



Intrinsic Coach®

# Interview

“With Intrinsic Coaching®  
people make better decisions  
and their experience also goes  
beyond the conversation;  
it’s much more valuable  
than just information.”

- John Gobble, Dr.PH, MPH,  
R.D., L.D., CHES



## Dr. John E. Gobble

is owner and founder of Medical Nutrition Therapy Northwest and a provider of disease management and therapeutic lifestyle change counseling. John has a Doctorate in Public Health in Preventive Care, a Master of Public Health in both Public Health Nutrition and Health Education, and is a Registered Dietitian, Licensed Dietitian, Certified Health Education Specialist, and a certified Health/Fitness Instructor by the American College of Sports Medicine. A nutritionist and health promotion specialist for nearly 25 years, John directed a therapeutic lifestyle and nutrition program for treating heart disease, diabetes, and obesity at Enton Medical Centre in Surrey, England and, more recently, designed and managed lifestyle research with James Rippe, MD, of the Center for Clinical Lifestyle Research in Massachusetts. John designs programs to identify risk and motivate health behavior change, teaches, speaks, and provides Medical Nutrition Therapy for a wide range of conditions.

## Jodi Sivon, M.Ed.

M.Ed. in Community Health, BA in Exercise Physiology, CHES, and certified by ACSM, ACE, and through the Cooper Institute, is an Intrinsic Coach® Mentor for Totally Coached, Inc. and Manager of Health & Wellness for Cuyahoga Community College's Metropolitan Campus. As Intrinsic Coach® Mentor, Ms. Sivon trains new coaches in the Intrinsic Coaching® methodology. As Manager of H&W for Cuyahoga Community College, Ms. Sivon manages the campus H&W Center, designs, promotes, and implements all campus wellness programs, and serves as a resource and coach for healthy lifestyle choices for over 450 full-time employees and 6,000 students.



**Q** Hi, John! Thank you for taking the time to talk with us. Please tell us about yourself and what you do.

**A** Well, 27 years ago I became a registered dietitian with a master's in public health nutrition. At that time I worked with clients in the rural south (North Florida) and started four county WIC programs—and this was when WIC was just starting up. That was my first introduction to nutrition counseling and behavior change. After that I went back to school and received my doctorate in public health with a focus on preventive care. From there I worked in areas of aging, health promotion and therapeutic lifestyle change. I served overseas in Southern England as a lifestyle and preventive care specialist for a reconditioning/lifestyle enhancement center and lectured throughout Europe. After that I came back to the US and became involved in developing programs for corporate wellness.

While in corporate wellness I was involved with developing technological tools to do health assessments and risk factor reduction. I did that for a number of

years and eventually branched off into my own company developing high-tech tools for health enhancement and behavior change. This included providing data management services for various research projects. As I moved from this area I saw the opportunity for getting back into nutrition education and one-on-one counseling with medical nutrition therapy.

In 2002 Medicare began paying for medical nutrition therapy and now insurance companies are beginning to cover it because the research is overwhelming in how it demonstrates that nutrition counseling or medical nutrition therapy can actually be as effective as a medication and used with medications to provide much better outcomes without the side effects of relying completely on medications. It also holds down the usage cost of medications. So medical nutrition therapy is picking up and getting involved in this has been a new adventure for me, but I see many opportunities for dietitians to do medical nutrition therapy.

As I got into this field I found different ways of managing medical nutrition therapy practice and determined what techniques and strategies would work the best and be the most effective. I learned about the Intrinsic Coaching®

methodology and thought it could really support my practice, and so I participated in the Intrinsic Coach® Development Series and began incorporating it into my medical nutrition therapy practice. I hope to share the Intrinsic Coaching® methodology with many dietitians because it is a tool that can make their practice very effective.

**Q** I would imagine that Intrinsic Coaching® can really impact the behavior change that clients are seeking with medical nutrition therapy.

**A** Intrinsic Coaching® impacts behavior change tremendously.

**Q** Could you talk a little about how Intrinsic Coaching® impacts behavior change? How do you integrate Intrinsic Coaching® into your work with weight management?

**A** With weight management I initially have the person complete a nutrition assessment and fill out a questionnaire which I evaluate and enter into my database. The database calculates nutrient values, recommendations and guidelines which I evaluate, and then make my own assessment. I present this information to the individual to show them where they are and what the results are. It is here where I incorporate Intrinsic Coaching®. After I present a client his or her results I ask, “Now what’s important to you? What do you want to accomplish?”

I take an Intrinsic Coaching® approach with my clients every time I meet with them.

I take an Intrinsic Coaching® approach with my clients every time I meet with them. Initially when I see people, even before they complete the assessment and I return those results, I always ask what their goal is. That goal is so important and is the number one thing we do. And even when a client identifies a goal we explore it even further. For instance, when I ask someone what his goal is, the first response usually is ‘I want to lose weight.’ I take this further and ask, “OK, what is important to you about losing weight and what does that do for you?” I continue on from there and find out what they really want to accomplish. Then we look at the assessment

results and focus on what we want to do next--what’s the next step towards accomplishing that goal? And the client always comes up with a next step. Too often as dietitians we tend to want to unload a huge amount of information on an individual expecting it’s going to change their behavior, yet it doesn’t. So, for me it’s ‘Here’s the results, now what do you want to do next?’ And it’s all about exploring their goal.

Too often as dietitians we tend to want to unload a huge amount of information on an individual expecting it’s going to change their behavior, yet it doesn’t. So, for me it’s ‘Here’s the results, now what do you want to do next?’ And it’s all about exploring their goal.

If my clients complete the assessment and receive follow-up coaching I will educate them about Intrinsic Coaching® and present them with some documentation in order to help them understand the approach we will be taking. They can read that over, write down goals and objectives just to clarify in their minds where they are and where they want to be. That’s how the weight management works and it’s really been effective in both outcomes and as far as a business strategy. Taking an Intrinsic Coaching® approach has been very positive for me and my clients.

**Q** It sounds as if you are taking it one step at a time meeting the client where he or she is in that moment. You mentioned the fact that you educate your clients on what Intrinsic Coaching® is. If I were a client what would you tell me?

**A** I would tell you that with Intrinsic Coaching® you are the only one responsible for your outcomes. This is your program. What we develop is based on what’s important to you. It’s not about you coming here to get fixed, but it’s about you being able to make better decisions as you work towards your goal. With Intrinsic Coaching® you not only make better decisions during our coach to coachee conversation, but the experience goes beyond this conversation and therefore it’s much more valuable than just coming here for information.

Thinking intrinsically is new to a lot of people.... It takes people about three times before they really get it and understand what we are doing and then it goes really well.

Thinking intrinsically is new to a lot of people so as I present this idea it usually takes more than one encounter for people to accurately understand it. It takes people about three times before they really get it and understand what we are doing and then it goes really well. But people are not used to Intrinsic Coaching® so you have to present it a bit at a time. When people come to me they are looking to lose weight. They think, “I want to go on a diet. Give me a diet. Tell me what to do.” And as a Registered Dietitian it would be so easy to say, “Okay, here’s a diet. Just follow this. Thank you very much,” and then you’d never see them again. But I know that this doesn’t work because everyone is different and has something different that is important to them. By taking an Intrinsic Coaching® approach to weight loss we identify that person’s goal, her values and find out what is important to him or her about losing weight.

With Intrinsic Coaching® you not only make better decisions during our coach to coachee conversation, but the experience goes beyond this conversation and therefore it’s much more valuable than just coming here for information.

**Q** John, you mentioned earlier that you always explore the goal of losing weight. By exploring this goal further do you find that there is often more there?

**A** Yes, there is always more to it. Individuals want to lose weight but more often than not there is more behind that. By exploring weight loss you may find they have other health concerns, joint pain, or even relationship issues. So many aspects of a person’s life is impacted by weight—their health, quality of life and maybe even self-esteem. With weight loss there is always some other issue that is important to them. Weight is just what they thought would be the way to fix it. It’s a strategy to achieving something more. Sometimes it turns out they just need to be happy with themselves. An Intrinsic Coaching® conversation helps them realize this and helps them find a peace outside of these external requirements they’ve put upon themselves. It’s actually a peace from within as opposed

to these self-imposed requirements, standards that may not be realistic and most often are not

With weight loss there is always some other issue that is important to them. Weight is just what they thought would be the way to fix it.

To give you an example, a client came in once and said, “I want to lose 175 pounds. Give me a diet.” Whew! Where do you start with that? What’s nice about Intrinsic Coaching® is that you do have a starting place. You can approach this by giving it back to that person and asking, “What is important to you about losing weight?” Weight loss or losing weight tends to be a problem that covers a lot of issues in a person’s life. It probably depends on how long they’ve been overweight or how long they’ve dealt with personal issues and weight is just one.

...a client came in once and said, “I want to lose 175 pounds. Give me a diet.” Whew! Where do you start with that? What’s nice about Intrinsic Coaching® is that you do have a starting place.

**Q** Taking an Intrinsic Coaching® approach really enables us to focus on that goal and find out what’s important to people. What else really stands out for you about Intrinsic Coaching®?

**A** Intrinsic Coaching® values the person. It comes to recognize people as creative, capable and complete and when you approach a person with that mind set then you affirm them. You support them. You encourage them and that positive approach transfers to that individual so nicely.

Intrinsic Coaching® values the person. It comes to recognize people as creative, capable and complete and when you approach a person with that mind set then you affirm them. You support them.

I think of a client who was talking about her mother and how she had to do so many things for her. During one of our conversations I shared that concept of considering her mother as creative, capable and complete. I asked her if that would change the way she would relate to her mother and it did. It made a big difference. It was not easy for this woman to do because they had a lot of issues, but she began making this choice because it was

an option that would improve her relationship with her mother. So Intrinsic Coaching® is not only helping me in my relationship with clients, but it's helping clients and anyone who understands these concepts improve relationships and accomplish goals. Intrinsic Coaching® is a major mindset that influences not just me and my clients, but the people we interact with as well. It moves people forward and the relationships they have with others.

Intrinsic Coaching® is a major mindset that influences not just me and my clients, but the people we interact with as well. It moves people forward and the relationships they have with others.

**Q** You're talking about the ripple effect of Intrinsic Coaching®--it carries on from one person to the next.

**A** Exactly. So that's a tremendous impact of Intrinsic Coaching®. If you can train your coachees then they can become more effective not only with themselves but in their own personal relationships.

**Q** What an amazing concept! They are coming to you for weight loss and then they walk away with something even more—the ability to think more intrinsically. That's wonderful.

**A** Isn't that something? So, there are a lot of benefits to taking an Intrinsic Coaching® approach. When people walk through my door they actually get so much more than what they actually thought they were going to get. They walk away with a clear goal, an action plan that they created and an understanding of Intrinsic Coaching®. It's been very good.

When people walk through my door they actually get so much more than what they actually thought they were going to get. They walk away with a clear goal, an action plan that they created and an understanding of Intrinsic Coaching®. It's been very good.

**Q** John, can you tell us what impact Intrinsic Coaching® has had on you professionally and/or personally?

**A** Professionally, Intrinsic Coaching® has helped me develop a service that I feel is effective, more effective than what is typically provided. And it's something that is easy to sell. All I have to do is present this concept of what I'm doing in terms of coaching, how it improves behavior and the fact that people have answers within and I have people sold. So many people come to me wanting something more. They've done all kinds of diets and they want to do something that is more effective and more personalized. And you can't get more personalized than Intrinsic Coaching®. And so Intrinsic Coaching® provides a way in which I can provide a truly personal approach to self-management and self care particularly as it relates to weight and medical nutrition therapy. People really like that and it's easy to sell.

Professionally, Intrinsic Coaching® has helped me develop a service that I feel is effective, more effective than what is typically provided. And it's something that is easy to sell.

Personally, Intrinsic Coaching® has improved how I relate to other people when conflicts are involved. I now have a way to resolve conflicts that's much easier than what my natural instincts might be. For instance when someone criticizes me instead of trying to defend myself (something I would naturally do) I bring it right back to them. I ask them, "What is important to you about this situation?" Looking for the unanswered question when there are complaints and criticism instead of defending myself has really helped me in personal relationships. It's exciting to see that happen especially when you work with kids. I have teenage boys and taking an Intrinsic Coaching® approach to parenting really helps in managing them in this time of turmoil and frustration as they move through their adolescence.

Personally, Intrinsic Coaching® has improved how I relate to other people when conflicts are involved... I have teenage boys and taking an Intrinsic Coaching® approach to parenting really helps in managing them in this time of turmoil and frustration as they move through their adolescence.

**Q** I'm sure it does! And in terms of resolving conflicts it sounds as if you're being proactive rather than reactive.

**A** It definitely is a proactive approach versus reactive. So in terms of professional practice I've found Intrinsic Coaching® is a great opportunity to present medical nutrition therapy as a tool that I can easily sell on a one-to-one basis. Even outside the office there are opportunities, such as providing phone consultations. These short 10-minute Intrinsic Coaching® conversations lead people and guide them to making appropriate decisions to meet their own goals. I've even helped develop a dietitian call center for a company and some of the underlying concepts have been Intrinsic Coaching®. The dietitians that are working there will also be trained as Intrinsic Coach® Coaches. It's exciting to know that these dietitians will be sharing Intrinsic Coaching® with others.

**Q** It is exciting that you are sharing the Intrinsic Coaching® methodology with other dietitians. There are so many opportunities to utilize the Intrinsic Coaching® methodology.

**A** There are so many opportunities to share Intrinsic Coaching®. I wish more dietitians practiced it, but even if all the dietitians that were doing medical nutrition therapy now were to be trained in the Intrinsic Coaching® methodology and do it effectively, that still would not be enough. There is so much opportunity to share this with others. The more people that know Intrinsic Coaching® the faster it will be passed on to other people.

The more people that know Intrinsic Coaching® the faster it will be passed on to other people.

**Q** What is your vision for dietitians?

**A** I'd like to see dietitians learn about the Intrinsic Coaching® methodology, become Intrinsic Coach® Dietitians and utilize it in their practice. Taking an Intrinsic Coaching® approach creates less stress and there is less pressure to 'fix' people and make them right. You are providing a service that they appreciate because it's tailored, it's personalized and you have an opportunity to actually see people change. You don't get to see this when you throw a bunch of information in their face and make them go home with a thick pile of paper full of do's and don'ts. There is probably little opportunity to change because it's like

any diet book or any weight loss program – people read it, they might work on it for awhile because it's a program someone else has said they need to do and then they lose interest in it. It's not really theirs. But when you work with Intrinsic Coaching®, then the weight loss program becomes theirs. They own it, they possess it. It is part of their life and the actions they chose to do are meaningful to them because it leads them to what's important for their life. That's exciting and gives dietitians a much more positive outlook on their work because it can be very frustrating when all you're doing is seeing people not comply. And with Intrinsic Coaching® they'll comply with what they want to comply with because they've identified what is important to them and are working towards this.

It's rewarding to see, to witness the changes people make over time and the 'ah-ha's' they discover, the light bulbs going off, and the realization that there is hope and change is possible. Their goal becomes realistic to them and it's practical because it's within their paradigm of living—not within societal rules and regulations or another person's imposed expectations.

Taking an Intrinsic Coaching® approach creates less stress and there is less pressure to 'fix' people and make them right. You are providing a service that they appreciate because it's tailored, it's personalized and you have an opportunity to actually see people change.

**Q** I'm hearing you say Intrinsic Coaching® shows people that change is possible. Has Intrinsic Coaching® expanded your vision of what's possible for people?

**A** Oh, certainly. I've actually been using Intrinsic Coaching® in groups that I work with and I see the changes, particularly the dietary changes and exercise habits. It's really exciting to see blood pressures go down, cholesterol levels go down and people experiencing more energy as a result of these changes. Just teaching the core elements of Intrinsic Coaching® to a group in the context of writing down goals, the things they'd like to change and understanding that they are capable of making these changes makes a difference. Incorporating these central elements of Intrinsic Coaching® can create a very nice group interaction.

I've actually been using Intrinsic Coaching® in groups that I work with and I see the changes, particularly the dietary changes and exercise habits. It's really exciting to see blood pressures go down, cholesterol levels go down and people experiencing more energy as a result of these changes.

When taking an Intrinsic Coaching® approach to a group I ask the individuals in the group what their goal is. What is important to them right now? And I ask people to share their goals with one another – I want to lose weight, I want to lower my blood pressure, or I want more energy. Then I pick a person and coach him or her in front of the whole group. For instance, if someone wants to lower her blood pressure I'll say, "Now if you lower your blood pressure, what will that do for you?" And they go on from there. And everyone else in the group tends to vicariously answer those same questions in their mind in relation to the goal they are working towards.

Through Intrinsic Coaching®, the group witnesses the 'ah-ha's' in that person's life and within just 10 minutes you've done a tremendous amount of inner communication and intrinsic awareness within a whole group setting. During a group talk there are all of these different things you know are important and should be covered, but if you step out of that for awhile and take an Intrinsic Coaching® approach asking, "What's really important to you? What do you want to see changing," and spend just 10 minutes on that then 'whoa' everything you've just said or maybe what you're going to present later becomes much more meaningful because then they look at ways to incorporate that with what's important to them. So, even in a health education setting where you're presenting lots of information, concepts and recommendations, if you take an Intrinsic Coaching® approach it becomes a much more meaningful experience for the participants.

So, even in a health education setting where you're presenting lots of information, concepts and recommendations, if you take an Intrinsic Coaching® approach it becomes a much more meaningful experience for the participants.

Q

I'm glad you shared how you incorporate Intrinsic Coaching® in a group setting. It shows that it is not limited to just one-on-one conversations. Do you have a particular success story that stands out in your mind?

A Well, there is this one lady I worked with. We'll call her Candy (for food, you know?). She literally tried every diet in the book. I would pull out the most obscure diet books just to see if she had heard of that one. She'd say, "Oh yeah, I read that one and gave it away." It was just amazing! She knew everything about every diet out there. And this made it easy for me. I didn't really have to present her with a lot of educational material. I just started with 'What's really important to you? What have you learned about yourself after all the things you've done? What would be most effective for you right now?'

She basically came up with a tremendous record keeping system that I wouldn't even have imposed on a person because it was so tedious, but she did it. It worked for her. She wanted to do it and continues to do it every week. It's building her awareness and she's making better choices. She has even told me at times she will look at something and my voice pops into her head and says, "Now, what's really important to you right now and how is this going to get you there?" Then she makes a decision based on that question versus some outside thing that's imposing on her such as 'I shouldn't eat that or I'm going to get away with it because no one can see me.' Here she is looking at it from a different point of view and making better progress. As a result she has lost weight. The weight loss has not been dramatic but it has been steady and slow, which, as we all know, is more effective and time will take care of that. What's most important is that other health problems have significantly improved. She originally had all kinds of digestive problems and these things have cleared up. She's able to eat in such a way that she's not affected by the food the same way she was before. So when you see that kind of change where health or quality of life improves so well because she's doing something that she wants to do and not something a diet book is telling her; it's exciting!

Now initially it wasn't easy for her. I had to reaffirm her and tell her that this is not something she has to do that's being imposed on her. It's her program and will be based on what's important to her. I continued to affirm her and tell her she can make a step at a time and it will work. She will be successful. She needed that encouragement. That got her going and she's happy she did it. Now she is feeling good about herself and is successfully losing weight and improving her health.

Q

What is most rewarding for you as an Intrinsic Coach®?

A

What's most rewarding to me is seeing the changes people make, especially in the conversations when they say they want to lose weight and then eventually it becomes something much more deep. It becomes deeper, something that is important to them. With Intrinsic Coaching®, a surface conversation becomes a meaningful conversation. A trite conversation becomes a crucial conversation because it actually impacts their life. So that change is what I think is rewarding to see, just to witness. And the peace it brings not only to the client, but to me too. It's very rewarding.

A

Well, I hope so. It's exciting to see people change. It's frustrating when people don't change, but when you study what really makes people change it really comes down to their values. Change involves giving people an opportunity to see what's important to them. Intrinsic Coaching® brings this and so much more to the table. As I said before it's a meaningful and crucial conversation.

Change involves giving people an opportunity to see what's important to them. Intrinsic Coaching® brings this and so much more to the table. It's a meaningful and crucial conversation.

With Intrinsic Coaching®, a surface conversation becomes a meaningful conversation. A trite conversation becomes a crucial conversation because it actually impacts their life.

Q

What you just said was so powerful! When it comes down to what is most important to someone it is a crucial and meaningful conversation. What do you want for people overall?

A

Overall I'd like people to live life to its fullest. Too often it's cut short unnecessarily with disability and even death. In studying preventive medicine you see so many people that unnecessarily are sick or in the hospital and disabled, lose their job and so forth. I'd like to see people live a much fuller life. This is why I do medical nutrition therapy and health promotion and particularly why I feel Intrinsic Coaching® is the way to go

I'd like to see people live a much fuller life. This is why I do medical nutrition therapy and health promotion and particularly why I feel Intrinsic Coaching® is the way to go.

Q

We're glad you're out there incorporating Intrinsic Coaching® into your work. You are definitely making an impact in people's lives.

# Who is Totally Coached, Inc.?

Totally Coached, Inc. is a Scottsdale, AZ based company that founded the proprietary and uniquely effective Intrinsic Coaching® methodology. Reaching internationally, the Intrinsic Coaching® methodology enables “Thinking better. Together.™” for benefits that extend across the workplace and beyond the organization’s walls to create healthier lives, healthier organizations, and a healthier world.

To be an Intrinsic Coach® like John Gobble, contact 480-515-5220  
or [totallycoached@totallycoached.com](mailto:totallycoached@totallycoached.com).

Make a better life.  
Live a better world.™