**CC\_S4E2**

Welcome to coach, to coach a podcast dedicated to showcasing the power of coaching. I'm your host, dr. Katie Linder, and I offer coaching to academics and higher education professionals to bring more ease to their lives and work this season, I'm offering a slightly different format than earlier seasons.

I thought it might be useful to go over some coaching fundamentals for anyone listening, who hasn't gone through. Coach training. I wanted to share some of the things that you can be listening for in each season. That would be good examples of coaching structure, philosophy, and techniques. So for each of the episodes in the season, I'm going to offer solo episodes, talking about some coaching basics.

Feel free to email me with questions about these episodes or ideas of what you'd like to hear more about in future seasons. If I do this kind of format again now onto the episode.

In the last episode, I talked a little bit about defining coaching and. Kind of it's relationship to things like therapy, mentoring and consulting. And as you were listening to that, I bet you were thinking, this seems pretty fluid and it is, you could have a mentor who was like a coach who asked questions that a coach might ask.

You could use techniques in coaching like motivational interviewing, for example, that are also used in therapy. So there's a lot of, kind of give and take between these different fields and practices. And the more you learn about coaching, the more you start to see some of the similarities and differences between these different service professions.

One of the key differences though, I think, um, between coaching and some of these other things has to do with how we structure a session. And so I'm going to talk today a little bit in this episode about session structure. And so the concept of co-creating an agenda. So a coaching session has, it's kind of three main parts and you would have heard this in a lot of the coach to coach episodes.

If you've been listening up until this point, the first part is that concept of co-creating an agenda. And I'll go into that in a little bit more detail. The second part is the actual coaching where you have a series of questions or you have some tools that are being used within the actual, um, kind of major part of the session.

And then the third part is where you're starting to close the session and you have a focus on, okay. Accountability and what are kind of the next steps or action items that a client has come up with throughout the session that they might want to move forward with before you meet with that client again?

Now I kind of like to think about this metaphorically as a meal. And when I describe this to the coach training participants, um, I'd say that when you're kind of coming into a session and you're, co-creating the agenda, it's kind of like when you're ordering from the menu, um, you, you've had a chance to kind of think about what you want and you're kind of choosing a thing.

And committing to that thing for the meal. Um, yeah. Putting in the order. And there's a little bit of a sense ceremony to that. Like if you, if you go to a restaurant and you're kind of, um, you know, ordering the thing that you want, there's a way that you're kind of easing yourself into this process of having the meal.

The middle part of the session is when you're actually eating the meal. And then the last part of the session is where you're kind of lingering over coffee and dessert. Um, so it's, again also kind of ceremonial. It's a form of closure and both the co-creating the agenda. And when you're closing out the session with a client are ways to kind of ease the client into the session from the outside world and then ease a client.

Out of the session and back into the outside world. So there's kind of these transitional moments that are happening as you start working with the client. And as you close out your session with a client, So each of these things have a little bit of a timing. Uh, so you're trying to do the setting of the agenda in roughly five to seven minutes.

And that might also include like a check in with your client. And then you're also going to try to give maybe 10, sometimes 15 minutes for the accountability and closure part at the end of a session. And then everything in the middle is the actual coaching, um, and whatever tools and questions you might use in the middle.

So that's kind of the overall session structure that you might see. And this is kind of roughly what you'll see when you listen to coach, to coach episodes. And again, this is an international coaching Federation structure. Um, so this is what I train people in when they do my coach training. Now the first part of the session, the co-creating the agenda also has.

Several parts. And when you hear me coach a client, and you'll also hear this with ISA Bo in season two, when she coaches me, we're both trained through ICF. So we both are using this kind of co-creating the agenda structure. So the first thing is that you ask the client if they have a topic for the session and they might describe, you know, what that topic is.

And once you have a sense of what the topic is for the session, then you would ask the client the significance of that topic. Or in other words, why is that topic kind of front of mind for them right now that they would choose that over something else? Now sometimes what you'll hear is a client will say, when they're talking, telling you what the topic is, they'll give some context.

Um, and they'll say, you know, something happened. And I, I really want to focus on this issue because of this thing that happened. And so, um, some folks will feel like, well, it, it seems repetitive to ask about the significance if they've already given some context. But what I found is, you know, 95% of the time, there's actually even more depth.

That you can go into about why this particular topic, why this moment and maybe why that topic relates to larger coaching goals that that person has. So I always ask about the larger significance. The third element of setting the agenda is you would. Want to know if there are certain things that the client is looking for that are kind of measurable outcomes that they want to see you coming out of the session by the end.

So it's not just about what they want to talk about, but what they're actually hoping to get out of this session by the time you're done. And if it's a 60 minute session or, you know, a shorter session or a longer session. It allows you to kind of frame the session and understand what it is. You're aiming toward like a target, um, as you're moving through the session and Azure exploring that topic together.

And part of the goal of these measurable objectives is that there would be something kind of quantifiable. So sometimes you might have a client come in who says, I want some strategies to, um, learn how to go to bed earlier. You know, I, I need a different evening routine and I'd like to go to bed earlier and I might say, you know, well, how many strategies are you looking for?

Are there, is there a certain number that you think would be useful? Um, are you looking for three? Are you looking for 10? Just to kind of try to quantify that now sometimes you'll have a client who will say, I just want more clarity around an issue, or I want to gain some confidence in a particular area.

And in that case, what I will often say is can you rate where you are right now from like one to 10? And they might say, well, right now I feel like a three. So then I would say by the end of the session, where would you like to be? So really trying to help them to find a way of quantifying if they want to move from like a three to a seven, then we can ask at the end of the session, what are you now?

And so we're able to kind of get a sense of a measurable difference between where they started and where they ended. So this is a helpful thing. I think when we're trying to kind of, um, Between a coach and a client have a shared understanding of what we're working toward together. We want to know the topic.

We want to know why the topic is important. And we want to know the measurable outcomes that we're trying to get at together through the session. Now, the fourth and final thing that you do, and co-creating the agenda is you would repeat all of that back. You would, you would echo that back to the client so that they know that you've got the topic, the significance.

And the measurable outcomes and they can, you know, if you're on track with those things, if you heard them correctly and that's actually what they want to do before you dive into the actual session itself. Now, I'm going to talk about accountability in a later episode of this season. So I'm not going to go into super detail about that.

But the other thing to know about session structure, which I think some people kind of question is they feel like maybe it would be too confining. Um, being in this structure every time you go into a coaching session, doesn't give you enough. You know, um, flexibility to really meet clients with what they need.

And I'm definitely a believer in, um, something that Gretchen Rubin says, which is discipline brings freedom. I think this is a perfect example of that, that when you have the shared agenda and you kind of know the direction that you're headed with a client, it actually really loosens up the possibilities of what you can do within the actual coaching session.

And you feel a sense of kind of purpose and intention of where things are going. And because of that, you have a lot more confidence from a coaching perspective of what you're trying to get at through the session. Now, I often will get questions too about whether or not session agendas can change, like sometime in the middle of a session.

And this happens quite frequently actually, where you'll start in one direction and then the client will kind of have an aha moment or. They'll feel like they've resolved what it was that they were originally thinking about and they decide they want to shift in a different direction. Um, and so really what you would do at that point is just check in with the client and say, it sounds like we're kind of shifting into new territory.

Is that okay? You know, does that make sense to you to go in that direction? Um, or you might just say, how are we doing with the agenda? Is there another direction in which you'd like to go? Um, if you feel like the, the original agenda has been resolved. Now a common thing that often happens, and you probably have heard this in coach episodes is that you will have things kind of emerge from the original agenda that was set.

And there will be like these different branching off pathways that you can take based on what has emerged from that original agenda. And it's the coach's job to always make sure that those branching off pathways. Circle back around and connect with what the original topic was, um, so that you can kind of let the client go off and explore a little bit, but you're always trying to bring them back around to what was the original intention for the session.

And, um, what was it that they were trying to achieve? What were those measurable objectives that they were aiming toward? So that's a little bit about session structure for coaching sessions and how you might cocreate an agenda with a client. I'll see you in the next episode.

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