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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 that 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 and 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 this episode, I want to share a little bit about using coaching tools and talk a little bit about what they are and when you might decide when to incorporate them into a client session.

So one of the things that I think is kind of interesting is when coaches are first starting out, you might learn a variety of different tools. And in my coach training program, we go through over 50 different tools. We practice them. We demo them. Um, and we have, um, all the participants have a chance to practice them with another coach in the program.

So they get to experience them as a client and as a coach. So when you leave the program, you have all these tools in your toolkit that you can potentially use. And the idea of a tool is that you're reacting to maybe something specific that the client has. And you have a specific kind of activity that you think will help for them to dive deeper into whatever it is that they're trying to achieve.

So, Interestingly ICF will say, don't use a tool where a powerful question will do. You know, they, they want to really emphasize the strength and importance of powerful questions, but sometimes you might have a client where they're kind of going down a pathway and you think, Oh, I have the perfect tool for this.

I think that it's really going to help. So the, one of the kind of pieces of coaching, knowing how to choose the right tool and for what client and for when. So some of the different kinds of tools that you might see in coach are visioning tools where you're walking a client through a kind of visioning exercise where they need to think about something in the future, or maybe they're trying to like, make it big decision until you would envision.

Yes. What would it be like to make decision number one versus decision number two, and you walk them through a tool that would allow them to do that. There's also a lot of different tools that help a client to explore stories that they might be telling themselves, um, or what are sometimes called limiting assumptions, where you would kind of pull something apart and kind of have a better understanding of.

What's underneath it in terms of the, the stories that are kind of the foundation of that thing that might be holding you back client back. Um, so there's a lot of different kinds of tools that you can use and powerful questions certainly act as a tool in themselves. But there's a certain kind of sequence when you're working with a tool with a client, um, that you would do when you're introducing this in a session.

So if a client said something or indicated when we were setting an agenda, something that made me think a tool could be a good fit for the session. Basically, what you do is you start by introducing the tool and kind of explaining what it is to the client. So you wouldn't just kind of spring it on them, without them having a sense of what it is.

So you would explain the tool, describe kind of what, what is it and why you think it could be a good fit for what they're describing, um, in terms of what they're hoping to accomplish in the session. And one of the most important things you do is then you ask the client's permission to use the tool. Now, this is something that I think a lot of people, when they're first starting out as coaches, they feel kind of awkward about this step of like pausing to actually ask permission.

But there's a lot of ways to do this in a really genuine way. So for example, rather than saying, here's the tool, let me describe it. Do I have your permission to move forward? Which would be like a very formal way of doing it? You might say something like, um, so here's the tool and here's how it works.

And here's why I think it's a good fit for us in this session. Uh, what do you think about giving it a shot? Or what do you think about trying this out? And I just kind of feel the client out to see are they hesitating, you know, maybe they don't want to go in that direction. Um, or if they feel like, okay, it feels like it could be a good direction.

You're really just checking it and with them, because oftentimes the club and is really the one who is directing the action within the session. And in the case of offering a tool that you might be using together, the coach is starting to direct a little bit more. And so you want to make sure that the client is on board with whatever it is that you're suggesting that you do, um, because they still need to be kind of directing the action a little bit.

And if they were to hesitate or say, like, I'm not sure that's kind of what I'm talking about. In terms of my objective or what I'm trying to do, then you would need to kind of decide, you know, another direction to go. So once you're actually using the tool, oftentimes there's a specific set of like instructions of how you would use the tool and, and certain stuff, depths that you had walked through.

And in the coach training manual that I drafted for the coach training program. Every tool that's included in there has a description. It has the discrete set of steps that you kind of walk a client through. It has a series of powerful four questions that you would use with the tool are kind of fitting well with the tool.

And then I also described some modifications because depending on the tool you're using and the kind of client you have, you might kind of shift a tool in certain directions based on kind of how it's drafted. So in using the tool, you're often going to be doing a combination of whatever the steps are to complete the tool and, um, uh, some kind of set of powerful questions.

And you always want to make sure when the tool is kind of wrapping up or, or some point during the tool that you're debriefing it with the client. So you're starting to kind of pay attention to what are their takeaways from using the tool? Are there particular kinds of things they're noticing as they're using the tool?

So the coaching tool is always a kind of, uh, a way to get more in depth with what the client is trying to do. And you would always use a tool very intentionally. Um, it's not like to fill time. You would, you would use a tool because you've gotten a direct indication from the client that this particular tool would probably be a good fit, um, and helping them explore what they want to explore.

Now, this is when you're using a tool within an actual session. And so, um, sometimes you might use a tool within a session, and then you would also ask, you know, you'd wrap up that tool and then you have more time to have powerful questions. It's not always that a tool will take up, you know, the entire session time.

Other times it will. Um, it will be maybe a more in depth tool. You'll go off in a lot of different directions and it will take time to debrief it and that will be the entire session. So that's the other reason to really ask the client's permission as you want to make sure that it's an okay use of your time together, that you're moving them off in the direction of using a tool.

The other way to think about coaching tools is sometimes they can be assigned as homework. So for example, um, there's a tool that I use that is basically a way to help clients understand and identify their values. And the tool comes with a handout that has a list of values, words, and a set of instructions of what to do with that list of values words.

And this is something I've used in like workshops. I've used it with individual clients. There's a lot of different ways that you can use this tool. And sometimes I will give this tool as homework because it can take some time for the client to read through the list of possible values and circle the ones that they think might be of interest to them and start to kind of narrow down the things that they're really resonating with.

Right. And then when they come back, we would maybe use the next session to debrief the tool all together. So that's the other one option of when you're using a coaching tool is sometimes it's something that you would discuss with the client. Does this seem like something you might want to do as homework?

And if so, you know, here's the steps, here's the worksheet or whatever it is that they would need to complete the tool. And then when they come back, you would check in and see how it went. Um, sometimes in the beginning of a session you went offer, you know, a little bit of a debrief before you get into agenda setting.

And sometimes that, that debrief is enough for that tool. Um, and you just kind of hear how it went, okay. Get some takeaways and then you might send an agenda that has nothing to do with that tool and that homework. In other situations, it may be that you do a quick debrief and you realize that there's quite a bit left to talk about with the tool.

And then that will become the agenda for this session is to really dive deeper into what the client was realizing through the use of that particular tool. So whether you're doing, um, a tool in a session, or whether you're doing a tool as homework, you're always kind of guiding a client through what are they coming to better understand about themselves through the use of that particular tool?

Now, one of the questions that I often get, um, from coach training participants is with so many different coaching tools. Like how could you ever know them all? I mean, how could, you know when to use the right one? And I would say that, um, what I found is. In doing the coach training, like as the training facilitator, it helps me to remember the tools better.

Cause I'm kind of always introducing new tools to our people who are participating in the program. Um, but also I think you have to be kind of reminding yourself of what some of the tools are. It's not like you have like a Rolodex in your head. And you know, all the tools and you've memorized them all. I think it's more, there's probably a core set of like 10 or 15 that I go through pretty consistently with my clients, because I often work with clients around a certain set of core issues, like values.

So those tools I'm like super familiar with. And then I'm often reminded of other tools as I'm working in the coach training and it is completely. Uh, likely that like the next week I'll work with that specific tool with a client, because it's just top of mind for me. So I think that there are also, um, Ways that you can be kind of reminding yourself of these tools over time, rather than trying to be memorizing them.

Now, the other thing I would say too, is you should be if you're coaching and feeling free to develop your own tools, and this is something thing that I think came pretty naturally to me, because I used to run workshops and that was like a. I was facilitating a lot of learning experiences for adult learners.

And because of that, I got used to creating like worksheets and activities and things like that. Anyone who has a teaching background is going to kind of understand what this is, where you have a little bit of a learning objective, and you're trying to create an activity around it. It's very similar in creating a coaching tool.

You have a goal of what you're trying to accomplish with that client. And the tool that you develop is something that is tied to that goal. So there'll be some kind of a description of what it is that you're trying to accomplish, that you can explain to the client, what is the tool? There'll be a set of steps that you would walk them through and maybe some powerful questions that would be associated with that.

And then you can also consider, especially if you're going to share the tool with other people. What are the modifications that might be able to be made to that tool so that it could fit a really wide range of clients? So that's a little bit about using coaching tools and I'll look forward to seeing you in the next episode.

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