**CC\_S4E8**

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 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

on this final episode of the season, I want to talk about one of the most important aspects of the coaching relationship, and that is creating accountability for your client. And the fun part about creating accountability is that every client will need something a little bit different. So some clients are pretty good about holding themselves accountable and they'll just write something in their planner and they'll be good to go.

You might have other clients who want an email check in or a text check in or something else kind of in between sessions to make sure that they're okay. Holding up their end of the bargain in terms of the things that they're hoping to get done. And there's all kinds of other things, creative ways that you might decide to create some kind of accountability structure with your clients.

Now, when I'm talking with the coach training participants about accountability, one of the frameworks that I introduced them to, and many of them are actually already familiar with it is Gretchen Rubin's four tendencies. And this is the idea that you have different levels of, um, kind of ability when it comes to internal accountability versus external accountability.

And that we're all a little bit different in how we have. I'm a mix and match of these. So Gretchen Rubin divides us into four categories and she even has a quiz on her website, which I can put into the show notes in case you want to check it out and see kind of which category you fall into. The first category she talks about is obligers.

And these are people who do better with external accountability and they might struggle with internal accountability. So they're going to be doing really well when they're given a goal or a deadline by another person. But if they have like a goal that they set for themselves, they're not going to do as well with keeping that promise to themselves.

Now not surprisingly, a lot of obligers show up in coaching because they know that external accountability is going to help them. And that's part of what they're expecting from the coaching relationship. Now the opposite of that is what Gretchen Rubin calls a questioner. And this is someone who does well with internal accountability, but kind of struggles or rebels when someone tries to hold them externally accountable.

And they are really wanting to have kind of a meaningful understanding of why they're doing any kind of task. And if something feels arbitrary, they're not going to want to do that. So, um, questioners are people who need to really understand why a task is important to themselves. Before they're, they're going to really be able to hold themselves to it.

Then there are upholders. And these are people who are strong with both internal and external accountability. So they can kind of meet their own deadlines. They can set their own new year's resolutions and they can also be accountable to people outside of themselves. Um, now it might sound like they're like the perfect mix, but under stress or when they're tired, upholders might need.

A little bit more external accountability or assistance. Um, because things like discipline and executive function can be really effected by things like stress and trauma. So I've noticed, for example, during this period of COVID-19 a lot of my high performing upholder clients are looking for a little bit of external accountability just to kind of help them along.

And then the last category is what Gretchen Rubin calls a rebel. And these are people who struggle with both internal and external accounts ability, and they often will push against yeah. Andrise and often they want a lot of choices put out in front of them. They will offer then connect their choices to their identity.

But meaning is going to be important to them along with things like autonomy and independence. Um, and so when you have a rebel client kind of like questioners, they really need to know the meaning behind what they're doing. And it can be helpful if they can tie the meaning behind an action to an identity category that they have.

So all of this to say it can be helpful when you are a coach, which to understand what kind of, of accountability frameworks your client prefers. Do they like internal accountability? Do they struggle with that? Are they more interested in external accountability? Do they struggle with that? Um, or are they good with both or are they good with neither knowing about your client's tendency can really impact the kinds of strategies that you might offer to them when it comes to accountability?

So at the end of each session, you would work with your client to create a form of accountability structure that works for them. And this can also change every session depending on what the tasks are and what the client feels like they need. So you might start by asking them how they would like to hold themselves accountable for the next steps they're planning to take.

Um, if you need to be involved in that as a coach, if there are particular tools that they plan to use to stay accountable, um, you can also use this time in the session as more coaching time to really explore the obstacles that they might anticipate as they're moving into their next steps. Um, if they feel like there's going to be helpful, things that they've done in the past to stay accountable, that they can learn from.

And then of course, how they want to plan for any kind of celebration. Once they do complete the things that they have in front of them. Right. So these are all powerful questions that could be asked and explored in the accountability section of a session. Now, one of the questions I often get from my coach training participants is, well, what if we have a claim who doesn't do what they say they're going to do, and this can happen for all kinds of reasons.

And as we know, from earlier episodes, and from earlier discussions on coach to coach, cornerstones of coaching are curiosity and non-judgment, so we apply those things. To the situation. If a client comes back to us and they're not completing something that they felt like they wanted to complete in the lab session.

So it's always kind of asking more powerful questions. And in a session agenda, you might start with some kind of check in with the client before you get into formal agenda setting. And during the check-in is when you might ask how things went with the client, when it comes to their tasks that they wanted to do.

Now, if you find that a client, uh, has not completed their tasks. One of the things that I really like to ask about is how, like, what were the things that ranked above that during the time that you had like in between the sessions? Right? So if the task was tied to a particular goal that the client has, maybe the goal is not a priority right now, like maybe something has happened that has dropped the importance of that goal.

And I think this was true for a lot of people when, um, COVID-19 hit, there were a lot of people who had goals, plans, projects that got really disrupted and they had to very quickly kind of reassess and start to change, you know, what their action items were, what their goals were around particular issues.

So this is an important conversation to have with a client is, um, in a very nonjudgmental way, just asking if their priorities have shifted. And maybe that is part of the reason why they're not completing the tasks that are in front of them. It can also be really helpful just to have a pretty Frank conversation about what are the obstacles that kept them from completing the task.

Sometimes clients will have, you know, a psychological block where the task feels relatively easy, kind of intellectually when they think about it. But when they try to do it, like they have a lot of feelings about that task that keep them from doing it and exploring some of that can be really helpful.

Um, and sometimes even for simple tasks, Doing it with the client in the session, in that moment, um, just to help them. Okay. Kind of get through that moment of fear or anxiety about it can be helpful. I have sat with clients as they've sent important emails, for example. Um, and these are things that they had already drafted, but they just like couldn't hit that send button.

So those kinds of things can be easily done within a session as well. I think it's also helpful kind of along the lines of that psychological block to explore with clients, what are the emotions that they associate with following through, on these tasks and for some tasks, there's this sense of like, not knowing what comes next.

And so people will procrastinate on the task because they don't know what's going to come after it. And, and they don't want to like have a gap, um, or they, they don't want to feel kind of like meaningless or directionless. Um, and so that can be a reason why people will procrastinate on a task. If there are questions that clients have about completing a task, like they may have realized that they don't have enough information to complete the task or there's somebody else that's involved in the task that is not holding up their end of the bargain and the client can't complete it unless this other person does their part as well.

So there's a lot of things that can come into a client, not being able to complete the task. The final question that I really like to ask clients, Is, is there anything that would make this task easier for you? Because sometimes we have an idea in our minds about kind of a perfect way that we want to do something, but if we remove some of those barriers, all of a sudden it'd be comes less of a, of an issue.

And I can explain this in a concrete example with one thing I talked about early on, I think in season one about creating a yoga practice, um, the idea of creating a yoga practice and doing full sequences for me, at least in the beginning, felt really overwhelming. And so to make that task easier for myself, I decided to practice one pose a day for the first 30 days.

And I didn't even like put the poses together in any kind of sequence, just practiced one pose a day. Um, and that is what I made that task feel easier for me. It was still doing yoga. It was still engaging in the practice of yoga, but I wasn't necessarily doing it the way that I had in my head. Which was, Oh, I have to do like a 30 to 60 minute full sequenced video.

Um, I decided instead to do something kind of smaller that got me into eventually doing those fuller sequences, but it was a smaller start to kind of get me going. This is something that helps with a lot of clients, as they're trying to think through big projects, or as they're trying to think through things that might feel kind of overwhelming to them.

So, this is just a little, what about, um, client accountability in the session? The other thing that coaches often think about is accountability and kind of a broader way to the overall engagement goals that the client has of what they want to accomplish over the course of several sessions. So in addition to keeping an eye on the agenda for each session, The coach is also really paying attention to what is the engagement looking like overall in terms of what the client wants to really accomplish with their goals?

So sometimes there's a amid engagement review or evaluation to kind of check in with the client. If, you know, maybe if a lot of people goals have been met, maybe the client wants to go in a different direction. Um, or maybe if not enough goals have been met, the client wants to refocus and really think about how they want to spend their remaining time.

I'm in the coaching engagement. So the accountability can apply at different scales. It can apply within the session level, but also within the level of the larger coaching engagement. So that's a little bit about creating accountability within a coach and client relationship. And I have so enjoyed the season and diving into some of these more specific topics with you.

I hope you've enjoyed hearing a little bit about the cornerstones and foundations coaching, and I'll look forward to coming back, um, in about a month or so with idea new season with a new coach. I know you're really going to enjoy it. I'll see you then. Thanks for listening to this episode of coach to coach for any resources mentioned in the episode, check out the episode, show notes at dr.

Katie linder.com/coach. If you found this episode to be helpful, please take a moment to rate or review the show in Apple podcasts or recommends episode to a friend or colleague. Thanks for listening.