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This episode of coach to coach is brought to you by my coach training program for academics and higher education professionals. In each training course, we meet weekly to explore how we can hold space for clients. Listen for the things that they care about most and help them to achieve their goals through focused questioning activities and tools.

If you think that becoming a coach might be a fit for your professional development goals, you can learn more about the coach training program. Or sign up for a 30 minute Q and a session with me to ask all of your questions@higheredcoaches.com cohorts begin in January, April, and June. And I'd love to have you join us.

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 excited to share conversations with some of the participants in my coach training program.

I get questions all the time about how people know it's the right time to become a coach. What the various career pathways are that lead to coaching and what people decide to do with their coaching skills. After earning a credential this season, we're tackling all of these topics and more, a huge thanks to each coach in training who offered to come on the show and share about their experiences with learning this new skillset.

In this episode, you'll hear from Dr. Rebecca Campbell. Who's interested in helping academics lead more purposeful lives by identifying the pathways and habits, practice the transform, their hopes into realities. Rebecca believes that when your identity as an academic is out of sync, it can affect all areas of your life and wellbeing.

Hey, Rebecca. I'm so glad that you were joining me on the season of coach to coach. Welcome to the show. Thanks for having me. I'm excited to be here. Oh, I am so excited to talk with you. Um, because you are in cohort one coach training. So we have spent the last year plus engaging with each other in this program.

And I think you have like everyone who's kind of come on this season, just a unique entry. Into this. Um, so tell us a little bit about your introduction to coaching as a thing in the world that exists, you know, as a field, how did you first come to know about coaching? You know, I, I will admit that I was an Oprah fanatic, so I probably started, you know, seeing Martha Beck on, on Oprah and then fast forward, multiple years, I was running a peer coaching program that was connected to a course at the university and, uh, girded up by my great program coordinator at the time Ms.

Sassy pants here would put on the annual budget. The two of us were going to become life coach certified. And every year we would put it on the budget and every year we would be told no. Um, and so I'd been sort of holding a grudge about that, that I had been running a program without the skills and credentials to do that.

Um, and then with podcasting, you know, there's so many coaches and so many great podcasts. Um, and I, I followed one in particular, uh, one style and realized this isn't quite right for me, but I think I want to dive in. Further. So it's something I've kind of known about for a long time. Hm. So I'm always really curious.

What is that turning point for people where you either have experienced coaching or you've kind of dipped your toe in the water of doing coaching, and then you realize I want to pursue training in this. Like, I want to do a deeper dive and build my skill set and really kind of treat this a bit like a craft.

Do you remember that point for yourself where you were kind of deciding, you know, this is. This is the right timing to do it maybe, or I know I want to move in this direction. It sounds like it had been a several years process for you through, and then. I think it was post sabbatical when I was finishing up writing up my sabbatical research.

And at that point, um, was when we really met, uh, I think more formally because I signed up for a writing coaching program and really enjoyed it. And then once the sabbatical stuff was written up, I thought, well, what next? Um, not that I don't have more data. Um, but, but what else? Um, at the same time you were talking to us about how you were launching the coach training.

And so it was, it was a little bit synergistic in that way. Um, and I, I think the other two pieces I'd add is, you know, I was probably a little bit bored. Um, and so, and. I was looking for a way to treat myself, um, in a very specific way. Um, and that is that I love to take classes. I love to be fully engaged, whether that's a group exercise class or I've, you know, like felting Wolf fencing, I love to take classes.

And I just think it's such a big treat to be fully engaged, but have somebody else. Be in charge. And I thought, well, what a win when I get to learn this professional skill and somebody else is in charge, I still have to do some work, but I don't have to think through it on my own. And simultaneous to that, I won an award on my campus and it came with some professional development sessions.

And so I was able to put that money towards the training. And so it was just kind of all the planets lined up. yeah. I resonate so much with that, Rebecca, about. Kind of formalized learning opportunities and that they can be a way, I don't know that everyone feels this way. Maybe you and I are just kind of a little strange this way that we celebrate and we reward ourselves with learning.

Um, but that's something that I, it really draws me into of, you know, I love when someone else has taken the time to pull resources together in a way that help me to understand them. And it, I feel like it's a little bit of a, um, Like a shortening of the learning curve. If I was just trying to figure it all out on my own, it would be a lot harder than if I can come into a program where someone else has done something.

Yeah. I'm, I'm the geek that always wants the museum tour. I don't, I don't want to wander around on my own. I want like, even if I only ended up learning about one painting, I'd rather have, I'd rather have the curator, you know, and I'll ease, drop on those other conversations as I'm walking through. Yeah. I formalized learning.

Yep. I love that. Okay. So I am curious, Rebecca, what is your background? You mentioned kind of having some coaching experience of leading these groups, but I'm curious if there are other kind of skills or experiences coming out of your background that you feel really helped to benefit you as you were coming into this coaching identity and learning these skills, what were you bringing with you?

I see. I think I was bringing with me the value of higher ed and, and the complexity of the faculty role. Um, I refer to it as the Bermuda triangle of teaching research and service. Um, and, and the understanding that I could continue to read every book on faculty professional development. But knowing what a best practice was and being able to guide somebody towards those best practices was not the same thing.

And so I think it was, I think one thing I brought with me was that knowledge base of, of how learning occurs in faculty professional development, but also this recognition of it's not the same thing. Um, it's sort of, I, it's probably the wrong analogy, but I feel like sometimes we could read about dog training, but that's different than becoming a dog trainer, you know, in the same way as we consume all these baking shows, um, or all these DIY things.

Um, it's not the same thing as actually helping somebody through the process itself. And so I think I brought that as this. Kind of overarching respect that I needed to know how to do this, how to translate this and that the base, yeah. Coaching is a very applied kind of practice. I feel like as you do it, you learn more.

Um, and you're really building the skills. Can you remember back to like your early experience in the program and what it felt like to kind of take on this new skillset and try it on and practice with it? What was that like for you? It was very chaotic. I would say very, I was super nervous. I was nervous with the cohort for quite a while.

Um, I was nervous coaching for quite a while. Um, and I think I was, I was really wondering, and I wondered even going into the program. Am I going to be able to translate the difference between mentoring, coaching consulting? And therapy. Am I going to be able to, to, to land, to stick it? Like, you know, like the gymnast landing, am I going to be able to stick that landing?

Um, so until I got comfortable with where I was sitting in that space, it, um, but all of us were in the same space. And so, and there was a lot of fun and there was a lot of support and a lot of laughter. And so it was that made it enjoyable. Well, and this was the cohort that started pre COVID and then we experienced COVID happening together.

Um, as a cohort, I'm curious how that has impacted this experience for you of learning, how to coach during this very different time, you know, that we've all been going through and that our clients have been going through as you've been coaching with people as that had, you know, a certain kind of impact that you can describe.

Yeah, I think in two ways, one is that we had the community and we had the regularity of meeting every week. And, and I jumped in big because of my professional development award. Like when I signed up for training, I like soup to nuts. I signed up for every class. Right. So there were times when I had two classes a week, um, there was a little bit of overlap, so I think.

It provided all of us, some stability to see some familiar faces. Um, and as we were practicing the act of coaching, we were able to use that time to actually process some of the things that we were experiencing ourselves through COVID. So it was very, it was very useful, very cathartic, I think, in that way.

Um, so that was one thing I think that, that were related to the pandemic. The other piece is that. Most of us, I think who are doing this as a side hustle, intend to do it on zoom or some other platform. And all of a sudden here's a situation where interacting on zoom has become normalized and, and the world understands it now.

And they understand this opportunity that can happen. Um, via this technology. And I think that was also really helpful, um, or there's sort of a serendipitous perk, um, that we experienced. Like we're not going to have to explain to people what this is or how to click it or that it's really going to be okay.

Um, so I think that was also kind of cool. Yeah. I had not really thought of that, but I think you're absolutely right. Like there was such a quick learning curve with video conferencing platforms in general. Um, and I think zoom, you know, for many people has become just a huge part of their daily life.

Like it's a very normalized part of their professional work now. Yeah. Yeah. I'm curious, Rebecca, what, some of your favorite things are about coaching so far? What are the things that really draw you in to this practice and that you've just really come to enjoy?

Yeah. Again, a couple of things. One, I am a. A Deek follower of all things. Self-help. So one of the things that I've really come to enjoy is that, um, instead of sort of reading some of those books, you know, in secret under the bed with the flashlight, I feel like now I have a. A professional reason to read it.

And I'm looking to see if there's anything in there that will help my clients. And if there's anything in there I can make a tool about that will help my clients. And so it's, it's legitimize this guilty pleasure that's always been there. Um, so I think that's definitely a favorite thing. Uh, But the powerful questions and how I've been able to use those, like every day in multiple situations, um, has also been definitely a powerful, uh, favorite thing.

And that was the hardest piece, I think, for all of us to learn, uh, because the tool is, is the tool. It's a strategy it's kind of written out, you know, what you're supposed to do with it. And the questions, you know, you have to develop on the fly. Um, but that's the piece that's probably the most transformative, um, and translates into so many other situations.

So it's a favorite now. So this is an area of coach training that I think is sometimes challenging for people. And that is the spontaneity of the coaching itself, but you don't always know the topic that the client is coming in with and you have to be. Kind of working with them in the moment to figure out what's the next question.

What's the tool you want to use? How has that been for you to navigate that kind of spontaneous space of coaching? I think that probably relates to my beginning anxiety, which we've never talked about. So I don't know if you had any clue how nervous I was for the first, probably three or four weeks, but, but by the end of, I don't know which class with most of that first cohort in tact, I was being my irreverent self on the chats in whatever, and realized that that is my coaching style and that I could bring that to coaching.

So we were talking about that question of what happens if you don't know the right powerful question. I, all of a sudden felt empowered to just say. I'm stumped. Hang on. Let me ask you that. Let me, let me think about what the next question should be. Um, or ask them what the next, the client, what the next question should be.

And so once I, I felt like a member of the, of the policy and then I felt like, yeah, it's okay. To, just to just name it. I don't know what to do next. Yeah. What are your favorite or who are your favorite? I should say clients to work with Rebecca. Who are you really drawn to? What is your ideal client look like?

Well, I thought it was going to be students and I still love to work with students. Um, but it has become faculty, uh, usually women, uh, who are. Really navigating again, that Bermuda triangle, uh, their values around teaching research and service and making sure that the right one of those things is prioritized and privileged in terms of time and, and energy and resources.

Um, and so anybody who's really looking for that alignment and of course in the life of a faculty member that alignment can shift, not just annually, but even by semester. And so it's sort of a constant struggle. So I've really enjoyed, um, working with clients who are really interested in kind of teasing that out.

So one of the other questions that I often get is like, well, how do you find your clients? There? People are very concerned that they're going to be trained as a coach, and then they want to know how to find clients. Can you talk about that process of just how you have put this news out into the world?

You know, that you're doing this work and how clients have been coming your way. The community itself on prolific and otherwise. So once everybody knows you're in the coaching cohort, I think there's kind of a general awareness and we're all from so many different institutions across, you know, across the world.

Um, so we make referrals to each other constantly, um, and we all have each other's websites at the ready. So I think there's a lot of cross-referral going on. Um, and I also just. That not begged, but I, I put it out to all of my, my colleagues at other institutions. I don't coach anybody at my institution, uh, just to maintain, uh, a nice, clear conflict of interest boundary.

Um, but, but at conferences before COVID, I'd say, Hey, I'm doing this thing. Um, would you, would you be able to refer us? And I got an overwhelmingly positive response from that. Um, That they'd be happy to refer. And so it hasn't been that difficult, um, sustaining. It is probably where I need to grow next. So when I cast the net, the net comes back with client fish.

Um, but sometimes I don't cast the net as regularly as I should. yeah. The timing of that can be kind of challenging because it's hard to know. If a client is going to re up with another package, or if you're going to have an open slot, like I I've found that challenging and I've been coaching, you know, for quite some time I find that difficult to juggle.

Yeah. So there've been some times where I'm not like a week or two will go by and there's not client. Um, but that's actually been useful in it's one way, because one of the biggest surprises for me was how much I enjoy the process and that I miss it dearly. If I'm not. Able to do it every week.

So you've mentioned a few ways, Rebecca, that you were kind of nervous or anxious coming into this process. And yet you I've come out the other side with more confidence, you know, when you're in your coaching abilities and in your identity as a coach, what really helped you to build that confidence?

Whether it was things within the coach training program or outside the coach training program. What has really helped you to step into that identity in a way that that helps you to feel more secure?

Two things. I think the practice sessions that were embedded in the training, as well as the hours that we were accumulating while we were in training. So practice, practice, practice, and, you know, I had 10 years of piano lessons, so I, you know, for practice, practice, get, get the timer out, I'm going to go.

Um, so I think that was probably the biggest thing. Um, But in, but paired with that practice, there was such an ease about it. There was it. We started truly at baby-steps and built and built and built, um, so that it never felt there was always learned at the beginning. Jitters. But there was never actual like stage fright.

No one was, I don't think anybody was in a cold sweat or anything, you know, crazy. Um, because we did start off kind of dipping our toe in the water and then our whole foot and. You know, both feet, et cetera. Um, so I think that was super helpful. The other thing that was helpful was the observation times with you, um, where we'd sit with the recording, um, and the, I think your style and the way that you handle the PR giving the feedback and the way you view the, the observation sessions.

Um, I think that w that made it easy or. To practice and to feel comfortable gaining the skills and the confidence. I'm glad to hear that. That's good. Yeah. Yeah. I know Rebecca that you are a learner, as we talked about and a researcher, a curious person, and I'm, I'm wondering if there are things about coaching that as you get kind of deeper into the practice, as you get deeper into thinking about this as a craft, Areas that you're still wanting to explore and kind of go more deep into either with your reading or other forms of practice.

What are the areas that are kind of next on your agenda as you're wrapping up training and in this kind of official way and going out on your own and maybe learning some things on the side,

two things that are. Not maybe as connected as, um, very different, but two things. One is the sematic coaching and the, and the breathing. I think that's something that I could do more of personally, and that would help. Um, and. That's a stretch for me. I don't consider myself to be very woo I'm very concrete.

Um, and so that's, that's kind of a little bit in the mystical side and, you know, light a candle and all of those things, but I, I do see that that is super useful. Um, and so I want to be able to provide that. So that's definitely an area. I've got a bunch of books tagged on my list. Um, and, and then group coaching.

I want to know more about how to lead those interactions and, and to be working in that space. Now, Rebecca, you mentioned earlier too, this idea of the side hustle and you are one of many people who've come through the program who have full-time jobs, um, as you're kind of thinking about coaching, and I'm curious for you to talk about just how coaching and the skills of coaching have maybe come into the full-time work that you do.

Are there ways that you use coaching outside of working with clients? Um, and you know, are these skills something that you found to be transferable into other forms of your professional life? Yeah, a hundred percent. Um, I've noticed it. Um, I'm, co-chairing a committee with a colleague and I've noticed that if I open the meeting a certain way with questions, um, because we're gathering feedback about, uh, it's pretty specific where redrafting the, our promotion and tenure criteria.

And so the committee gives the feedback. Um, on the drafts. And so the way that I frame those questions has become really important. Um, and it can either hinder the work of the committee by stagnating it, or it can really be useful transformative, um, productive and tell us exactly where we need to go next.

Um, so that's like a pretty concrete example of, of that. Um, Just again, the art of the powerful question. We know that once the full draft goes to the whole faculty, I'm kind of harping on this specific example, but we know that there's some sticky places, right. And, and we know from many experiences in many committee meetings that that faculty are going to get hung up on details.

So being able to frame those conversations with powerful questions, instead of just, what do you think. Because, what do you think we're going to get into an argument about how many peer reviewed products should one have to become an associate professor? The question I'm asking and I've got them all scripted for the conversation, of course, is, uh, what faculty development would support you in achieving these outcomes.

Um, what would it be like? How, how do these align with your values as effect? Right. So we're, we're not gonna, so it definitely does, but you know, whether it's the husband, the kids, uh, chatting with a colleague on a walk or a zoom call, I use them all the time. Yeah. I remember a couple of weeks ago, a really dear colleague, um, was frustrated and I just texted her like 10 powerful questions that she could ask her supervisor.

She was just like, okay, that's really good. Thanks. Oh, the uses, they are endless of these questions. One, I know Rebecca that you have also thought. Really carefully and deeply about the uses of coaching and teaching and learning environments. And because you were originally coming into the program, thinking you were working with students, um, you know, this was an area that you were really thinking about.

I'm just curious if you have any thoughts on that for people who are thinking about potentially using this with undergrad or graduate students, um, what is this, you know, led you to think about that in terms of the role of coaching within those environments?

I love this question because I've been, and I'll ramble because I've been thinking about how to articulate this. I think I have a fantastic experience as a grad student in a seminar, very tight, small seminar. And within a couple of weeks, we realized that there were only two questions she was ever going to ask us about the reading.

And that was what's your favorite part? And what part did you disagree with? And of course why, and I think as academics. W we want a question that, you know, is so layered and has 500 words in it that by the time you get to the end of it, you don't really even remember what the question was. And I've seen that I've seen that in seminars and forums and, um, and these were the most rich discussions probably in all of grad school from these two very simple questions.

Um, and so. I have been able to think about how I ask questions to my undergrads in a much different way, um, to solicit really honestly, better discussions. And it's almost counterintuitive. Um, because I make sure that the question is more manageable. It's bite sized. It's, it's more clear, um, all of those things.

Um, but I now, um, also have homework sessions with my students every week. And so we work together much like a traditional writing sprint that a faculty member would do. We work together. And at the end of that, there's always a powerful question. Uh, or two, um, and I'm trying to help them become better, better learners.

And so those questions are generally focused on, okay. Today we did a 45 minute sprint instead of two 25 minute Pomodoros. What were the differences? What do you need? You know, how are you going to make those decisions for yourself in the future? Um, but I'll also ask them, what are you giving yourself, grace over guilt about this week?

Um, and they, they have really responded well to that. Um, and so I feel closer to them. Um, there's all kinds of interesting things. They. They report back, um, that they are, they feel connected to me. So it's helping, especially in an online setting, it's really helping to build an online community much more quickly.

Um, and no boundaries are being crossed, right. Because you think about coaching in this private space. And, um, but I asked the questions really around their academics. Yeah. I love that example. That's so cool. Rebecca. What is next for you when it comes to your coaching journey? As you're wrapping up coach training, what does this look like for you in the next couple of years?

Maybe as you're thinking about coaching? Well, I. Bravely added up all my hours and I am about halfway. And so in the very immediate future, it's going to be accumulating the remainder of the hours, um, to become ACC certified. Um, but I really just want to expand my client base, um, and offer some group programs.

Um, so that's probably what I'm going to be focusing on as well as, you know, deepening my own learning about the practice, keeping up with cohort one. Um, yeah, I always feel like they're like half a block ahead of me on a run and I'm like, I'm coming, I'm coming. So it's been a great energetic group. Um, and so, yeah.

Yeah, there is a lot of energy in that cohort. That's a great way. Great way to describe it. Is there anything else, Rebecca, that you want to share about what this journey has been like for you to come through coach training and to step into this role as a coach?

I would, yeah, of course. I would say that I learned how to trust myself through this process in a way that I did not expect. Um, but that has been incredibly meaningful for me. Um, both personally and professionally. I love this idea of trusting yourself through part of the process. That's so good to hear.

Yeah. And I haven't done radical self-trust, which I haven't, I haven't, that's also on my list. Of course, what am I going to do next? Um, but, but it, it, it, I did grow in that way. Um, and that's been fantastic. That's awesome. Lauren, Becca, I want to thank you so much for being part of this cohort for coming on the show, sharing about your experience of coach training, and it has been such a pleasure to work with you over this past year plus.

Well, the same of course, Katie. Thanks for having me. Yeah. Thank you 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 thanks for listening.