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**SPEAKERS**

Jo Wheatley, Zoe Hawkins

**Zoe Hawkins** 00:03

The Coaching Crowd podcast is for compassionate courageous leaders, HR professionals and high achievers, people who are passionate about helping others to find alignment in their lives through coaching, and do a thinking of training and developing as a coach. Hello, and welcome to the coaching crab podcast with me, Zoe Hawkins and my friend and co host, Joe

**Jo Wheatley** 00:25

Wheatley. Hi, everybody. Today we are talking about the topic of facilitating client growth. And the reason that we're talking about this is that coaching is all about facilitating client growth. So much so that it is one of the core coaching competencies, certainly for the ICF. And it is covered in the core competency frameworks of the other coaching bodies. So we thought it deserved a podcast of its own.

**Zoe Hawkins** 00:50

Absolutely. And I think one of the things that's worth mentioning at the front end around growth and facilitating growth and progress. This isn't just at the end of a coaching conversation thing. So obviously, in a traditional looking coaching conversation, you get to the end of a coaching discussion, and you start to think about what are the actions and commitments that your client can take forward. And you'll you would support your client in in being able to do that and think about what it is they want to commit to. But progress and growth, for us is a continual process throughout both a single coaching conversation, and a coaching relationship. And I think that's just important to notice. Because if you save all of your facilitation of progress and growth to the end, you're actually not necessarily fully supporting your client to notice all the different places that they are making progress and being able to connect him with that.

**Jo Wheatley** 01:44

And sometimes it can feel like a lot of pressure for the client content at the end of a conversation if you're bombarding them with questions about it. And especially if you've got a client that is a reflector, whereas if you embed questions, just more naturally in the conversation as you go through, I think it's often easier for the client to kind of just do it have a little realisation that oh, yeah, actually, I am making progress. Oh, this feels good. Yep, let's keep going. You know, I can do this. It does help to build that momentum.

**Zoe Hawkins** 02:11

Yeah. One of the questions I really like to ask my clients throughout a coaching conversation, is that what are you learning so far? Or what are you taking away so far, that's valuable here. And that does a couple of things. Like for me, it creates a pause in the coaching conversation to be able to make sure I'm still in alignment with my client. So I'm sure you've had it before Jo, where you'll be working with clients. And obviously, you've got a clear goal from the outset. And then you open it up to discussion, and you get like five or six, you know, different avenues that you could go down to support your client. And the danger often is that the coach makes the decision around which of those avenues would be most valuable. Whereas I think when you check in with your client around, you know, I hear you've got this goal, and I, I hear you've shared all these different things like, what's been valuable so far for you here, there'll be able to tell you, and that is going to help you to co create where you go next in the conversation. I think for new coaches, it stops a new coach getting overwhelmed with all of the information that's coming in and feeling that sense of responsibility to need to support your client in the right way. So when you when you're checking in with your client, you are building rapport, and you're co creating that relationship and making sure that that responsibility for the progress is firmly in the hands of the client, you are there to be able to facilitate that.

**Jo Wheatley** 03:37

And that comes through the forms of questions that that would be categorised as presuppositions. So when you ask a client, you know, what have you learned here? The assumptions a presupposition is an assumption that's embedded into a question. So what have you learned here? The client has to accept they've learned something in order to be able to, to answer that question, or they might choose to reject it, but they have to at least consider that as part of the process. And you know, sometimes when clients come to coaching, they will say, I want you to hold me accountable for X, Y, and Zed. And you'll see some coaches that are accountability coaches, but if your approach to coaching is more that the client is responsible for their results, asking these questions are like, how will you hold yourself accountable for the progress that you make? Is again, it's just, you know, keeping in the front of the clients mind? Yeah, I actually need to do something, you know, as a result of these conversations, or recognising the progress they are making in the shift in their thinking or their feelings, you know, or the decisions that they're making about actions they're going to take afterwards, which can be significant progress for them.

**Zoe Hawkins** 04:46

I mean, one of the things that we often talk about on the the programmes that we facilitate is how your own need for progress can come in to the coaching space, and this comes up is supervision a lot. So we will hear coaches come to supervision and share perhaps some of their secret frustration that the client isn't making progress or their concern or worry that they aren't facilitating the progress and the client isn't getting the results that they would want to have. And there is this line between how much of that need for progress is your own. As a coach, you know, do you are you kind of hooked on the aha moments and you know, the big leaps that client makes. And then when you come with a client who looks like they're taking small steps? Well, they may be small steps from your judgement, but they might be giant leaps for the client. So supervision is a space to really calibrate. Like, how is the progress showing up for the client in the session? So you know, what does the client need in terms of progress and, and what is happening for yourself and your own need for achievement?

**Jo Wheatley** 05:59

I think sometimes coaches can not ask questions about progress because of a fear that the client won't be able to identify any progress and, and then the thought of the, you know, the feelings or that the change in the rapport that might occur as a result of it. So if you're a coach, and you're listening in to the podcast, encourage you to think about how do you feel when you think about supporting the client by asking them about the progress that they're making? And, you know, how would you respond if the client said, I don't really think I've made any progress yet? How do you hold yourself into that grounded position of as we often say, That's information, you can just gently start by saying to them, tell me more about that. What's getting in the way for you here? What would you need to believe in order to be able to either make progress or even identify progress, perhaps, depending on what you what you've learned about the client so far? And if you think oh, yeah, how are you isolate a question? Yeah, I definitely asked my clients about progress, maybe just stop and jot down six questions that you ask about clients progress and see and see, if you can, you know, get to that list? Should we share a few so that we, you know, might ask you, you shared a couple already, but should we share it?

**Zoe Hawkins** 07:14

Yeah, I think it's really energising to be able to ask your clients about their pride, you know, and their and their gratitude, even for the progress that they're making. And I think that can look like, you know, what are you proud of, particularly as we've been working together on on these goals? Or what are you particularly proud of in this session? What are you celebrating, you know, as you work towards your goals, and that might be quite challenging for the client to answer. They're not used to celebrating progress. Many people are used to celebrating the end results. And we can talk a lot about that, actually. But you know, that can create a bit of a deficit of motivation, because if you're hooked on, you know, the result, the progress can feel actually really challenging. So I think that can be really useful.

**Jo Wheatley** 08:00

The ICF, like, caters to differentiate between the progress that the clients making about their learning about themselves, and also about the situation. So when it comes to asking clients questions about their progress, it can be, what have you learned about yourself? Or what are you learning about yourself? And what are you learning about your situation? To help them kind of differentiate between the two and see if there is a relationship between those, for example,

**Zoe Hawkins** 08:29

I think the piece around what are you learning about yourself, also helps to tap into those themes and trends and can almost string all of your coaching sessions together, as the client is able to lean into some of the underlying things that may be coming up when each of the individual goals in the sessions may seem unrelated? So I think that's a great question. And obviously, for us anyway, coaching is about igniting that inner coach, enabling the client to get to a point where they can be self sufficient beyond coaching, even for a while in between periods where they get to embed what they've learned, and I think learning about yourself is it goes further than achieving your goal. You know, those are skills and strategies and awareness and insight that you can take to any goal that you apply. So I think that that particular question I really like from the ICF around what are you learning about yourself? I think it's absolutely critical for us as coaches, to help our clients to connect in with that,

**Jo Wheatley** 09:29

and you could ask questions about the relationship that you have with your clients. So, you know, how are we doing together? How are we progressing together in our relationship as coaching client, you know, that can be so important to be able to build on and to hold transparent and explore together so that they can get the most out of the sessions ahead and be able to make even more progress or accelerate their progress, and also to help them consider their relationships with other people. And what does progress look like in your relationships with others? I think another good question can be, you know, how will you feel when you make progress? You know, how do you tend to feel when you're making progress? And how are you feeling right now? Just to hold that comparison? And also to see, is there any blockers that might actually be connected to progress for the individual? What

**Zoe Hawkins** 10:25

is interesting, you talk about feelings, there's what I was thinking about bringing up that accident. And feelings themselves can be progress, you know, so as the coach, you need to be aware of like, what does progress look like? Because progress isn't always about doing stuff. And I think we can get hooked on that, as coaches of like, all my clients been able to, you know, achieve the promotion or you know, whatever it might be as an outcome. But feelings can be progress, I feel lighter, I feel more energised, I feel more free. Thus, progress, you know, changes in beliefs can be progress, it awareness of values, progress, you know, there is so much progress to be had in the coaching session. But as Joe said, like, clients may have blocks around being able to see what their progress is. So if you're in that situation where your client says, Well, I'm not sure I've made any progress, really, that doesn't mean that you're a terrible coach, it may mean that the client is struggling to connect in with the progress that they are making. And that's when you can facilitate, you know, a range of these questions. Well, how are you feeling at the start of the coaching? Compared to how are you feeling now? You What do you notice about that? You're there's lots of different doorways to be able to explore progress.

**Jo Wheatley** 11:42

And as you're sharing that, I was noticing the language that you and I have, are fairly visual. So you know, we, you might ask your client, you know, what progress Can you see yourself having made so far? Well, if your client is not a visual thinker, that question might not even make sense and like not land at all. So making sure that as the coach, you're adapting your language around exploring this area to match your client's language is really, really important.

**Zoe Hawkins** 12:07

Yeah. And coming back to what we said before around achievement. So I think I would have been the client who would struggle to have been able to see progress. So that would have been a block for me, because I have this value of achievement is a strong driver of mine, and achievement, for me what used to be the finished article. And so when you think about facilitating progress conversations with your clients, you can also sometimes discover new insight and awareness, just through facilitating progress, which can enhance the progress that the client makes again, you know, so it's a valuable part of the coaching conversation, not only to help your client to connect in to the, you know, the value that they're getting from the coaching, but it's also about raising the, you know, the self awareness and the journey that they're on as a whole.

**Jo Wheatley** 13:01

Figure also can holding space for the discussions or the review of progress at different points in the coaching session. And also overarching programme can help the client to connect into those short, medium and longer term progress markers that they might have, because also at the end of the coaching programme, we're helping our clients to future pace and to think about, okay, you know, where was the beginning? Where am I now? What's more for me to do? What am I motivated to do moving forward? What support do I need? around that? So what is the progress I want to continue to make in this area over the next six months, for example? And what support needs do does the client have in order to help them achieve that, beyond being with the coach, because the coach is not the only support figure or element in the client's life? Hopefully? Yeah,

**Zoe Hawkins** 13:56

I think there's lots of different ways that you can ask about progress and lots of different places where it's valuable in the session. And I think it sits hand in hand with some of the other coaching skills that we talked about on other podcasts. So like, for a client to be able to notice their progress, it takes really good contracting, and good goal setting. And so the other thing to think about, as you're listening to this, and you're thinking, Oh, I don't know, do I? Do I need to help clients to really monitor their their progress? Check in with yourself on how much time are you spending, establishing what progress looks like at the front end of your coaching session? You know, what are the quality of the goals looking like, what's the quality of the contracting? How important is progress to your client? And as you've kind of connected with that, that will almost set the tone for how much of this time that you spend with your client reviewing progress as part of your coaching.

**Jo Wheatley** 14:52

I was just thinking about a question of asking the client, what are your expectations around prayer? progress in our session today. You know, what are your expectations about yourself when you think about making progress? Because I can imagine some clients would say, Yeah, well, I set myself really high expectations, you know, and then you've gone from a goal around. I think the example you gave earlier was getting promoted into, actually something that may be is relevant to not only that goal, but but other goals as well. And so that's an example of where these questions around progress can actually unhook new insight for the client in ways that that perhaps client and you didn't imagine it

**Zoe Hawkins** 15:40

brings in that that element of control, doesn't it? So for many clients progress can feel out of their control, because they have such high expectations. And perhaps they're focusing on aspects of achievement that somebody else is actually responsible for. So when you're able to zone in with the client around, what are you in control of in relation to your goal? And how can you celebrate the progress of the things that are in control? That's, that's all achievable within the coaching space. So I think that's a useful reminder, when we're supporting clients with their expectations, and we're supporting clients in the goals and outcomes that they strive for, is to make sure that what you're working on is within the client's control and not something that is out there to chance, I guess,

**Jo Wheatley** 16:29

as I think about the connotations of the word progress, so I'm mulling over in my mind at the moment like progress, what does that mean, if we actually start to break it down, I'm sure somebody out there knows. But what was coming up for me, then, as I was reflecting on that was, Think Progress, for me has a sort of connotation of movement, like moving forwards, and that can feel a bit waited, you know, we talked about responsibility. For some clients, progress is going to be standing still being able to fully connect with who they are, accept their current situation, even that it could be a very strong example of progress. What I'm saying is, it's important to to value and recognise that and then to support the client too, and, and to be aware of what our clients discounting when it comes to their progress. Because we'll often hear that, Oh, yeah. Well, I have made no, I haven't really made progress. Well, I have made some progress. But that but is that example of discounting? So again, the follow up questions that we can ask to our clients, when we start exploring this can be really important. So if you simply say, what are you discounting there with the but Well, it did take a lot of effort to do that. But the reason that I'm discounting it is because really where he wants to be at this stage was there, you know, and so then, you know, where do you go in your conversation with the client? Obviously, that depends, again, on the context what you know of them, but just to just to note, really, that sometimes progress is about stillness. Yeah,

**Zoe Hawkins** 17:56

I think that's a great perspective. So I hope what we've shared with you today as ignited some thoughts on your own progress and how you're progressing as a coach or if you're an aspiring coach, you know some of the progress that you're making with the with the skills and the passion that you have for this topic. If you're enjoying these podcasts, please rate and review the podcast it always is really exciting for Joe and I to be able to read your reviews it gives us inspiration for future episodes.

**Jo Wheatley** 18:24

And if you're interested in some of the emotional elements that we brought in today's podcast, you might want to check out our emotions coaching practitioner training that you can visit at IG company.co.uk forward slash emotions coaching.

**Zoe Hawkins** 18:43

Thank you for listening to the coaching crowd podcast with Zoe Hawkins and Jo Wheatley. We'd love for you to join our inclusive community to learn and grow in the coaching space.

**Jo Wheatley** 18:51

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