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**SPEAKERS**

Zoe Hawkins, Jo Wheatley

**Jo Wheatley** 00:03

The Coaching Crowd podcast is for compassionate courageous leaders, HR professionals and high achievers,

**Zoe Hawkins** 00:10

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 crowd podcast with me Zoe Hawkins and my friends and co host Jo Wheatley.

**Jo Wheatley** 00:26

Hi, everybody. Today, we've got a really interesting thing to discuss, which is the question that came up in a group supervision I was facilitating recently. And the question is, how do I know if my coaching is valuable? So we're going to explore that today. As you know, we never script these conversations. So you are hearing the conversation fresh as we explore that between us?

**Zoe Hawkins** 00:48

It's such a great inquiry, isn't it? How do I know if my coaching is valuable? Because I think that thought has gone through every coach's mind, as they've been coaching clients. And I mean, the obvious one that comes to my mind is to ask your client, you know, I think when you are looking at your client, and you're calibrating, is this, is this valuable? Is this not? Is my coaching getting any is my coachee getting any insight? Are we going down the right path? Have I gone off somewhere here? Then you ask your client? Can we just pause the moment? Is this valuable? Or what's valuable about this exploration for you? What are you taking away so far? So I think sometimes we can be guilty as coaches of trying to do all of the work, and trying to work out all of these things, when actually, your client is there, they are the most resourceful person in the room. And so therefore, we can hand those inquiries over to our clients and hear what they have to say about it. I

**Jo Wheatley** 01:47

think the exploration starts right from the chemistry conversation. And inquiring with the client around what value do you need to get from the coaching? How will you know that, that you have received that value? So if this is a doubt that you have in your mind, I think there's a question around, does this inquiry come up in relation to coaching one particular client? Or does it come up for you regularly? When you're coaching all clients? In all conversations? Is it an inquiry that comes up in all relationships in your life? So not only with your coaching clients? Because the answer to that question may lead you down different pathways. So if it is only coming up in relation to coaching a particular client, then you might want to explore the dynamic in that relationship between you and your client. If it's about your coaching, you might want to explore some of your beliefs about your identity as a coach your role as a coach. And if it is broader than that, then you might want to do some work separately, with a coach on those things. And what when we look at the question, How do I know if my coaching is valuable? I think we can kind of pull that question the words in the question apart. So we could you know, as a supervisor, I can ask questions like, what does it mean to know? What what does that even mean that we know something? Is it? Is it for the coach for you as a coach? Is that something you experience physiologically? That's like an anchor to you of like, Yes, I know, I believe in this I'm centred around it, or is it a different thing for you? What does value mean to you? And what does value mean to your client? And what does that mean for the way that the two of you work together? And is this about you feeling it's a valuable use of your time that you are doing that? Or is it for the clients experience of it, and we know that there may be value that the client experiences in the session, and lots of clients will actually almost collect and see the evidence of the value of the coaching in between sessions, and for some clients, the full value is not really experienced, you know, until six months, 12 months, two years, three years down the line? And so how will you measure or even value that value? If we want to take it that way?

**Zoe Hawkins** 01:58

How much value is enough value? You know, like and how much is enough value for you, as the coach and how much is enough value for the client. Those two things might be misaligned. And as you said, like I do see a lot of coaches hunting value that is already there that is perhaps unseen or misunderstood. Sometimes the smallest steps that clients take for them are giant leaps. And I think the more we coach and the more experience we have of seeing transformations within clients, the greater our expectations become. So if we've worked with clients in a very deep way Helping them to recognise beliefs that are no longer serving them and kind of moving well beyond, you know, old scripts that they've carried. And then you work with a client whose first step, is it No, to say no. You know, you can start to think, Oh, that's great that they took that step. But they could, they could be all the way over here. And that client perhaps isn't ready to be all the way down that road because they're still up this end. And it's really important as practitioners that we learn to keep pace with our clients. And it's great that we have high expectations for them. And we are cheerleading them behind the scenes, but we can't get ahead of where our clients are, because then they can pick up on their energy of feeling like a failure, or perhaps they feel like they're letting you down as the coach, and none of that may be expressed, but it might be felt. And so as you've said, there, Jo, in the early stages, the contracting part of what does value look like for you? What does value look like and feel like for you? How will we know that you're getting value from this conversation? Those are really important parts of contracting.

**Jo Wheatley** 06:07

I've had really interesting conversations with coaches in supervision that I'm facilitating about how this question changes when they move from coaching pro bono clients into charging for their services. And that's often a point in time at which there is this kind of compulsion or doubt or extra expectation. And I think sometimes it's worth exploring as well around, are you going too fast in your coaching, so you're not creating those opportunities, those pockets of time for the client to connect with the value that they're experiencing from the conversation, the new insights that they're gaining? Is it a case that the session is being too driven by you as the coach rather than it being co created. And so the driver for value is because actually, there's more of a dynamic of do too rather than do with, not intentionally, but sometimes that can come from anxiety, as a new coach, for example, starting out and wanting to almost get quick wins, it's a bit like when you start a new job in the workplace, and everybody's I get some quick wins, you know, gets some small things. And I think some of that can creep into it. And so actually, really, almost taking a step back, checking out the pace, taking time, giving space for the inquiries, asking questions like, what would be the most valuable thing for us to do next in this session today? And asking it in a gentle pace? And I know we've talked or mentioned several times in previous podcasts about ego. Is this question coming from ego? If not, where is the question coming from? What part of you is bringing that inquiry?

**Zoe Hawkins** 07:51

And then, you know, to flip all of this on its head, is that doubt even yours? If you start to, you know, pick it like that the doubts that you have of the client getting the value, is that actually coming from the client, into into you as the practitioner? Or is the client having doubts about their own worth and value within the situation that they are exploring with you. So there may be some transference, you know, or parallel process going on. And you don't know what these terms are, they're just a psycho dynamics that take place between coach and coachee, or coach and supervisor that helped to explore and open up the different, unexplored perspectives within a coaching relationship. And this is where supervision can take you into, you know, quite deep exploration around Yes, actually, am I familiar with this sense of value? Or is that that actually not mine? And if it is coming from my coachee, what does that? How is that useful? You know, how can I use that to best serve my client? How might I check that out? With my client? Do I even check that out with my client? These are other questions and explorations that you might you might reflect upon?

**Jo Wheatley** 09:05

Is it okay for you as a coach, to accept that the work that you're doing is valuable?

**Zoe Hawkins** 09:13

Or not valuable? Which is something else? Isn't it? Like? Is it okay for you to have a coaching session? That hasn't been valuable for the client? Because there will be situations where that happens. And how do you sit with that? To recognise it is great, because then you can inquire into, do I need to do something about that? What might I have done differently? Do I need to address that with my client or don't I? But to be able to accept that some sessions may not be valuable is the starting point for being able to open up the learning if you resist, that the session may not be valuable in the first place, then the learning isn't available to you. So there's a whole dynamic there.

**Jo Wheatley** 09:59

Yeah, it can be a real milestone and actually an essential part of the coaching engagement to have had that point and that realisation. So if you are courageous enough to lean in and inquire into that with your client and your client feel safe to be able to be honest with you about the experience, then you can start to understand some of the root causes of that, and what that means for how you work together moving forwards, and it can actually really, really deepen the rapport in the relationship, which then can create the space to add even more value into what the client can, you know, can get out of the coaching relationship. So I think, hopefully, what we're doing in our discussion is also normalising this question, it is a normal question to ask ourselves, I think people that are drawn to coaching tend to be mission led, we want to be able to support the individual client, we're also I think, mindful of our broader contribution into the world and the value that we're bringing, wanting to, you know, we often talk about creating a positive legacy, but basically, to leave the world in a better way, in some way. And so that sometimes may show up as a pressure that you experience to be adding that value. So doing work on yourself, you know, we talked about the money mindset earlier on, and that that can be a trigger points for the value can think of any other trigger points. So for this question, showing up, probably when

**Zoe Hawkins** 11:31

you work with clients that feel more challenging than other clients, so I would experience that as you work with a certain type of client and the coaching is going really well. And then you come across a client, and it doesn't go in the same way as you have expected the previous clients to go to, because we're all different, aren't we humans are beautifully unique. And so clients will come to coaching in all different shapes and sizes, and it's for us to obviously, work with the client to get the best from them and be flexible. But sometimes when a client arrives, perhaps it's in corporate coaching, where there's less of a chemistry matching process that happens, but they are one coachee that's perhaps been assigned to you as a practitioner. And where you might struggle to, I don't know, build the connection that you may have had in previous clients, or you're working with a client and you feel that the conversation is jarring. I think that can be a trigger for questioning. Am I good enough here? Like is this me? Or you may project onto the client that they are a difficult client. And what we would say is there are there aren't really difficult clients, it's really about the relationship and the dynamics between you and understanding what is happening, but I think different clients can definitely raise different questions in your own mind about your ability to be a great coach in that moment for them.

**Jo Wheatley** 12:53

Yeah, it's an interesting one, when you're talking about being a corporate. So if you're a coach that has been used to coaching people that are contracting with you, as an as a private individual, and then you get invited to work with an organisation and coach, an individual in an organisation or a number of individuals in the organisation, and all of a sudden, you may almost experience that, as you know, a big set of eyes, you know, overlooking everything that you're doing? And then you can start to get confused with am I working here with my clients agenda? Or is it the organization's agenda? So those questions again, in the early days around? How will the return on investment in the coaching be evaluated? And I think when you go through the ICF accreditation process when you need to submit recordings for that, actually, the feedback is that the client is responsible for the outcome. So if even if in that conversation, their client hasn't made a huge shift, that doesn't mean that the coaching hasn't been valuable that you haven't demonstrated those core coaching competencies. And so I think the messages that you get from the accrediting bodies can also influence how you as a coach, interpret or answer this question of how do I know if my coaching is valuable, and maybe the real people to judge whether the coaching has been valuable or not? A neither you as the coach nor the coachee. But actually the other stakeholders in the coaching

**Zoe Hawkins** 14:21

now, which was where mine, my mind was just going then when you work in organisations, there are other stakeholders aren't there? And I think what we're saying, overall, as you start with the end in mind, whether that be with sponsors within an organisation, or with an individual client, start by talking about value, but what does that look like? What can you be, how can you calibrate together if the coaching is valuable and stay open to learning as a practitioner, if you're sensing and feeling that the teaching isn't valuable, and your client shares actually, you know what, that wasn't as valuable as before? What do you want to do with that? You know, how do you want to use out to become an even better coach and practitioner.

**Jo Wheatley** 15:03

So I've really enjoyed this discussion. I hope those of you listening you can decide for yourself how valuable the conversation is to you in the moment in the coaching you're doing and broader than that. And if you're interested in connecting with us on any of our programmes, you can visit our website IGcompany.co.uk.

**Zoe Hawkins** 15:26

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. Go over to Facebook and search for the coaching crowd to be in good company with other aspiring coaches.