CC91 final edit

Mon, May 29, 2023 5:48AM • 19:59

**SUMMARY KEYWORDS**

decision, client, coaching, decision making, coach, values, situation, beliefs, helping, connect, strengths, approach, thinking, honour, emotions, resourceful, reflecting, feel, faced, talking

**SPEAKERS**

Zoe Hawkins, Jo Wheatley

**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 cloud podcast with me Zoe Hawkins and my friend and co host, Jo Wheatley.

**Jo Wheatley** 00:26

Hi everybody. Welcome to today's podcast is about how do you coach your client on the topic of decision making. And the reason that we're covering this is because all coaching involves decision making on behalf of the coachee. And that can start right from deciding who they want to be as their coach, it can be around deciding how do they need their coach to be with them? What topics are they going to bring to coaching? And then of course, when they've decided on the topic, they're going to need to make decisions about the actions that they take based on their reflections. So coaching is all about decision making. So where should we start? Sorry.

**Zoe Hawkins** 01:10

I think we start at the beginning of decisions, which is probably the reason your clients bring something to coaching, where a decision is involved is because they're struggling to make the decision. And often when we look at decision making, the way that we would approach that in everyday life is to think about the pros and the cons. And you talk about what if I was to do this, and then that would happen. And if I was to do that, and this would happen in you think, the 360 around the decision. And so often, when a client comes to coaching with the topic of I have a decision to make, because if we start with that one, you need a different approach, because the client has probably spent an awful lot of time thinking about this decision already. And they're unable to make it. And so therefore, that is why they're bringing it to coaching in the first place. So as a coach, whilst you could explore pros and cons and look at the different end game scenarios, it's more likely what your coaching needs from you is support and looking at things like their values and their beliefs and their emotions, and what are the obstacles essentially, that are in the way of them being able to make the decision. So I think a good starting point for me as a coach would be to explore what's getting in the way of you being able to make this decision and starting to identify the gap. And that might be a confidence gap around, I just don't feel confident to make the decision, it might be a knowledge gap, I don't have the knowledge to make this decision. Or it might be an emotion, like overwhelm or confusion, you know, so starting to understand what is in the way of my client being able to actually make this decision, I think is a great exploration to do with your client in the front end.

**Jo Wheatley** 02:59

I think taking a strengths based approach as well like the, you know, clients that we work with are intelligent and resourceful, and all of those things. And sometimes they can feel disconnected from that, when they're in these these situations, and they bring it to coaching. So inquiring with them around, you know, can you think about a time when you've made a decision? You know, well, what was it that was present at that time that enabled you to make the decision in that way? How can you connect with those things or recreate those things, as you think about the current decision that you're making, and again, you may be back into the gap, you know, what is what is different? What do they need, and helping them to identify those needs, I think decisions are very emotional, there can be a lot of fear at the heart or at the root of decision making, can often tie into an all or nothing approach. Like if I have that, then I don't have that. So it's like, I want this, and I don't want to lose that. And they individuals can find it very difficult to navigate and move away from from that kind of more divisive thinking.

**Zoe Hawkins** 04:07

Exactly right. And of course, some decisions don't always leave a positive outcome, even though the decisions that you want to make. So if you think about supporting a client, perhaps to leave a significant relationship, but that might be a corporate role that they've been in for like 20 years, it might be a romantic relationship that they're bringing. And, you know, working with a coach on the decision, it doesn't mean that making a decision is going to be entirely positive. And that can be a real barrier for clients and being able to move through and make a decision. So some of the work that you might be doing is exploring the emotions related to the decision making, as you said, Jay there about fear, you know, what kind of fear is in the way what are all of the emotions that that client is experiencing in relation to making this decision? And after the decision that is made, what is it that they are anticipating is or isn't going to happen? And maybe how Helping your client with what's on the other side of that decision as well. And you were talking there, Joe about taking a strengths approach. And some clients may not be aware of what their strengths are. So actually starting with, you know, what are your strengths, and how does this decision aligned or not aligned to the strengths that you're having, and helping your client to really raise the awareness of the different qualities that they that they bring to the context of the decision. So for example, if it's choosing a job, maybe they've been offered a job, and they don't know whether to accept it or not doing some work around their strengths, and helping the client to clarify, you know, what are their strengths, and then be able to review the decision in line of that might be a really empowering piece of work for the client to do.

**Jo Wheatley** 05:45

That's the office thing to explore. So, which is what are your beliefs about? Decision Making? Because a lot of coaches might go into what are your beliefs about the thing that they want to make the decision about, but an alternative approach will be to explore that. So if you have noticed, and your client, you know, has noticed, too, that this is, this is actually representing something else? Yes. It's that this week, but next week, it's going to be something else. So what's the root of all this? What's the commonality is a pattern here? Each time that you're asked to make a decision or need to make a decision? Do you go into paralysis? Some people will just make decisions without even thinking about them. And that's a that's a different area of coaching that you might want to do with them. So yeah, what are your beliefs about decision making, you know, what we witnessed, when we're younger, from our parents or our caregivers, or you know, teachers, even around decision making can influence the emotional experience that we have when we are in situations here, and now in the present day around decision making? And so you talked about, like reaching out beyond having made the decision. So connecting him with a future self? I think there's an identity piece for individuals. It's like, who I am now, and who will I be after I've made this decision? And what impact what will it connect me to? And what will it disconnect me from? And of course, we, you know, we do a lot of this drawing on neuro linguistic programming tools and techniques to

**Zoe Hawkins** 07:13

Yeah, what you were mentioning there around caregivers, Jay, I was just reflecting as you were talking about my mom, who's an amazing mom, she's absolutely brilliant. And I remember throughout my childhood, every time there was a decision point, she bought her love and care to that decision, which is, are you sure? Have you considered this? Have you considered that? Do you really want to do that? Is that definitely want you to do, you know, so without her knowing, like place doubt in my mind, because I respected her and I was listening. And so I would often hear, Oh, well, maybe maybe I haven't considered all the options, or maybe I haven't, like, maybe I've don't really want this like, I don't know, now, you know, and so decision decision making. For me, it's been a real journey, because I think for me, it was connected to an element of doubt in in myself. So I would be approached with a decision, usually, I'd have an initial bolt of intuition around what was right for me. And then my inner critic would kick in thinking, Ah, but am I certain Am I sure. And so you can start to identify, as you described there, Joe, like patterns and trends that come through in your client, if you can help them with that can resource them in many areas beyond this one decision that they may be faced with making at that point in time? So there's the beliefs about the decision that you're making? And there will be beliefs about self around? Am I a good decision maker? Am I reckless in my decision making? Can I trust the decisions that I make? And and then you can target your coaching on the real thing that is in the way of that decision making?

**Jo Wheatley** 08:45

There's also maybe some coaching around the idea of right and wrong, you know, because often there's a fear of what if I make the wrong decision that will the wrong decision for who that's often an interesting place to explore? Sometimes it's themselves, but sometimes the answer will be different. And again, stepping back, what does this represent? What's your relationship between right and wrong? Is there anything that exists in that space between those things and right and wrong in relation to what like a timeline or your values? Or, you know, or what is it that can be a very rich and fruitful conversation?

**Zoe Hawkins** 09:19

Yeah, of course, and what is wrong, like we create what is wrong is if we create what is wrong, we can uncreate that, I think what the word is, you know, that we can, we can reframe that, you know, and it's often when we're decision making, we can disregard our resourcefulness. So if we're faced with a crossroads, and we make a decision, and that doesn't work out, sometimes we forget that we are resourceful or our club or our coaches can forget that they are resourceful. So actually, okay, so if you do make a decision, and it turns out to not be the best for you, what are the resources that you hold that will enable you to pivot to change to readjust in light of whatever decision you make? And so that is beyond right and wrong, you know, that's about what can I draw on once I've made this decision to ultimately take me on a path that is going to be helpful and best for

**Jo Wheatley** 10:12

me. And of course, the compass, as we often describe it for our decision making is our values, which we haven't talked about yet. And values are these things that are really important for us to have in our life in order for us to live our best life and to feel fulfilled and complete. And it can give us that sense of inner security and inner peace, when we are living our lives in alignment with our values. Now, not everybody comes to coaching, knowing what their values are, even what that concept is, or they may also have some negativity attached to the concept of values, having encountered them in the workplace where they may or may, the actions in the workplace may or may not be aligned to those, some have very positive connotations. So helping the client to be able to identify what their values are that relates to the decision making, there's a few different angles on this because this idea of right and wrong that we were just talking about, you know, how how do we connect into our resourcefulness? Well, for us, I think we would say it's about always focusing on the learning. And you and I both have a value around learning and growth. And so if we find and when we find ourselves in those situations, we focus on the learning. So actually, a value has been met, even though maybe we didn't get the outcome from the decision that we wanted to achieve. But if we take it back to making the right how do you make the right decision for yourself as doing, knowing what your values are, and then running that decision making all the outcomes through those values and the degree assessing really, the degree to which the decision that the client is thinking of making will honour each of these values?

**Zoe Hawkins** 11:53

Yeah, and often, when you do that, you'll find there's some values conflict, you know, so one decision will honour one value, another decision will often honour another value. And so what that might enable you to do is look at, well, what have you not considered? You know, you're faced with this or this? Or what about that, or that, you know, so the client may have locked in to only two options and disregarded a load of options that may be that may be great for them. And this often happens in the case of like career development, for example, well, I've been offered this job or this job, and I don't know which one to take. Okay, well, what about all the other jobs that exist elsewhere in the world? You know, what about? What about that, and I think this is often aligned, as well as values, bringing in purpose, which is kind of beyond values, like helping a client to really connect into, like, what is your higher purpose here in the world, you know, and it's quite high chunk. And, and that can be hard for a client to connect him with, but what are you here for, you know, what really brings you energy, and sometimes starting at that highest chunk can just take the person out of the decision? And into this, you know, what is the legacy I want to leave in the world type conversation, and then come back from that? And what they might then see is actually, gosh, it's not this decision at all. Actually, this is where I want to be. And maybe that's not now. And maybe that's in a number of years time. But what does that mean, then, for the decision that I'm faced with today? And I think that zoning out piece can be really helpful in, you know, just helping the client to step out of what is feeling like, you know, heavy weighing situation into more of that hysterical kind of thinking, to be able to get more perspective.

**Jo Wheatley** 13:43

Yeah, I think it's like taking them up and out of themselves, but also taking them deep down and in connecting to themselves as well. And that's where the role of the coach can come in. Because as you say, like, we can kind of just end up in our default of it's something that also comes up in terms of a dynamic between coach and coachee, when it comes to decision making is the coach may be pushing the coach, he may be pushing the coach for more of a mentoring approach, like, I don't know what to do, what would you do? What do you think I should do next? What do you think would be the best decision for me right now, we've been working together a long time now. And that invitation and then there is some decision making that the coach has to make and of course, as coaches we are making those, you know, micro decisions throughout a coaching conversation. And so that's about referring to the contract what the client wants to achieve and how can you best be in service of that, whilst also thinking about the rapport between you and the client, what are the dynamics that exist in the relationship, what might you be recreating? You know, between you, what will you be underlining in terms of the clients beliefs, because in that situation, if you to answer it, it may be that that reaffirms the client's belief that they can't make decisions on their own. As an example, I remember

**Zoe Hawkins** 15:08

going to a supervision session once and I can't even remember what I was bringing as the context. But I remember thinking, I really need the reassurance of my supervisor on this. And knowing that that was unusual. So what I came to supervision in the end was like, I've got this situation. And I feel like I need your reassurance on it. And I don't know why I feel I need your reassurance on this, because I don't usually need reassurance. So the topic of our conversation became about the reassurance not actually, the thing I wanted reassurance on. And so you've got to watch out for that. I think as a coach, you know, when your client invites you, as you said, Joe, they're into these spaces is almost in in the moment, what happens in a micro session is you ask yourself a number of reflective questions, to be able to make a snap decision around do I respond to you? And the question is sort of asking are, you know, what's the reason the client is needing my sort of opinion here, what's behind this, and as you said, there, Joe, is that in service of them or not? And of course, that can also trigger in our Slyke. RNA, like helper, like most people come to coaching because they love helping people. And so when we're asked those direct questions, it can be really strong, because we might have a strong opinion on at this point in the coaching relationship about whether a client should or shouldn't make one of those decisions. So it can be a real moment of testing your reflective practice skills as the coach around the route that you take forward when you're faced with those situations.

**Jo Wheatley** 16:44

Yeah, I had an experience outside of coaching, but that's kind of for me is related coaching happened recently. So I asked my mum, her opinion on a parenting issue. So my one of my children, obviously, what my mum's grandchildren expecting her? To give me an answer. I already thought I knew what she would say. But I was still going to ask the question just so I could get confirmation of that. She gave me a different answer. And in such a different way. And it shocked me. But also, I was always interested in that. And I've been reflecting on it since about as you're saying about, but what's the reason that I went for that reassurance? Or I went to get that answer? And then actually, I went along with what the answer that she gave, and then I've been reflecting on, you know, for me as a, as a parent, myself of somebody of an age that I can make those decisions. You know, it's important to remember that if you are kind of seduced into giving your view, your view might change in the future. And so therefore, how does that impact the client whom then may make the decision? Of course, if they make a decision based on what you've said, as the coach, and they then decide that was the wrong decision? And then they come back? And they say, you said, I should do that, and I did it. But this happens. So yeah, I think it's about really our role is about helping our coaching clients, as we know is to connect into their own inner coach, so that they can coach themselves to make the decision that they want to make in that situation in the here and now.

**Zoe Hawkins** 18:17

Yeah, absolutely. And this decision making process that we're sort of talking around today, we've mentioned strengths, we've mentioned identity and motions, values, beliefs, that lots of layers, to helping a client to make decisions is exactly the process that we talk about in our book deciding to coach, it is a book around helping people to make the decision about whether they do or don't want to leave the corporate world to, you know, to become a coach, and obviously, about how you would set up a coaching business. But ultimately, what the book is about, it's about making decisions. And how do you really help somebody to, as you describe their job, go deep inside themselves to work out? What is the right decision for you. So even if you're a coach already, and you're listening to this podcast thinking, gosh, yeah, I hadn't thought about approaching decision making that way. Our book, deciding to coach could be a great resource for you.

**Jo Wheatley** 19:07

We've also had really great feedback from the emotions coaching programme and about how those tools and activities have really helped clients to make decisions and to have an emotional experience that they want to have through that process. So if you're interested in picking up more tools that can support you with decision making and other things. You might want to check out our emotions coaching practitioner programme, which you can find on our website, IG company.co.uk.

**Zoe Hawkins** 19:37

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.