109\_Resolving\_non\_commitment\_final\_edit

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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.

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Hello, and welcome to the coaching crowd podcast with me, Jo Wheatley, and my friend and co host Zoe Hawkins. Hi, everybody, we're back with another episode. And this week, we're talking about how to resolve non commitment in coaching. And the reason why we're bringing this for you today is because as we are working with our coaches in training, and also beyond training, they will often be clients that come maybe more likely on a pro bono basis on a free basis, where their commitment to the coaching raises questions in the coach around how do I handle somebody who is perhaps cancelling sessions last minute, or what, even when they're coming, they're not necessarily seeming fully present. So we thought that would be a good topic for a podcast. So let's hope you agree.

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Yeah, and we're gonna run through a few different scenarios where this shows up today and give you our thoughts and experience on these scenarios. So let's kick off with the client who seems enthusiastic for coaching, you've had perhaps an initial chemistry call, and then they disappear, you know, so and this can happen often with clients who are coming forward for pro bono coaching. So on our coaching qualifications, you need to do a number of coaching hours. And that's fairly standard of any coaching qualification that you'll do. And while some coaches will charge for these sessions, or ask for an exchange of value for the sessions, many coaches will offer them for free in exchange for like a testimonial, or feedback on how they're doing. And when you work with pro bono coaches, at the scale that we do, it is often you will see this non commitment coming up. So someone will put themselves forward for coaching, you'll have a great chemistry conversation, you'll be really excited to get off the blocks. And then silence. So how do you start to handle that as an initial setup for your coaching thing was interesting as the these types of scenarios often catalyse an emotional response from the coach, or they can do and it can feel very personal, like a rejection. And so when you know, our coaches in training, bring these kinds of situations in supervision, we often start to explore, you know that part of it. And it's interesting to consider, I think, how would I respond to the situation if the client was paying, because these situations do also occur, like we had one recently where somebody was talking about is my first paying client. And you know, they're really excited. So

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I think some of the practical things that can help around this around how you manage expectations, and how you create the expectations of how you're going to be together in the relationship as coach and coachee, right from the initial contact that you have, and that chemistry conversation that you have, where you cover the practicalities of it. And it can feel like there's a lot to cover, and you're trying to build rapport with the client there as well. Be careful of people pleasing. In those situations, like being overly flexible. I think, you know, when you find yourself in a situation where you don't know what's happening, like do I need to keep this time in my diary, like if you've, for example, some coaches will agree dates before having received payment, and then the holding the dates in their diary, they haven't received payment. And they don't, they just don't want to mess anything up, you know, for the client and the start of that relationship. So think about the sequencing that you want to do, if it's a pro bono situation, our coaches send a pre coaching questionnaire to the client to complete before they start the coaching. So one of the things that they can do is ensure that they've got receipt of that before they set up dates, because that can, you know, ensure that the process flows along.

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Some coaches, you know, thinking about some coaches will start to get into the, you know, contacting the coachee lots to make sure it's all going to happen. And, you know, we encourage coaches to think about that relationship dynamic. You don't want to get into a parent child dynamic, you know, at the start of the relationship coaching relationship is adult to adult, eat, you know, a synergistic relationship. You're both bringing different knowledge, skills and experience and ultimately if the client who's having pro bono coaching decides not to show up. We don't well we don't always know if they have decided but you don't always know the reasons behind it. So if

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client doesn't show up, you know, you're going to hold on to, in that call or in that situation for probably 10 minutes or so. And then I would email the client and say, sorry, you couldn't make it to today's session, you know, I hang on, on the call for that amount of time, I hope you're okay.

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And then you've got to decide, like, is that something for you? When you say, if you want to continue coaching, please let me know, are you going to say, actually decide for yourself that this, you're not going to coach this client, because the dynamic between the two of you that you're experiencing is that this isn't, this isn't the type of client I want to be able to carry on, it could be that there's been an emergency that the clients had to deal with, and they haven't had time to let you know, it's just a genuine, you know, thing. And they'll feel, you know, terrible about the fact that they weren't able, you know, to show so you need to think carefully about really like your brand your values, how can you act in accordance with your values in how you deal with a situation like that. And in supervision, for me, yesterday, I was doing some group work. And this came up. So someone was sharing that they had a client, they had a chemistry call. And in the chemistry call, the client was sharing how their world was a little bit chaotic. And actually, they wanted coaching to help them with the chaos. And the coach was sharing how there had been lots of these moments of, you know, they'd agreed a day and then it hadn't happened. And then they'd sent the form and they hadn't got it back. And then they they chased not heard anything. And then the coachee came back a week later, you know, so the chaos was already present in the system. And I think they eventually got the the coaching off to start with the chaos was then in the coaching session of like, moving from goal to topic and not really having the focus. So also, I think when you come to commitment, have a look at what's happening systemically, you know, look around what's come up in the coaching sessions so far in terms of the chemistry, that you may have the chemistry contact, you may have had, what's come up in the pre coaching questionnaire that's been sent back, if you're a number of sessions in and commitment is coming up, then what's happening from a systemic lens that might be important to observe, or to coach. Because commitment, as you said, at the start, Jo, it can be easy to take it personally and start to judge. And it's really important at all stages that we try to hold ourselves in curiosity to be able to make clearer decisions. So how come this is happening? What's going on for the client here? What's going on? For me here? Is this a situation that I have had energy and passion for? Is this a client who, who I want to support and coach and it's okay, if it's not, but when we come with curiosity, we're making a decision without judging the client for their behaviour. And I think that's, that's important and aware, you can to co create those decisions. Now, obviously, if you're being ghosted. So, let's say in this example, where you have reached out to a client, they've expressed interest, and then they just disappear energetically, you might still be holding on to that client of like, what, are they going to come back? Are they not going to come back? Are they one of my clients? Are they not one of my clients? Like, how do I move on from that? And I think sometimes it's what action might you need to take to be able to create an ending. And for me, that's often being able to say, um, you know, haven't heard from you really enjoyed our chemistry conversation, if that was true,

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you know, I will draw a line under the coaching, unless I hear from you within the next week, you know, being able to put something out there such that you're able to energetically step away, can be really important for your own focus and attention on where you want to be. Yeah, we had somebody sharing that with us recently, didn't we? And it's as a result of like, the exploration and then the decision, they decided to actually go back to the client and say,

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you know, that the session wasn't going to happen. And they said they felt a huge sense of relief. I think other things to consider are, does this happen with all your clients? You know, if it happens with all of your clients, then I think there is, you know, an invitation and opportunity there to be able to consider how am i co creating this problem with my clients? You know, what am I bringing into the system as you say that is that is creating this? If it is with one client, then I think that that's different is recognising what's mine, what is my clients, but also in that kind of a situation? What are you colluding with? So if your client in the example you've given so like where

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Client, in a chemistry conversation is said on life's really chaotic, I really want to get some order and some focus and just need to get some peace of mind, etcetera, etcetera. If when the client is demonstrating that behaviour, you don't share it as an observation and reference back what they've come to coaching for, then are you colluding with, you know, an enabling that behaviour to continue? It's like, so how can I serve my client best in the actions, or the way that I'm going to choose to respond to what I'm experiencing, because also, what you experienced as the coach in relationship with the client, might might be very similar to what the

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client's relationship dynamics are outside of that, and they might have also referenced that in the chemistry conversation to say that they want to improve their relationships with others, because they think that it's impacting on them. And as a coach, we, we can hold the mirror up to our clients, that's one of our roles, it's what we get, we can contract for so asking permission to share observations or to share your experience of, of being in relationship so far. So we we consider all of it is information is used in theory, like, you know, holding a space of curiosity, it's information, and we can reflect it back to the client and ask is asking them, what are their reflections on it. But also, we do need to put deadlines in place, we don't want to let things go on and on and on, you know, like, say, if you'd still like to have coaching with me, let me know. And then you still hold as you say, holding that client, they're gonna they're gonna come back. And yes, they might it but is that the way you want to run your coaching business? Boundaries serve both you as the coach and your coachees. From the outset, everybody knows that they're clear, they know what is what is helpful and what is not helpful. And that sets your coaching relationship up to be an adult to adult coaching relationship, which is ultimately really important. It's not always easy, though, I was just reflecting as you're talking, I remember a long time ago now had a coachee turn up in their dressing gown hungover. And an IT the coaching session didn't go ahead. I was like, I don't think this is the best environment to hold this coaching session. You know, I think it's best that we, you know, end the session today, and we can reschedule. I don't think that that that client relationship continued to be on then it was in it, it was a contracted one in the early days.

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But I just I remember coming away from that thinking, Did I handle that? Okay, you know, there's always a, there's usually some questions around how you handle non commitment, because it can be

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complicated, it can be triggering, it can be emotional. Ultimately, people come to coach because they want to help. And so when that happened to be the person that's like, No, this isn't happening, that can feel hard to do. So I think that's where supervision can be really helpful. If you're experiencing non commitment, it's really useful to have a space to be able to explore that to explore what's happening for you, what's happening for your client, is there anything you're missing, you know, around that systemic lens, that could be actually really helpful, both in terms of your own coach development, and also the development of, of your client, and ultimately, the achievement of their outcomes. So let's consider a scenario where organ an organisation is funding coaching, and the client is coming along, maybe happy to come along, maybe with some reservations, there might be a little bit of a backstory around the you know, their performance. They come to the set every session, they come along to it, they are physically present. But you feel that they are

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psychologically absent. Hmm. Yeah, so turning up, but not necessarily there. I think for me, that goes back to what we were saying around the observation, you know, how, how do you best serve your client. And I think how you resolve commitment in that situation first is about rapport. So you, you need to have a really good relationship with your client, in order to perhaps observe some of the things that they may find edgy. So and the client may not find it edgy, but I think rapport is a good place to start. And then when you feel like you've had rapport, you can you can use your curiosity. You know, I'm one of the things I'm noticing when you come to sessions is, you know, I love the fact that you're turning up and you know, we're having great conversations. I just have a sense that you're not fully present. What do you think, you know, what's, because you might be wrong. It might be that you're not fully present. You know, and you're sort of not necessarily fully tuned in to this client for bye.

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In a number of different reasons, and the client might reply and be like, No, I love, I love these sessions, you know, they're amazing, I'm getting so much out of it, and then suddenly the commitment issues might dissipate. Or it might be the door that they need to be able to step through to be able to say, oh, it's really interesting, you say that, you know, this is going on, or I don't really want to be here I was sent here or who knows what the client might say. But it's a really opportunity to step into sometimes what is needed is courage to be able to provide the opportunity for the client to reflect on that as well.

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And you can do that through asking the client the questions, as well as asking them how committed are you to making the progress that you know, that you said that you want to make? Or how much commitment? Do you have to, you know, during the session today? Or what are you noticing about the way that you show up in these sessions, you know, more more generic questions to help them reflect. And then I think it's great if the client can say, I know I'm here, but I also I often feel guilty that I'm not really fully here, because I'm often like running from, you know, I always have like an SLT meeting or, you know, X meeting before this. And it might be as simple as the session isn't at the right time of day, for the client to be able to be fully present, you know, there are lots of factors that can that can come into it in that way, of course, you've got the, you know, if you've got a coaching contract, where it's maybe a three way with the manager at the beginning, and maybe there's a three way with the manager, at the end, you might have a conversation about bringing the manager back in or, you know, I was fine that the way that a client

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enters into a coaching relationship, it shows up in some way in the coaching, you know, so that tail, if you like to the coaching in a did they find you where they recommended to you?

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Did they want to come? Or was it suggested to them that they have coached by a partner or a colleague or you know, or a manager? So, you know, that non commitment, I think we've covered in other episodes, like if a client says, Yeah, I'm gonna go and do that, and they don't.

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Again, that's their choice. And I think one of the things that comes up when we're in group supervision, and this came up yesterday in a group supervision was big coaches can sometimes get hung up on like, an addiction to transformation or creating transformation. And if they don't feel that they have facilitated huge transformation for their clients, the self confidence can plummet, because they see that as being the role, but actually, you know, how do how do you measure the impact of coaching or the value of coaching? Well, clients progress in different ways. And some clients like

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may find coaching, hugely valuable, but what they get out of it might be something completely different to what they had wanted to get out of it originally. But they might have an insight that has come completely left field to them through it, but actually, it's going to be pivotal to the rest of their life, or maybe outside of work stuff rather than inside work stuff.

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And how do you as the coach feel about that? So I think as you know, as coaches, it's important that we keep our ego in check, you know, is it really non commitments by the client? Or is there something else happening for them, and lots of clients will take a while to build rapport? Won't they, before they can really do deeper work? I think what we're saying is everything is information. And sometimes, certainly in those early days, the information may not be available to you because your ego is present. And your ego is judging the client for the behaviour that they're exhibiting. So perhaps it's a client that isn't doing any of their coaching actions. So you spend all this time, you know, good hour, hour and a half coaching this client and they walk away with some really great actions that you feel like amazing is really going to help the client move forward, and then they come back and they're like, Oh, I didn't do them.

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You know, and before you're able to get to curiosity, you're like, what? How come you haven't done them? You know, so keeping your ego out of the room, and holding the curiosity to be able to look at the information that is coming in, through behaviour through energy, through action or inaction. It's just information. And that's not information that's just for yourself, that's information for you and your client to be able to explore and thinking about a scenario where you know that we're talking about here now where a client

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may show up and in the initial coaching come, you know, chemistry conversation and aligning on the goal.

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For the coaching,

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shares goals or sets goals up that they think they, the coach would want them to set up based on the topic that they're bringing, or based on what they think their organisation would want them to be setting because of the reasons that they've come to coaching. And so you might have a client in that scenario that doesn't do the actions, even though they're saying this is what this is what I'm going to do, but if the coach is more transactional and focused, we must always have an action, you know, and agreed. But that client might be a client who actually embeds a lot of the stuff that's been discussed and the insights into their everyday conversations. That makes a huge difference, subtle, but you know, cumulative difference in their experience and other people's experience of working with them. But if you just looked at, did they do the action they said they were going to do before, you might feel that you know that the coaching hasn't been successful, but when you broaden it out to consider it. So that's about really, really getting to know your client, and really forming that trusted relationship and helping them to notice and value the other outputs of coaching. Yeah, absolutely. So a topic we could share lots about for a long time, but hopefully today, we've given you a good flavour of issues of commitment, how to handle them. And ultimately, it's about staying curious. So if you've enjoyed today's episode, please come and leave us a review. You can do that on Apple, please rate and subscribe to the podcast. And if you only want to do one of those things, please subscribe to the podcast because that's the most important thing you can do to support us. So thanks very much.

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