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

**Jo Wheatley** 00:26

Hi, everybody. Great to be with you

**Zoe Hawkins** 00:28

this week. Today's topic that Zoe and I are going to talk about is what do you need to do to prepare for your coaching qualification to get the most out of it? And the reason that we're discussing that is because it was suggested in one of our posts recently as something that our listeners would find really helpful. So So where should we start with this one? Yeah, and when I think back to when I was doing my coaching qualification, I don't think I did prepare, I think I'm the sort of person who sort of rocked up ready for the experience. And, you know, just took it as I went. So it's probably not how I would do it today. Because I think that, in order to get the most from it, there are a number of things that you can do. And the most obvious one, I think, is really starting to get absorbed in the topic of coaching, most specifically, around reading, listening to a podcast like this, just starting to really get into, you know, what coaching is your sort of thoughts and opinions on coaching. And obviously, on our programme, we provide an extensive recommended reading list. And it's a really good opportunity to, you know, to take a look at a couple of books, most of them are available in libraries, you don't have to buy them all, and starting to dig in to the topic and finding out more about coaching and mentoring and the different kinds of approaches.

**Jo Wheatley** 01:46

Yeah, and hopefully, you'll be enjoying doing that, because you've chosen to do a kitchen course. So it's not, it doesn't feel like work, it feels like a joy. And something that actually also helps your well being doing a little bit of reading or listening to podcasts really can help to put the foundations in place. One of the other things that's important, I think, in the preparation for your course is thinking about, have you got the support that you're going to need from the people around you in your life, that's going to help you to create boundaries around your learning, to give you the space and the time to be able to focus on the learning. So whether it's attending the session, or whether it is doing a little bit of reading or doing practice in your triads, and that may be work colleagues, if you're doing it in work time or something work time, it may be family, if you need support with childcare, or anything else at home may be carrying responsibilities. So have a think about what you need in terms of that and have those conversations in advance.

**Zoe Hawkins** 02:47

Yeah, when I trained as a coach, originally, my life looked very different. You know, I wasn't married, I didn't have any children. It was I was in a relationship, but it was me, you know, doing things with my time that I chose to do. Whereas when I trained as a coaching supervisor, I had three children under the age of five or six, I think at the time, and you know, time planning that qualification was an absolute mission. You know, because there was some in person time there were weekly calls, there were then triad calls. So time blocking, and diary management became really important to make sure that actually I could engage fully in the programme without that noise going on in the background about whether I was going to be able to make something or whether I was that attendee who would be saying, Oh, no, I'm really sorry, I can't make those dates. So there was that to be had Before I enrolled on the programme. But even once I didn't roved It was then a case of me and my husband kind of coordinating the times when I would need to be in the programme and making sure that we had that foundation in place. And for me, that just helped me to relax and enjoy the process. Rather than that being a constraint.

**Jo Wheatley** 03:58

It helps when you've got people that are interested around you as well, doesn't it, you know, if they're broadly speaking, interested in topic, and you can chat to them, you know, after the session, then them supporting you and holding that space, they also get some benefit from it, too. We and people that join our programmes, a lot of them do have children or other commitments, or they're joining from different time zones. Some are funded by their work. And so we're happy for them, perhaps to spend some time and work doing it. Others might be funded by work, but that's the limit of it. They have to do the study in their own time and some self funding and maybe doing it as a very private thing. So there's a broad range of of individuals and circumstances, you know, that people have behind the scenes as they join the programmes. And so I think it's really important that you know, as much as you possibly can about the format of the coaching programme that you're joining, and for us, we have a broad range of formats and we're broadening them each year as we sit down and we reflect on what have we heard from our learners? What how can we make This experience of training to be a coach as easy as possible given that it is a significant commitment. So whether that's doing weekly evening format, or it's doing it over a weekend, or you prefer to do it in a semi intensive or an intensive format, because that suits your broader commitments in life situation.

**Zoe Hawkins** 05:18

Yeah, it's an exciting time to join us on one of our programmes. I think as we expand the communities, you know, that we, that we have to serve, we're having a conversation yesterday, weren't we, with Emma, who's one of our alumni, and she runs the freelance lifestyle, and she's a load of freelancers and talking about what would be the best format for freelancers. So we talked about a Friday programme and studying every single Friday for, you know, a certain amount of weeks. And so we're trying out lots of new formats next year to offer variety and increased accessibility to our programmes. So if you haven't visited our website in a while, because you aren't sure, if you could have made our previous formats come and take a look today, because you're likely to find on there, at least one format that suits your suits your lifestyle and suits the way that you like to learn.

**Jo Wheatley** 06:06

I think there are some questions as well as you're preparing for the course that are useful to think about. So we encourage you to think about what are you going to contribute to the group that you're part of the learning cohort that you're with? Your what can you bring to that group is going to be valuable and help to create a healthy learning environment? What are your individual needs, so as you think about joining this new group, meeting these new people going on this journey with them, knowing that you're going to be coached, as well as coaching others and involved in receiving feedback and giving feedback? What do you need in order to get the most out of that experience in order for you to feel safe and to thrive in that environment? And also think about? What do you need specifically from the trainers? Is there something different that you need from them that perhaps you don't need from other people within the group? And I think this all plays into the concept of, you know, what's your attitude to learning. So everybody that comes in our courses are adult learners. And what we see is that sometimes people find it difficult being back in a learning environment initially, because people come with some coaching skills, whether they've been on some short coaching courses, or they've had feedback that they've got a teaching style, and there is unlearning involved as well as learning and that can be uncomfortable for people. So just thinking about, you know, what's your readiness to learn? What are you open to? What are you willing to let go of? What are you willing to welcome in? How do you feel about you absorbing and taking on lots of new information?

**Zoe Hawkins** 07:47

Yeah, well, on the programme, we talked about the comfort zone model, don't we, where there's comfort, stretch, and panic. And I think when you enter into a new environment, and particularly a learning environment, by nature, you're going to be in your stretch zone, if the whole programme was in your comfort zone, we wouldn't be doing our jobs properly, in terms of enabling you to be the best coach that you can be. So you are going to be, you know, in the stretch zone when you come on this programme. And that is, it's because it's helping you to learn and to grow. But of course, when you're in your stretch zone, and your skills and strengths are untested, perhaps or they're, they're reforming, as you said, Joe, some unlearning taking place. With that can come some discomfort as well, some anxiety as well as excitement, and joy and celebration and adventure. So we often describe the process of learning to be a coach is a bit of a roller coaster, a gentle roller coaster, we like to think not too many drops from a really high height, but a roller coaster of experiences. And so when you're thinking about embarking on the journey, just get into the mindset that that's okay. And it's welcomed, and that you're going to be in a forum with lots of other people having a similar experience, not the same experience, because obviously, there'll be on their learning journey, but no one's going to just breeze through the whole thing in a very linear line. Because we will be there stretching and challenging each and every learner. And depending on where their starting point is. So if you were if you're working with somebody who is experienced, they may be coming to the programme to top up their learning from from a different starting point, but they will still be experiencing stretch and challenge on their journey because we'll be applying that stretch and challenge where they need it. So just know that when you come on to a coaching training programme, no one is a beginner and no one is the polished article. So you're all in the container together and going on this journey of growth and adventure. That the

**Jo Wheatley** 09:45

whole learning thing is as you say, is a different experience for each individual and it can prompt a whole range of different emotions from individuals. So I know when my husband and took, you know, a very chunky piece of development and his dyslexic and he was concerned about the study and the learning and not the learning, but the study elements of it and conveying, you know what he knew. So he actually got a book out or bought book that was around like how to develop your study skills, so that he felt confident to be able to show up and, and know how to approach it, I guess, in the most efficient way. And we have learners joining our programmes with all sorts of, you know, specific needs, and have a think about how do you feel like I say about the learning and what do you need? Do you need to have a chat with the facilitators or the organisation about any specific needs that you have, they're going to enable you to be able to learn and get the most out of the programme, because the earlier that you can have those conversations, I think, you know, the better for you to put your mind at ease. And also to enable the organisation to be able to meet your needs, if they possibly can.

**Zoe Hawkins** 10:54

I think the other thing worth considering, obviously, when you're coming into coaching one of the core pillars, you're going to learn about his goals. So what are your goals? You know, as you embark on this adventure, and I would set goals around, obviously, when do you want to complete this by and if you have the structure of the programme, you can break that down into milestones and chunks, but also, what experience do you want to gift yourself with? How are you going to celebrate along the way? What are the milestones that you wish to put in, to be able to celebrate? And what does success look like? So really just starting to get into the coach's mindset about this journey that you're going on, because as we know, goals can really help to focus the mind. So you know, when, when you're enjoying things, and when you're finding the course you sort of easy and you're in your stride, you get to celebrate that. And when you're finding it more challenging, you've got the clarity of your why you're doing it. And when you want to do it by to help to persevere, when things feel a bit more challenging.

**Jo Wheatley** 11:53

There's definitely something around how to sustain yourself. Because if you think about our level seven programme, which is a master's level qualification, you've got 24 lessons, which are two and a half hours each plus then undertaking is 72 hours of coaching practice, plus the supervision and the three assignments that go along with it. So it's just that it's a significant undertaking. How do you sustain yourself, because what we can see is that if you if you need to miss a lesson, maybe you're on holiday, maybe you're unwell, maybe you've, you know, maybe you've got a work commitment that can't be avoided. It can be easy then to think, oh, you know, hard to get back into it the following week, or to think, Oh, I've missed that. Now I feel behind and to go into a little bit of a spiral around that. And then feeling perhaps that you don't you know that you're not belonging so much in the group because they're further on. So if you're somebody that knows, for example, that you work best when you've got an accountability partner, that could be somebody on the programme, or it could be somebody, you know, outside of the programme may be somebody that has done a coaching qualification before. And that's another good thing I think to do for preparation is to, you know, if you know, people that have been on a similar journey, maybe it's with a different provider, but just chat to them, what was their experience? You know, what did they find that help them so that there may be some things in there that are that are helpful for you and think about if you prefer having those closer relationships, think about that early on in the programme. So when you're being asked around, what do you need in terms of support, just pop a message in the chat or speak to somebody say, hey, is there anybody that wants to kind of buddy up as accountability partners, or that if you can't make it, there'll be the person that catch you up on what you've missed, and so on.

**Zoe Hawkins** 13:39

Yeah, and of course, the piece you didn't mention is the pre learning as well, Joe. So on top of all those elements, there's the pre learning for those 24 lessons. And actually, one of the great things about studying with us is when you sign up, you get instant access to all of those lessons. So you know, if you're signing up, say six months ahead of when your programme starts, you can as well as you're learning and listening to podcasts and all the things we're talking about here, you can actually still start working through the content. And then when you approach your course, you can go back to and revisit and do a refresh of the particular lesson that you may be studying that day. And that's really going to help you to you know, start to really step into that coach identity and start developing those skills because the pre learning that we have within our learning portal is is really high quality teaches you a huge amount about coaching and you get to see live demonstrations of coaching activities. So you're gonna get a very good experience of your coaching programme, just by the pre learning alone and that is before you even come on the live sessions and start practising it and being able to ask questions within your community group as well. So, you know, if you're somebody who really wants to get ahead and get learning and feel like they're not a total novice, sign up early, get your access to the learning portal and start working through those lessons and you're going to feel like you're in a really great place when you join the programme for the live sessions,

**Jo Wheatley** 15:06

it is also recommended to sign up early because of course, is sell out. So in order to get the format or the date that you want, you really do need to be thinking about about it in advance. If we think more broadly, in terms of getting yourself set up for success, I think it's useful to research and connect into the coaching accreditation bodies. There are three main ones in the UK where we are based, and they all got their own competency frameworks for coaching. They have code of ethics, they've run events for members and non members, your course will hopefully be accredited, you know, by by at least one of them as as are. And just Familiarise yourself, because that's part of getting into that coaching world as though he was talking about and just getting insights and working out, you know, who are the people that I want to follow. And that's another thing you can do in preparation is learn about who are the people on your other social media channels that talk about coaching that are going to inspire you and actually also help you to learn without even realising it. Because you'll see things in your feed, you'll read it, it'll it'll prompt new thoughts for you. If you're interested in particular, maybe more specialist areas of coaching, whether that's coaching outdoors or kitchen with ADHD, or climate coaching or catching execs or catching young people also start to just read around those areas as well. Because there may be things there that that inspire you or give you questions that you might want to ask on your coaching training.

**Zoe Hawkins** 16:42

Yeah, and I think this piece you're talking about there and connecting takes me to your network, you know, so one of the things we encourage people to do on our programme, if that's what they want to do is to start to socialise their network. So recognising that you have coaching hours to do 72 hours for the level 754 for the level five, most people start to worry, where am I going to find my coaches from? Like, how am I going to get my coaching hours done? And what we tend to find is most people get this through their network that might be a LinkedIn network, or Instagram or Facebook, most of our learners tend to be on LinkedIn. So have a look at your LinkedIn profile. Firstly, do you have one? Secondly, do you want to have one and what might it do for you, if you do have one, just start to refresh it. So start connecting with people in your organisation people that you used to work with friends and colleagues from other organisations, people you might meet at different seminars and trainings, connect with Joe and I connect with your facilitators. If they aren't Joe, and I connect with other course learners that you might see pop up saying, Oh, I just signed up for September, connect with them, hey, I signed up for September to you, it's a great opportunity to start to build your network. And as you're building your network, and you're doing you're learning and you're reading and listening to podcasts and working through the pre learning, put the occasional post up, I learned this today, this is really exciting. Or I can already start applying this in my role as a leader, whatever it is, take people on the journey with you around your coaching experience, because by the time you're then ready to find coaches to work with your network are already aware that you're on this journey. And they've been following in some of your posts and your engagement and your joy for coaching. And when they see you post, they're either going to say I know just the person for you, I'm going to connect you up or they might say I really fancy a little bit of that coaching, if you don't know them too well and their connection is one or two removed from you, then they could be a great person to coach and if they're not and you know them really well maybe it's an ex colleague that you worked closely with, you can offer that person to somebody in your cohort, and somebody in your cohort will offer you somebody that they used to work with so there's often an exchange so the piece around finding people to coach whilst we know it is often a big worry doesn't tend to transpire to be a problem especially if you're sort of building your network along the way as well.

**Jo Wheatley** 19:09

And then I think there are some practical things that people care about Zara which are getting new stationery people get so excited. So getting a new notebook, you know, to take notes from your coaching course one that when you look at you want to pick up and you want to touch and you want to, you know add things to and it feels special to you and the same for pens as well we get lots of pictures don't worry about got my staff, you know ready to go. I'd also encourage you to think about where are you going to engage in your kitchen programme. So if you're doing a kitchen programme virtually online like like our programmes, maybe you're going to choose somewhere that is not where you might be sat doing your day job, you know, somewhere that can anchor you into coaching and and what that is like we do here that that does make a difference for people being in a different environment to maybe you know where you're sat where you're Do HR director or HR manager or whatever your your day job is. So have a little think about those practical things, even having, you know, a nice drink with you that you always drinks, you know, when you're doing your coaching qualification, something that just, you know, what are the little things that nurture you that are that make you smile. So you know, give you that little bit of a boost, as you sit down, maybe you're gonna have certain sweets or snacks that you treat yourself to sustain your energy as well for the practice. It's like

**Zoe Hawkins** 20:29

back to school vibes, but this time, like a really good school. Yeah, with a really positive experience. And I remember actually, who was chatting to somebody this week when we around that, that school and the anchors that you might have about study. And we know that not everybody comes to learning having had a positive experience of school. So I think what you're talking about there, Joe is like, create an environment which you feel joyful entering, we will be able to create a container where your experience of learning as an adult will not necessarily be the same one that you had, you know, as a child or as a teenager, we want you to enjoy this process. We want to remove obstacles and challenges. We want everybody to be able to engage in this and increase access to great coaching education. And so create an environment which is joyful for you. So I hope today is really, you know, given you an idea of all the ways that you can prepare for your coaching qualification, come and take a look at our programmes on our website, IG company.co.uk And if you've enjoyed today's podcast, please do rate the podcast make sure you're subscribed. If you can leave us a review, please do we really appreciate those. And we look forward to welcoming me onto one of our programmes very soon. 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 the company with other aspiring teachers.