95\_ Understanding self

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**SPEAKERS**

Jo Wheatley, Zoe Hawkins

**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.

**Jo Wheatley** 00:21

Hello, and welcome to the Coaching Crowd podcast with me Joe Wheatley, and my friend and co host Zoe Hawkins. Hi, everybody.

**Zoe Hawkins** 00:28

We are here today to talk to you about the coaching competency understanding self. And we're probably touching on self development as well. The reason we're bringing you a discussion this morning about these competencies is it's a really core part of training to be a coach and being an ethical coach as well. So we wanted to do a deep dive into some of the different aspects of this competency for you. And we should probably begin by talking about the competency frameworks actually, in kind of setting the scene Do you want to kick us off there, Jo?

**Jo Wheatley** 00:57

Well, each of the coaching bodies have their own core coaching competency framework, they all reference the competencies in different ways that emcc their number one core coaching competency is understanding self with the ICF core competency framework, you may see it as coming under demonstrates ethical practice, because understanding yourself is a core part of being able to be ethical in your practice. And we'll be exploring that today. And of course, you've also got the Association for coaching, and there are other coaching bodies around the world as well. So when you train or qualify to be a coach, you may choose to become an accredited coach with one of those bodies. And you're required to demonstrate an evidence how you have honoured those core coaching competencies. So we're starting with understanding self because, for me, it is about the coach, but it's also for the coachee as well, because that's the heart of coaching really is helping the client, the coachee, to understand themselves, to understand the current situation, to really connect with their goals, and help them to understand what they can do, what the choices that they can make, who they are, and who they want to be as they achieve their goals.

**Zoe Hawkins** 02:16

I think this competency fascinates me because it's never ending, there's no matter how well you think you know, yourself, there is always more to discover. And I think that's been one of the greatest gifts of coaching, is joining this profession, this industry came into it thinking I've got a pretty good level of self awareness. And yet, then it's very quickly you realise No, actually I don't, I actually had a relatively surface level of self understanding. And that sort of brings in this angle of like, when you train to be a coach, yes, you gain the skills to be able to help others and support others in their development. But you also gain the skills to do that for yourself. And really start to understand the different layers of who you are and how you behave and how you are in relationship and what impact your behaviour has on others and the micro decisions that you make moment by moment that generates, you know, the different responses in your behaviour. And I'm a learner, you know, that's one of my core values as learner. And so for me, this competency is what motivates me to keep going, like every client I work with teaches me something about myself, every CPD programme that I go on, teaches me something about myself, and in turn that has the benefit of the ripple effect in my life. So you know, my family benefit from my own personal development. And so when you come to train as a coach, it is so much more than training to be a coach. It's about really understanding who you are at your core. And how can you use that actually to build, you know, the life for yourself that you want to experience?

**Jo Wheatley** 03:59

I think this core competency is underrated. So and it also creates quite a defensive reaction in coaches, they're in training. And the reason I say that is because if somebody asks you the question you do, what do you think you understand yourself? You probably can already sense and said, Well, of course I understand myself if I don't understand myself, who else is going to understand me and so to really lean into this competency requires a huge amount of courage. It's almost like being prepared to open a door and not knowing what's behind it. And it's about being able to notice like to connect your mind with your body. It's not all about your thoughts. It's about your whole experience as a coach, when you reflect in sessions and after sessions. Is there anything that you've noticed? Was there any resistance within you did you feel a strong pang of anger when the clients you know respond? Did in a certain way, did you feel deep sadness? Is there? Are you sensing some responsibility towards your client? Are you noticing that you hold a client in your mind after a session? You know, there's lots of different things. What are your motivations for coaching? Are they for your clients? Are they for you? Are they for both of you.

**Zoe Hawkins** 05:23

And that's the piece that we often pick up in training, isn't it is everybody comes to coaching with a shared desire and purpose to do good in the world. And sometimes that's about helping others. And sometimes that's about being the best leader that they can be, but in some shape, or form, it's about service, isn't it and being of service to others, and how that can translate in coaching is with this rescuer, you know, so clients will come and they'll share their challenges, and there can be a real, almost need to help that client fix whatever it is that they're going on, or there can be an overwhelming desire to be of value. You know, how's my coaching? Been? Excellent? Has it been life changing? And as you said, that was that for you? Or is that for your client, because the line can be quite thin, when you're working and training to be a coach. And that's not necessary a bad thing. Because obviously, we want coaches to want to do good, and we want coaches to want to be a service their client, but it's like the flavour of it. Because if you come to coaching with a need to have to be a value, and a need to be of service, that can create an unhealthy dynamic between coach and coachee. And you can become desperate is the word that came to mind, but it has that that sort of underlying flavour of desperation to need to serve your client. And so when you're working through the coaching programme, what you're also doing with yourself is understanding what is it about me, that leads me to want to have that impact, and you almost sort of like, turn the corner and, and where it may start as a need, it becomes more than a healthy desire, through the ways that you learn about yourself through the empowering beliefs that you develop, through the perspective shifts that occur. So it can be, you know, a really transformational experience.

**Jo Wheatley** 07:14

Like there's lots of things that you encounter when you're training to be a coach. And there are things like a sense of belonging, do I feel that I belong into this profession? I'm on the outside or want to be on the inside? When you're in a cohort? Do you feel? You know, do you feel any sense of rejection? Are you feeling accepted? What patterns from your life before your training? Might you see showing up in the new situations that you experience? Or when you're coaching clients? Are there any shadows is might be an expression some people would use from the past that are showing up in the presence that aren't about the here and now in the present? But actually, they belong somewhere else? So are there any of those things that may be worth exploring as an individual? And it's about learning, learning the role of a coach? And where are where does that role finish? And you start and how do you how can you be authentic whilst also having some separation between them? Because I would also say that, for me, this competency of understanding self is something that I engage with across my whole life. So I think about and reflect on who I am, how I'm responding to things. And all of the things that happen in my life, and I enjoy doing that it's yes, well, you can always continue to learn more about yourself. I think there is also competency within this one, which is also about being comfortable with what you're aware of, you know, not not keep pushing, pushing, pushing, pushing, pushing. So just taking, you know, taking bite sized pieces, I think is what I'm really talking about, where you notice something because there's a situation the other day wasn't there where something happened. And we were having an exchange, like on our phones. And then you were like, well, you share what you

**Zoe Hawkins** 09:01

what are you called me, didn't you and I had a little rant. And it was very much about just acceptance. So we, you know, we're emotions, catching practitioners, right? We're the founders of that progress, we start talking about the emotions. And I think where we got to is it was more about the shock of the situation. And then my subsequent kind of reaction to that, but actually, there comes a real acceptance with that of like, I behave this way because I felt shock. And that's okay, that I felt shock because it was a shocking situation. And now I recognise I feel shock.

**Jo Wheatley** 09:37

I'm okay with that. Well, you're Yeah. And your response was, you you you had an emotional reaction to something that had happened outside of like our relationship, but we were discussing it together, weren't we? And it was your you were interested in your reaction. And that, to me is the epitome of understanding self is yes, there was this event that happened And you've noticed that you had a particularly strong emotional reaction to it. And what you were interested in is not putting it all out. Yes, you were having an emotional reaction to the other person and or the thing that had happened, but you then very quickly were pivot on to. Okay, so what's in this for me was relevant for me here? What's the learning for me? And that, for me is understanding self.

**Zoe Hawkins** 10:24

Yeah, it's bringing curiosity, isn't it? So it's that I in that moment, I was able to recognise that the response I was having was completely disproportionate to the event. And so I didn't get sucked into the emotions of it, I began to get curious, which is why we ended up on the phone. And I was like, what, like, what is going on Jo? Like, why am I so reactive? Why am I reacting so strongly to this relatively insignificant thing, and that's where and we, and that's where we got to wasn't it as it was around the shock of it. But that was an enjoyable experience. It took something that without coaching training, I could have gone down an absolute rabbit hole and stewed on this particular event for several days, as it happened, it was over and done within half an hour, it became quite funny is now a story that sort of goes in. And I have taken some learning from that around, there's more work for me to do on this thing. That is a known pattern for me. But it's a moment then to be able to capture that and go great, I will continue to reflect and refine on on that particular wound is probably the wrong word. But we all have those pieces of ourselves that we want to continue to work on. And this was one of those for me. So yeah, that understanding self is about bringing your curiosity to all of the situations that you find yourself in, in a healthy way. So not in a shaming way or in a I must be a better person way. The result is obviously you grow and you develop, but it's not because you aren't good enough already. It's just about that. I think it's about wholeness. For me, it's about that journey to wholeness.

**Jo Wheatley** 12:00

Yeah, and I think on that, but journey that you mentioned, I think for me is being able to engage with the what if that, for me is like the road to it is you don't have to accept it or, or make a decision is bringing your curiosity I wonder if or what if this, and it's also about getting curious about the how, and the rationale and the reasons. So when I originally signed up to coaching, training, the rationale for me signing up to coaching training was having all this feedback around my whole life, really, I knew that people often would come and they chat to me for ages, and you'd be quite intense, they go away, and then they come back, and they'd say, thank you so much. And I really enjoyed it. And I thought, Well, what a privilege. And then when other people saw that happening in my professional career, they would call out and then what are you doing? I thought, I don't know what I'm doing. If I'm good at this, could I be even better? And what if I do something wrong if I don't understand it, so I didn't feel that I had the understanding. And so I saw engaged in coaching training, to develop my understanding of myself, and also how I could contribute and do more of what I really enjoyed doing. And you and I, I think have talked before probably on these podcasts around how understanding self. For me, I think it really helps to build resilience. Like if I understand myself, and I can understand my reactions, or I don't, but I understand that I don't, and therefore I want to learn more about it. And I'm willing to go there for me, a result of that is increased resilience. And it can help to prevent burnout as well. I think by having that understanding of yourself and you know, the signals that you might have. And I think for a lot of people, when they undertake coaching training, because it is a personal as well as a professional development opportunity and transformation opportunity. I think two things often happen. One is there's a lot of resolution of past stuff that people either didn't realise was there but comes out and gets resolved. Or there's a realisation and an understanding that there are some things maybe that they would like themselves to have more coaching or therapy or something on. But the process itself, which requires you to practice being a coach, as well as being coached, really, really does enable you to learn so much more about yourself, and the reasons that you behave the way that you do. And that often comes out when we are covering more detailed stuff around the language people use. So clients but also as coaches and what may that be signals for the dynamics in relationships, the patterns, all of that stuff and the emotional intelligence stuff as well obviously, for me,

**Zoe Hawkins** 14:56

there's something in it which is about self compassion and self acceptance. So I think there's a lot of that that happens. So yes, there is change. And yes, there is development and awareness, I think you also develop as you're talking about resilience, a real compassion for yourself the journey through life that you might have had accepting parts of yourself. And with that comes change. So it's not always about doing something differently or needing to, you know, change the way that you are, often it's just about peace, and gaining some internal acceptance and peace for that. And then I think there's, for me, this competency, understanding self, it's about responsibilities. So you were saying there, Jo around, you want to do what you are naturally doing really well. In coaching, there's a huge amount of role modelling, I think that takes place. So on the programme, we talk about transactional analysis, and how that coaching is a very adult to adult relationship. Now, when you are in coaching, you can really hold somebody in their adult place, which is where they are that they're most resourceful, they are able to be in the here and now thinking clearly generating new ideas, perspectives, choices, options, is one of the reasons why coaching is really powerful. And in order to do that, you need to be able to hold yourself in adult, and sometimes clients will bring things that will sound very familiar, or will ignite in you a memory or, or, you know, a response. And to be able to hold yourself in adults, whilst listening and engaging with your client is, is really important. And so I think, for me, as one of the one of the reasons I'm so committed to my self development, and my my understanding of who I am, is so that I can be there in those moments for my clients without being, you know, sucked back into my own life or, you know, shifting between those ego states of parent, an adult and child. So it's part of the role for me, I think, is what I'm saying, like, you have these competency frameworks for a reason, like they are the guiding light of our profession and our industry. And I take it seriously, you know, this is my job, and I want to do it really well. And so for me understanding self, it's a responsibility and a commitment. And thankfully, one that I really enjoy as well.

**Jo Wheatley** 17:20

Well, I was gonna say, you know, I think it's, it's fun, it can be fun. And it can be ugly to you know, it does take a lot of energy. I think initially, for people, we talked about courage earlier, that understanding self, in terms, as you were describing around the moat, role modelling, for me is also being able to know and understand what I'm doing, and the reasons that I'm doing it in the coaching conversation with the client, and with a lot of my clients, I will explain to them, you know, the reason that I've asked a particular question, I think it helps them to feel safe in the conversation and again, helps them to really tap into understanding self and and ignite their own inner coach and mentioned earlier about, you know, when we give observations to clients, that's for me is very closely related to understanding self and making sure that what I'm observing is purely about us, it's purely about them, maybe my reaction to what they said, but that the reaction is based on on them and what they're bringing and what I know of them, rather than what I may be bringing from, from my own stories or experiences outside of that session.

**Zoe Hawkins** 18:30

So that brings us to the end of today's podcast, and we have a very special opportunity to invite you to join us a two day coaching summit on the third and fourth of July. The coaching Summit is an event that we've held for the past couple of years, where we're showcasing a number of speakers from our business lounge and from our communities, including ourselves, bringing you a selection of different sessions and workshops, all based around the theme of coaching. Last year proved to be a really exciting couple of days. We're really looking forward to taking part I know our speakers are armed with some really fascinating, inspiring sessions to ignite your inspiration and motivation for coaching. So do come and register you can join one or several of our sessions across the couple of days. You can find out more information IG company.co.uk forward slash Summit. We would love love, love to see you there. 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** 19:42

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