Episode 123 final edit

Sun, Jan 07, 2024 8:08PM • 20:23

**SUMMARY KEYWORDS**

changing, client, coaching, coach, life, conversation, experience, coaching session, relationship, podcast, wheatley, impact, share, listening, felt, place, exploring, unsee, passionate, perspective

**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 friend and co host Jo Wheatley.

**Jo Wheatley** 00:27

Welcome, everybody. I'm excited to share with you today's episode, because we don't know where it's gonna go. But the question that we are exploring is, can one coaching conversation, change a client's life? And we're covering that question, because it's come up a couple of times over the last year where where people have kind of inquired around that specifically, but also in broader conversations. So we thought it warranted a podcast episode. Yeah,

**Zoe Hawkins** 00:58

absolutely. And we had a brief chat before my starting place on this is that, yes, one coaching conversation can change a client's life because all conversations are life changing in some way. So every time an interaction happens, something changes. So having the conversation or not having the conversation change has occurred. So I think from from that angle, I'm like, absolutely one conversation can change a client's life? Will it always be evident how that coaching conversation has changed a client's life? Not necessarily. But maybe it could also be dramatically evident how that coaching conversation has changed that client's life from the clients perspective, or from the coaches perspective. And I think we've got to think about micro and macro. And sometimes we can come in to coaching conversations expecting big aha moments and revelations. And I think many of the life changing moments that occur in coaching are subtle. You know, they're subtle shifts in mindsets or subtle shifts in the way that we see things that can build and build to have a dramatic impact on somebody's life. So I'm sitting in the Yes, camp. So how about you, Jo? Yeah. And

**Jo Wheatley** 02:22

I think my initial answer was yes and no, into not sitting on the fence style, but an appreciation of, of the different possibilities. So from the Yes, perspective, and I do absolutely. I know, this to be true, it's through the lens of clients having fed back to me, and as you were saying, it's not that a client would say in a session, that's life changing. Occasionally, yes. But also often later, many years later, sometimes clients come in back because they don't always, you know, some changes need time to be to be to come evident. But I think it's the the yes, for me is it's not even a whole conversation, necessarily. Sometimes it is, it can be the impact of one thing said, and sometimes it's the thing that said, there's been they've heard said to them several times previously. But there's something about that moment, the relationship that exists, that can can be life changing. Sometimes I think it's not necessarily a moment that can be life changing. But it could be the energy, the overall feel of the coaching session, that that just shifts something in a client, it could be the client share something with you, and you respond in a different way to the way that other people have always responded to them sharing or being that way. And all of a sudden, that gives them the opportunity to experience themselves in a different way. I mean, there are so many different ways in which that interaction, or experience in a coaching session can be life changing. And I think on the nose side, for me, it is, if a client is not ready, willing or able, they know, it's possible that it won't be life changing for them. Coaching isn't for everybody all of the time. And so yes, it is possible that it won't be life changing. It doesn't mean it won't be valuable, or useful. And again, there's choice for the clients make around how valuable how useful and yes, the way the client shows up will inevitably impact on that. So that those were my initial thoughts about it, but what else is coming up for you? So when we're exploring this question of can one coaching conversation be life changing?

**Zoe Hawkins** 04:53

I think as you were talking there about the different ways that something can be life changing. I was reflecting on the relationship itself. and how the experience of coaching can really change your life from a sense of recognising what you need from relationships. So in a coaching relationship, obviously, the attention is all on you the care and compassion is for your clients outcomes, the coach has no interest, it's detached from what the client chooses to do. And so the coach is entirely empowered within that coaching relationship to make choices, they get clarity of thought and make decisions. And there is a rare quality, I think, that is held in relationship between coach and coachee. And when you experience that, I think it can make you reevaluate the relationships that you're in elsewhere in your life. So it's not always a conversation that is life changing, but the overall experience, so you might go through coaching, and it'd be a gentle experience, and you come out and yes, you've you've put some actions in place to achieve some goals, but maybe it's been relatively I don't know, like, easy, if you like, not not too deep and not too challenging. But the experience of being heard the experience of being witnessed the experience of just having space to unfold your thoughts, that could be enough for that client to walk away and be like, right, I need to put some boundaries in place, or there are relationships in my life that aren't serving me in the way that I need to be served. So I'm going to be making some changes. So, you know, it's not always the conversation, is it? I think sometimes it's, it's the other stuff that takes place.

**Jo Wheatley** 06:31

And what's popping into my mind is that, yes, one coaching conversation can be a life changing for the coach. Yeah. So if as a coach, you enter into coaching conversation, open hearted, with a with a learner mindset yourself, you know, in that equal synergistic kind of energy that, that you'll be trained to enter into the conversation with, then it may be that, you know, as the client is sharing their model of the world, it shifts your model of the world, you know, the sharing perspectives are things that you that you haven't considered before, and that that's life changing for you. It may be that what you experience in terms of the impact for the client on the conversation, is life changing for you, you didn't realise that you had a particular talent or you, you know, there's so many ways that can be life changing for the coach, and that the way that you show up and meet your client in relationship can be life changing for both coach and client. And sometimes, I think you can have those moments in a conversation with somebody else, whether it's in a coaching conversation or not, where you exchange that link, and you both know that you are changed in that moment. And that's a very special human experience to be able to have.

**Zoe Hawkins** 08:09

I think coaching, and why it is so life changing is because, like some things you can't unsee you know, so when you're in a coaching conversation, a great coach will be able to share observations around perhaps it's patterns that are emerging from behaviour or even language that they use. I remember, once, in a coaching conversation, somebody just happened, somebody that my coach happened to mention that I use the word maybe a lot, I'd never noticed that about myself before. I was like, oh, maybe this and maybe that. And then like, you know, I'm just sharing an observation, you seem to use the word maybe a lot. Tell me more about that. And that just opened up a wonderful exploration around commitment and fear of failure and all sorts of discoveries. But then I couldn't unsee that language. So every time I use that word, maybe I was able to go inside and be like, Why am I using that word? Like, what is happening for me here? Is this something I'm afraid to commit to? Is this something that I want? Am I people pleasing? You know, how can I be more assertive, so, you know, it wasn't life changing in the sense of like, oh my gosh, like, that's amazing. It wasn't this big bang, it was a, I'm not going to be able to ever not see that now. Like just a whole new level of awareness. And that's just one small slice of a coaching session. But I think the impact of all of those small slices can be very dramatic on somebody's life.

**Jo Wheatley** 09:43

And that's another piece of the exploration around this question is what does it mean for something to be life changing? Yeah, you know, you were just describing like, do and for you, those of you that are listening, like, like, what does it mean to you is, do you think like, needs To be like, as you said, So Big Bang, like everything has changed in my world now the way that I see it? Or is life changing, maybe a new insight that's going to lead to you making one decision differently? And is life changing? Because you decide to move house? Is that life changing? Is it moving a job that's life changing? Or is it you're going to show up in a relationship in a different way? So in order to answer that question, or reflect on it, we need you know, we need to consider what that means for us. When when I think about, has a coaching conversation, been life changing? For me? Yes. I can wholeheartedly answer that, yes, because I brought a coach in to work in an organisation where as a human resources director from that conversation, or experience led me into coaching, training to be a coach myself, which has led which led me to start a business, leave my job, show up as a mum, as a, you know, in all the roles of my life in in a different way to the way that I would have shown up, it's given me freedom to work from home or actually work from anywhere in the world that I would like to work, kind of, because I have a family too. So there are some restrictions there. It's given me, you know, financial independence, it's totally changed, it has been totally life changing. For me,

**Zoe Hawkins** 11:31

it's the ripple effect in coaching, isn't it? So I remember a number of clients, but you know, let's just take a general theme where you're working with a client, and the coaching feels a bit like Groundhog Day, like you're not really getting anywhere, you know, yes, the coachee is making some progress, but it feels like perhaps not making as Pro as much progress as they would like, or even as the coach sometimes that that I felt they wanted or were capable of making. And, you know, there's a whole other conversation we can have about that. But years later, those clients will come back through into my circle in some way. And they will share that, that coaching or those coaching conversations were the catalyst for dramatic life change for them in their whole life as a consequence of that coaching has taken a a different effect. And I think as the coach, you don't always get to see that, you don't always get to see the full impact of the work that you do together. I just think that's I think that's great. You know, I think that's, you know, if you can stay with your client in the present moment, and just trust in the process, trust that things are unfolding exactly as they need to, for that client at exactly the right time for that client. And you know that the coaching is going to be life changing for them in the way that it is meant to be for them. Because the process works like coaching works, you just like I said before, that you can't unsee things once you once you see things and once that once that Pebble has been thrown in, you can't stop the ripple effect like it, it happens. You just don't always get to see the whole the whole thing.

**Jo Wheatley** 13:09

He can also kind of use this question that we're exploring today, in bringing it in, to ask your client like, what would need to happen in our conversation today, in order for the conversation to be life changing for you, that might just sort of below the boundaries of the client's problem or current situation? And stretch them into? Wow, yeah. And what would that as we were talking about earlier, like, what would that even mean for me? And what would I need to do? And it may be that that's not a place that they want to or can go to, you know, in that moment, but it might still stretch them out? You know, so it's, I love kind of listening to the conversations around me or, you know, that I'm exposed to, and with what I know about the clients suggest, you know, experiment with them in the conversations to get them to think think outside of their current thinking.

**Zoe Hawkins** 14:01

It's funny, because as you say that I was like, you know, somebody was to ask me in coaching right now, you know, what would be life changing for you? I think my reaction would be like, I don't want it to be life changing. It doesn't mean I want to stay the same, but it's, as you were saying around what are your beliefs around life changing? It takes me to a place a place of, I want to enjoy presence. You know, I don't want to be thinking of like, big change, you know, it's like, where does that question actually take you? Because I think fatigue can come from like, thinking oh, it's got to it's got to be life changing. I need to change my life that may not actually be the destination. You know, maybe life changing isn't what the client wants to experience it because that

**Jo Wheatley** 14:51

could give the client clarity concept you know, around ah, I definitely know I definitely don't want that or what image is it that comes into your mind when you think about life changing, because as you were saying that was thinking, or the image in my mind is like an atom splitting. And that that feels like, yeah, that that feels big. But a client might take that conversation or that question rather, in a smaller way. My life changing right now for me would be saying no to x or this thing.

**Zoe Hawkins** 15:23

I think we're also takes me as like let's unpick, let's unpick that, you know, you're coming to coaching with the premise of coaching, being about future focus and change. And yet, when I present the concept of life changing, you have a reaction to that. Like, for me, that's data, like even in myself, I'm like, well, that's interesting. Like, what's, what's that about? So I think that can just be a really fascinating piece as well. But I also think where it takes me as the coach is like, it's really important, you don't get hooked on coaching, needing to be life changing. Yeah, and I remember when we were working for, like a coaching agency, they introduced this rating scale, for the for the client had to rate each session for the coach on a scale of like, I think it was one to five and one was like, I don't know, like, pointless or something or not very good. And five was life changing. And for I think, was something like average, it was like, there was quite a gap between Yeah, it was average, or it was life changing. And there was quite a lot of pressure, I felt as the coach for each and every conversation to be life changing. And yet, as I started this conversation, my belief is that every coaching session, is life changing in some way. It's just whether your client sees it or not. So

**Jo Wheatley** 16:40

I was really interested in that you remember that rating? Because as I Oh, yes, of course, yes, that happened. And it remember thinking, Oh, my goodness, like that is that is huge. And, and so never gonna get rated that and actually, most conversations, the clients rated as life changing, which I sort of felt that was hard for me to compute, actually, which, as you say, is interesting in itself. And so it would have been useful to have had more information, actually more of a breakdown around that. But what we're talking about is expectations here. client expectations, Coach expectations, and we've talked in a previous episode about, like responsibility and pressure, and how do you manage that? And we know that these things come up when we're supervising coaches as well. So we've we've we've taken a various different routes to explore this question around, can can a coaching conversation be life changing? Any final thoughts? So

**Zoe Hawkins** 17:43

before we do, actually, the one piece that came to mind is we've actually only talked about coaching from the perspective of being life changing in a positive way. Coaching done badly, could be life changing in a different way. You know, it could be I don't want to end on the on the low tone. But like, the reason why we're so passionate around coach training and coach education is because the ethics are deeply important to us. And that relationships, so much trust is put in to that coach and coachee relationship, that coaches, it is important that we can honour that through being skilled and being ethical and coaching in a conscious way, it is possible that you could have an impact on somebody's life that isn't positive. And you may not always know that. I think that's the important thing. Like if your client doesn't experience, the trust and safety in the relationship, your client may walk away with a less than positive experience and carry that with them. Particularly if they felt undermined or disempowered in some ways. So I think bringing it full circle, it's just to say like, the reason we kind of are so passionate about coaching, and we do this podcast, and we offer the trainings that we do is because when you change your client's life we want it to be because that is the change that they want to experience, not that you as the coach want to impart upon them. And for you to be the amazing gift of change. It's all about what is your client want? What do they want to experience? And how do you simply facilitate that process for them? So I think, yeah, that's just something that kind of popped into my mind as we were wrapping up there.

**Jo Wheatley** 19:27

And I'd like to say to you all, thank you for listening. If it's your first episode, hope you've enjoyed it. There's lots more to be able to tune into go through the back catalogue, if you're a regular listener, and we know there are so many of you, thank you so much for listening and joining us each week. And if you've got five minutes, we'd really appreciate it if you could leave a review of the podcast. It really inspires me and I to continue to make the podcast so yeah, thank you for listening.

**Zoe Hawkins** 20:02

Thank you for listening to the coaching crowd podcast with Sally Hawkins and Joe Wheatley. We'd love for you to join our inclusive community to learn and grow in the coaching space. Go over to

**Jo Wheatley** 20:11

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