Somatic Coaching

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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. 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. So the topic for today's discussion is somatic coaching. And the reason that we are talking about this is because we are very much interested in this. And it very much echoes the approach that we'd like to integrate into our coaching practice. And it's also a term in coaching that not everybody might be familiar with. So we want to demystify it and explore it with you today.

**Zoe Hawkins** 00:52

Yeah, which seems like a great place to start, doesn't it? So what is somatic coaching, and I think the easiest way to describe it, from my perspective anyway, would be that it's about using all of your senses. So that you are the tool, you are the technique as well in that coaching space. So it's really about having a connection with your body, your emotions, as well as your your thoughts that come through in that session, so that you can use those bodily sensations to really tap into an intuition, I think that is coming through in your coaching and being able to share that with the client, how would you describe it, Jo?

**Jo Wheatley** 01:31

Soma is a is a Greek word, and it it means body. So it is about really focusing in on your inner experience connecting in with your body, as you were saying, very like using yourself as an instrument and very much a whole person approach. And we know that that can actually be something that in today's busy world, people can find very difficult to do, we almost become fragmented. And so I think sometimes the role of the coach is really to support the client, to be able to reconnect with all parts of their experience. And also the way that we show up as coaches is about us being able to be very aware of almost hyper aware, I would say, of our body sensations, what we notice in the conversation, what is different for us, what is it that's that's prompting that?

**Zoe Hawkins** 02:27

Yeah, and actually, one of the things that just popped into my head, as you were talking there is that we don't necessarily set out to help the client reconnect with their body like that, if that's not on their agenda, and that's not their objective, then we don't go there. However, there is something that happens in coaching, which is helping your coach you to connect with that inner coach in whatever format that may be. So when a client comes to coaching, what they experience in relationship with you is a kind of a role modelling. So if you as the coach are drawing on, you know, what you're experiencing in your body, and what that might look like, for example might be, it's really interesting when you said that I had a real, rising feeling of something in my body, you know, what does that mean to you, then by nature, the client is going to probably check in with their body or next time they notice a rising sensation in their body, they might start to pay attention to that and what it means. So by the nature of you, drawing on the sensors that arise for you, your clients are likely to start doing that too, because you're in this sort of role modelling relationship really so igniting an inner coach is often a byproduct of coaching. And when you bring somatic coaching into the space, it can help your clients to reconnect to what is happening for them as a whole person. Because it's quite easy to dismiss certain sentences. I think, when you're busy in a day to day.

**Jo Wheatley** 03:57

Yeah, so what we can do is help to legitimise the intelligence that there is in our body, like clients will say things in coaching sessions, like, Oh, I just feel like something shifted in me, then, you know, or I'm feeling something shifting in me. Now, you could ignore that as the coach, or you could lean into that. What is it that shifted? Where is the shifting happening? How is that different for you? You know, what's emerging for you? What are you sensing in your body is happening right now? How can that help you as you think about your next steps? So it can be done in a very subtle but significant way.

**Zoe Hawkins** 04:34

One of the things I think about and against is something we touch on in the emotions coaching practitioner, so clients that come with a, say a generic coaching when I say generic, because let's say confidence, for example, well, confidence doesn't actually mean anything that you have to be able to define what confidence means to me, or to you and we might have two different experiences of what it feels like to have confidence and what it feels like to not have confidence. So if a client comes to coaching and I want to improve my confidence, you could go off down the track of like, Great, okay, let's go and do that and bring out all different tools and techniques to support with doing so. Or you could connect in first because what they may be thinking is a lack of confidence. It may not be it may be that they don't like the sensation in their body when they happen to be in a particular environment or with particular people. So you can help people to unlabeled themselves by connecting back in with, let's first start with what is this experience that I'm having? Or not having? That is becoming a problem for me? Where am I experiencing that in my body? Do I like it? Do I not like it? How is it a problem for me? So yeah, that and labelling and unlearning piece, I think can be useful when bringing more somatic senses into the coaching space.

**Jo Wheatley** 05:55

I think energy is a big thing here. So you know, people can talk about trauma, for example, being held in the body, we can think about when you're in relationship or conversation with another person. So say, for example, between coach and coachee, there is an energy exchange. So if the client comes into a session and is high energy, lots of words, you might have been flat as a pancake, but they come in and and before you know it, you find yourself smiling, you find your own energy levels rising. And we can talk about we talked I'm sure about matching and mismatching before. But that sort of exchange that we have and noticing the changes, that is what I think somatic teaching is is about noticing what is happening, bringing your awareness, bringing your attention, bringing your focus to it. And you may need support in being able to do that. So you can inquire with your coaching client, you know, where, where, where are you feeling the energy at the moment in your body, you know, are you feeling any sensations, you can help them to do breath work to, you know, connect or shift some energy you can help you can support them to do a full body scan, you know, as they're talking about something. If somebody is using lots and lots of words, that kind of centering and slowing down. Sometimes words are a distraction, aren't they from what from an experience in their body that they don't want to have. And so they almost create noise, because that's easier than actually being still and really making full contact with something that they're experiencing in their body. Think about people shaking when they're nervous. I mean, that is a physical representation of an emotion of an emotional experience.

**Zoe Hawkins** 07:37

I remember when I was doing some deeper, more kind of transformational work with a client. And this particular one was using a form timeline therapy, which is from neuro linguistic programming. And we're taking the client back through various emotions in order to release let's say, trauma held in the body, you know, release emotions that have got stuck in different memories and experiences. And when we were releasing, I can't remember which emotion it was was either anger, sadness, fear, hurt guilt with some of the ones we're working on. She was silent. And yet, I felt the shift like there were no words exchanged, but I felt the release of emotion. And so as we were coming back through the, through the process, and we get to debrief it at the end, you know, how was that for you? Because that was a big one. I was like, I sensed a shift as well. You know, what was it like for you? What was it like for me, it you know, it helps to build rapport with the client to know that you are tuned in now. Not everybody necessarily has that skill from the outset. But I think the more you use your somatic senses, the more you can tune in to your clients energy. And there is an intelligence within that energy around where is my client at right now? What is it that I am sensing from their energy, that can be information here for me, it's it's deeply intuitive work. And it can be hugely powerful when when used well, in coaching.

**Jo Wheatley** 09:05

I consider it as being like something that we integrate into our approach, it isn't something that's separate from something else, I think you gave the example earlier of where you can go in a conversation when you're supporting a client and, and where you might bring this in. So you may bring it in at the beginning to help the client to kind of ground in the session really understand, you know, what are they bringing in? How are they bring themselves into the session? It might be when they're exploring a particular topic, and you've realised that they've got very much in their head. And then they need to, perhaps there may be some new insight in connecting into other parts or the whole of themselves and, and what their experiences. And again, as you come towards concluding the session, and maybe noticing how what has shifted What is different for them, and what are they going to take, you know, as they are leaving the session moving forward. So for me, it's not like I do that coaching rather than a different form of coaching. But it's very much around what could I use? What could I tap into from this particular area of coaching that might enhance or be valuable for my client and their experience?

**Zoe Hawkins** 10:11

Yeah, absolutely. And I think it's also checking in with your client, to make sure that you are not interpreting what you think you're seeing, you know, so you may notice your client, flushing, for example. And you might interpret that as embarrassed, you might interpret that as stressed, you know, so instead of commenting on the flush that you're seeing you made you say, oh, did that did that question leads you to feel some embarrassment? I'm noticing your cheeks have gone red, like that would be you interpreting what you're seeing? Rather than you might say, I'm noticing a flushing occurring in your face? Like, do you want to, you know, tap into that and explore what that is? What is happening here for you. And you want to contract for that. Because otherwise, you might make your coachee feel incredibly self conscious if you're going to be commenting on their body language, or what you're seeing or noticing throughout your coaching. So I think contracting is a really important part of somatic coaching as well. And, you know, checking out, is your client open for that? Or would they rather not, that they rather not be witnessed in that way. But it can be it can be useful, and it can help the client to articulate the unsaid I think, sometimes things are hard to say, or you know that something is happening within you, but you cannot find the words. And so if your coach invites you to explore, say, the flushing, then as the coachee, you might say, I don't know what that's about. But there is something about this exploration that I feel really uneasy with. Would you like to, you know, delve into that a bit more? Yes, actually, because this is a something that happens to me regularly, you know, the flushing is actually a problem, it happens to me in meetings, you know, and then you're off into something that could be a really valuable discussion for the client, but it's not necessarily they're gonna bring and land on the table in session one or two. So, yeah, helping the clients are really connecting and find the wisdom. And what is held in their body is can be really, really great part of teaching.

**Jo Wheatley** 12:19

Yeah, so we encourage you to, you know, read more around the topic, think about what this means to you. What do you already do in your practice that perhaps you hadn't labelled in this way, but that is useful, and what might be the growth areas for you as you think about this whole person approach tuning into the wisdom of the body. If you want to learn more about this through an emotions coaching lens, then visit our website www.ig company.co.uk forward slash emotions coaching.

**Zoe Hawkins** 12:52

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** 13:01

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