

THE COACHING HUB

Podcast Episode 27 - What coaching is and what coaching isn't

Ruth Kudzi: Fundamentally, a coach is somebody who holds a space and dances in the moment with their client to help their client move towards a goal.

Hello, and welcome to the Coaching Hub Podcast with me, your host, Ruth Kudzi. If you're a coach or you're coaching curious, this is the place for you. We're going to be talking all things coaching, personal development and business development in a really fun way. You're going to hear live coaching sessions, and you're going to come away with tools and techniques that you can practically use and take away. If you enjoy this podcast, I would love you to subscribe. And if you really enjoy it, give me a review.

Isn't everybody a coach nowadays? Surely, that is just a de rigueur word that we all call ourselves. And actually online, you may be forgiven for thinking that coach is the new black, because there seems to be a plethora of coaches, gurus and people who are calling themselves coaches. So what's going on? In this episode, I'm going to do some myth-busting. I'm going to talk about how you can distinguish between what coaching is and what coaching isn't and how you can really understand actually what a coach does.

The word coach is everywhere when you go online. And the thing is, the word isn't protected, the industry isn't protected, so it's widely used as shortcuts. Many people I know love and respect, use the word coach because people see it as a way of identifying as somebody who can help. And so, coaches become somebody who can help, but somebody who can help, is much, much bigger than only a coach. There are coaches who are teachers, trainers, mentors, and I have worked with some of these people who say they are coaches when they're trainers are mentors, and they are world-class. They are amazing at what they're doing.

So what I'm not going to be doing in this episode is I'm not going to be bashing people who use the word coach and are actually using coaching skills. What I am going to be doing is I'm going to be peeling back that onion, peeling back those layers, to share what coaching is and what coaching isn't and talk about the different modalities, so you've got more of an idea of what a pure coach does. And then we know the world is not pure. The

world is not black and white. And often, people blend the modalities to suit their clients, to suit their needs and to suit their interests.

Fundamentally, a coach is somebody who holds the space and dances in the moment with their client to help their client move towards a goal. It's a forward-focused intervention, where the coach's supporting the client, helping them get clarity, confidence and change how they're being, thinking, or acting, or all three, so they can move forward with some kind of transformation, change, momentum. It's always goal-focused, but often, you may be working with a coach and you may not like the word goal, so it can be intention. It can be accomplishment, it can be success. There is some kind of measure that you're moving towards. So it's very forward. We're not looking at the past. And the only times that coaches do look at the past when they're looking at pure coaching, is to seek to understand the future. So they don't go into the trauma unless they're specially trained trauma coaches. Instead, they look at the past to inform the future. Most of the work is done actually in the present, in the here and now.

As you can see, that can differ from a mentor because a mentor is usually somebody who's done what you want to do. They're a few steps ahead of you. And often in the online space, we confuse mentoring with coaching. We say that a coach needs to be a few steps ahead of us in order to support us. Now, if they're a mentor, then this is true, because you want a mentor to have had the experience so they can share that with you. But if somebody is a pure coach, they don't even need to be in your field. And there is evidence that the most successful coaching is actually when somebody is in a completely different field, as they're able to maintain their curiosity.

I would counter that with the fact that if a coach is really aware and self-aware of what they're bringing to a session, then if they can take themselves out of it, they can maintain their curiosity, whatever they're doing, although they do need to be aware that they may have biases based on their personal experience. And I think as a coach, we all need to be very aware of these biases, as these can impact our clients and impact the results that they get.

So we know that coaching is forward focused. We know that it's not about telling or directing as a mentor or consultant might. And it's not about giving people lots of new knowledge as a teacher or trainer might. It is a distinct paradigm. And it's one that is supported by the other interventions. Counseling may work with somebody who needs to go back and actually make sense of what has happened before they move forward. Consulting and mentoring help people to get direction. They give them that direction, and they give them the tools that they need to move forward. Often, when you combine this with coaching, it's really effective because then the coaching can help the person overcome their internal barriers and their external barriers in order to move forward towards those things that the mentor or consultant has suggested. Training and teaching obviously have their place, because they are teaching and helping you to learn new

concepts and new ways of doing, being, and thinking. So we know these modalities can work really well individually, or they can work together.

But what I want to do today, is I want to explore a little bit deeper into coaching. Pure coaching is when you are holding that space for your client, and I'm going to give you a really good example. I had a client recently on a discovery call, and she came to me for pure coaching. She said, "What do those sessions look like?" And I said, "At the beginning of the session, I check in with you to see what's going on with you in that moment. And when we've done that, we work on what you want to bring to that session. And we look at what success is going to look like for you at the end of the session, as well as longer term. And then, we do some future pacing to imagine that you're at the end of the session and really look at what you want to cover in that session in order that you can accomplish what you want to accomplish.

And then my role in the session, is to sit with you and hold that space to help you explore what you need to explore. And as a coach, I will be tuning into your energy. I'll be tuning into changes in the way that you speak, in your tonality. I'll be tuning into what I'm feeling from you. And that may be that I share my intuitions and my thoughts about what I think is going on with you. But when I do that, I do that without attachment to those being right. I take my ego out of it, and I only ever share in order for you to explore more.

For example, if I say, I noticed that there was a change in tone, what's going on there? I leave it to you to explore, or I'm feeling this more. That's going on? What is it? Or I sense that you're not saying something?" Now I can leave it there as a question, or I can put that question on the end, but you can see my tonality, I left it as a question. So I went up at the end, something that I actually used to get criticized for doing.

And then at the end of the session, throughout the session, you partner with the client. Okay, this is what we wanted to achieve. Where are we now? What else do we want to cover? Where do you want to go next? And that is a very open session. You are responding to what the client brings. You're not bringing yourself in. And the only way that you're talking about what's going on for you, is within the context of the client. So these sessions are really pure coaching, and that would be kind of ICF, MCC level coaching, which I'm a PCC, submitted my MCC, very sure that that's going to be coming very, very soon.

So it is a way of holding space and really listening on every level with every fiber of your body, to what your client brings and what is going on for them. And these are incredibly powerful sessions because your client is exploring their thoughts, their feelings, and their behaviors in order to get clarity over what's going on for them right now, and also what they want to do next. The reason that coaching is so powerful, is that your client is making their decisions. This isn't about being directed. It's about them going where they want to go. And it's about them really tuning into their thoughts and their emotions.

And the thing is, that we never really know what is going on for our client. We can't see in their unconscious mind, we can't see everything in their conscious mind. They have got the best knowledge and view of their lives. And if we allow them through powerful questioning, powerful listening, and through curiosity, to explore that, then they come out with the actions and what they want to do next. And this is pure coaching at its best. It is relational, and it really focuses on the moment. So as you can see, that may well differ to some of the coaching that you've experienced.

And the thing is, that there are loads of great coaches, me included, who often blend approaches. I have clients that come to me and they want, for example, a blend of business and mindset work. And that means that in the business work, I may be putting on my mentor or my teacher hat and then I will work with them as a coach. Or I may be helping somebody give them a bit of training or teaching around neuroscience or mindset work before I then work with them as a coach. But if we're looking at pure coaching, it is non-directive. We're not telling our clients what to do. In fact, we're empowering them to make choices about what they want to do next. It is non-directional. We do not tell them. It is forward focused. It's always looking at how what they're doing right now in the present, is going to impact the future. And it's looking at that learning and how they can apply that learning to all areas of their life.

It is about how they want to be, think and do differently. So it's not only action-based, and I think that that is a big misconception about coaching. You may have a session that is all around how somebody's being, how they're feeling, their emotions, or it may be around their thinking and their thoughts, which is why I love the neuroscience-based approaches, which are looking at how people can change their thinking patterns and what impact that's going to have on them.

So coaching is an incredibly powerful intervention. And there are lots and lots of different schools within the coaching paradigm. Online, we know that anyone can call themselves a coach. And I don't think that that is necessarily a bad thing because coaches become a short hand for helping people. But if we, as consumers, are more discerning on what we're looking for, then we start to work with the people that give us what we need. And that coaching experience is different, depending on what we need.

But if you have not experienced pure coaching, I would highly recommend that you do, because working with somebody who is giving you their full attention, so you can dance in the moment with them, so you can really allow yourself to explore what is going on for you, both consciously and unconsciously, means that you are able to take ownership for what is going on in your life and make those decisions and have that success and move towards those goals and celebrate them.

Today was all around what coaching is and what coaching isn't. And it was a bit of a paradigm busting. I am not sitting here saying to you that pure coaching is the only way. I am offering it as a powerful intervention that you may want to experience, or you may want to train in, alongside other interventions. So if you are considering training as a coach, you know that I run my own training school, Kudzi Coach Academy, and often the people that come on that training, are already highly skilled teachers, trainers, mentors, and they want to add another tool to their toolkit. You do not only have to be a coach. You can do that as a combination of other things.

I would love to know what your thoughts are on this episode. And if you enjoy it, please subscribe, review it on Instagram Stories and share it widely. Until next time, thank you for listening to the Coaching Hub Podcast with me, Ruth Kudzi. If you enjoyed this, I would love you to join my Facebook group, The Coaching Community, for more of the same.

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