

THE COACHING HUB

Podcast Episode 54 - Our client's context: why it is important to understand where people are coming from

Why is our client's context. So important as coaches, I'm going to explore this in today's episode. So first of all, let's look at what context means. Context can mean anything. It really means what does the client bring? If we are coaching the who and the what? So the what being the situation and what bring the problem, what are we also coaching with? Who, who is that person? How do they see themselves? What are that experience and experiences and what are their perceptions of that experience? How did they grow up? Why did they grow up? What was that experience like growing up? And I see more and more in the coaching world that coaching is not context specific, and it's true that everybody can benefit from coaching. But equally we have to realize that for some people, coaching is seen as more accessible than others. I am doing this as a white middle class, probably kind of middle aged woman.

He lives in the UK. I am very aware that my context means I'm much more likely to use a coach, the many other people. And I'm also aware that with the contextual background that I come from a my experience and despite what it looks like on the surface, my life has not always been easy. There were lots of things I've had to deal with. However, the many people who have had much more significant barriers, real and perceived structural barriers to them accessing something like coaching. And we have to understand that the client's context, what the client brings is part of the who. And if we are holding a space to be nonjudgmental, we have to realize that context is important because everybody does not share the same perceived or the same lift experience. Everybody does not have equal opportunities in this world. And therefore, if we are doing something as powerful as coaching, it is up to us as coaches to make sure that the space that we are holding for those people and for all of our clients is a space that is truly non-judgemental and inclusive.

And when I say this, I don't say this flippantly because of course, if we're being honest, are any of us truly nonjudgmental? There will be things that will trigger us. And that will make us need to look at our biases, our unconscious biases, the things that we carry around with us, the belief structures that we have as coaches. And we need to make sure

that we do the work on those, because if we don't do the work on those, then really what we're doing is we are not modeling for our clients, how to hold space in the effective way. We're not modeling inclusivity, we're not modeling real personal growth and real personal challenge. So for me, a client's context is about everything that they bring. And it is about us as coaches, being able to support our clients with the who as much as with the wall.

And it's the being as well as the doing many people. Well, I have had very different experiences to us. And if we want to be the coaches that we really do, and if we want to be inclusive about who we work with and how we work, we need to acknowledge this. And we need to understand and identify when we need to do the work. And that is a competency. Now that the ICF, the international coaching Federation has named as a distinct competency coaching mindset, being aware of when we need to do the work, being aware of when we need to get additional support as coaches. And I think it is very important here to mention as professional coaches, the importance of supervision, if we are holding space for others, if we are making sure that to the best of our abilities, that space is non-judgemental and inclusive.

We need somebody to hold space for us. And we need to ensure that we're able to talk in a safe space about what has happened with our clients and explore how we're able to be better at what we did. This is one of the things that always amazes me about coaches. I see people who either haven't trained or who have done some training, and they're like, okay, I'm done now. I'm like, yeah, you might be done with training, but are you done with development? Are you done? Are you really able to hold that space for your clients effectively? And are you able to look the client in the face and know that you're not being judgmental, that you are able to see them as a whole person and with the entirety that they bring to their sessions?

Are you able to do that? And it's very interesting because on social media that there definitely seems to be two schools of thought in coaching. And it's a very interesting, um, thing to look at anyway, because coaches, when that end the coaching sessions, it's about their clients, not about them. However, on social media, it's often about the coach and not the client. So we have this word to talk. We have this weird relationship where in one part, coaches are sharing what they think and feel, and equally when the holding space for clients, they're not sharing that. And I always find that really interesting. However, even in sharing on social media, we have to be aware that this is going to impact people in different ways. And of course we, we can never know truly how our content may trigger people.

The more that we can be aware of the fact that we are working with whole people, because we are whole people and we may be a mega successful business person. We may be a great coach, but equally our relationship may not be working. Or maybe we find it really hard to be healthy. Or maybe, I don't know, maybe we are in debt. I don't know

whatever it may be. And all of these are examples. I know whenever I share anything like this, some people don't listen and then they message me like Risa, you, I gay. And I'm like, yeah, I'm okay. All of those are actually pretty good in my life right now. We're really good. That doesn't mean there aren't other things. And as much as if we are holding space for others to be their whole self, to bring everything in, we used to have that space hold for hours too.

And that is with coaches and coaching supervision and ensuring that we get that right support. So I invite you to be curious about what your clients bring and to acknowledge that you do not understand their context as much as they do and whatever they have experienced it is that perception and that story. And it is part of them. And as coaches, we are not here to judge. We're not here to point fingers. We're not here to feel that we are better or worse than anyone else. We are here to really help people transform from the inside out, by holding powerful space, asking fantastic questions and really picking up on the things that are going on for someone so they can change from the inside out. If you don't already realize that I love what I do. I not only love coaching and mentoring. I also love training people and we have our next coach shading cohort starting in May and a very exciting coaching experience week, which you can enroll for below using the show night, which you can, and a very exciting, completely free coaching experience week, which is starting on the 18th of April. The Facebook group will open just before with lots and lots of insight and training to support you to be the best coach you possibly are. I would love to see that take care.

© ruthkudzi.com 2021