

THE COACHING HUB

Podcast Episode 67 - Creating Certainty in Uncertain times

I'm just really pleased. I've been able to leverage all my experience that's come together. And I think that's a great example for my clients as well, because they can see, I am really living the best life that I can live, even with everything that's been thrown.

Hello and welcome to the coaching hub podcast with me, your host, Ruth Cook feet. 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, pastoral development and business development, and a really fun way. You're going to have live coaching sessions and you're going to have 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. Hello, coaching hub. I am delighted to have the brilliant James editor. Harry James is a CEO, founder, entrepreneur, um, work life balance coach. Have I got that? All right, James.

Absolutely. Yeah. Great today. Great to be here. Thank you.

Brilliant. So James is somebody who I'm delighted is on our current coach training cohort, and he's going to be talking about creating certainty in uncertain times and we're definitely in uncertain times now. So I would love to know I'd love to know a little bit more about this. So when you're saying creating certainty in uncertain times, why should we stop?

Sure. So I think, you know, again, we all know that it's very uncertain at the moment and I think many people feel like there's this certainty. And a few years ago I found out I've got a heart condition. And I feel like I had a bit of a headstart in the game in the sense of realizing that perhaps things on a certain as we think, and no one really knows what's going to happen today tomorrow, but yet we feel like we do. And I think COVID has just brought that to life really. And I guess this theme of creating certainty onsite in times is around thinking, what can we do, not what can't we do. And often when we think about kind of reversing things, we kind of compound on, or we're worried, and we think, Oh, we can't do this. We can't do this.

And, and it feel the world feels very small, but then if we start even just on a practical daily basis, what we can get up, but what are the foods that we love to have that we can do? It's the smaller things, having a shower, having a bar doing, I guess, that self care and looking after them, that's just the starting point. And then, you know, there is still so, so much that we can do. And for me it was around. Yeah. If we focus on those things, then that can be the biggest difference. And I've seen that with my clients as well. And it was very interesting timing wise, coming up with the opportunity to be part of the cohort, uh, on Mondays and doing the coaching qualification now, which I look today in July last year originate. And it just wasn't the right timing. And then I, you know, with everything that carried on and being back here in the cohort, starting in February, I just thought, you know what, this, this is something I really can do. And so it's just been a theme I've seen, you know, what, as it brought me, it's bought me this certainty that every Monday, uh, for a number of hours, I've got this structure, it's almost this rhythm to my week. And so, yeah, for me, it's just a really powerful theme. That's helped my clients and also very much helped me.

How does having a rhythm to your week and that structure help you?

Interesting. I blocked out Monday is fully, so I won't have any other clients or anything else on a Monday. And even though the program has kind of four, four hours long, it just gives me that, that space, I guess, and start the week and then everything else kind of flows from that. So I think it's, it's one of the things I talk about as a coach kind of providing space. And it really it's the first time we did it. I'm not feeling, I guess, instructed education for awhile. It feels like this is the closest I'm going to get. And I, uh, you know, have that Sunday night feeling. I think a number of people in the cohort share that, you know, Monday came around, it was late Sunday night and getting your books ready, pencil case, whatever that kind of, you know, and that anxiety a little bit thinking, you know, how's it gonna work and whatever.

So yeah, it, it really, from a rhythm perspective, it's amazing how the weeks are just flying by and with kind of like, Oh, it's Monday again, but it is, you know, I'm going to say it's a highlight and a structure that ultimately the rest of my week then flows from and being someone that's kind of been working coaching for the last couple of years, very much. I've got certain clients certain times, but there's, there's not as much structure as this night. You know, someone interesting. I think we all do love a bit of structure, even how free we are that actually it's. Yeah, it's really, really super helpful.

I remember when I used, I used to work in education and I'm laughing at this because education, uh, love inspirational quotes. One of them was struck to liberate because if you have that structure and you're able to be more creative because you're not thinking about what you need to do.

Definitely. And there's a work philosophy, something called getting things done, um, in a book and kind of methodology by a guy called David Allen. And he's like, we're not designed to keep all this information instruct, you know, our brains aren't designed like that. And so, you know, people like Zuckerberg and Steve jobs, you know, they wore the same people. They wear the same thing every day. It just removes something. So there's a structure they put in, so that then they don't need to worry about it. And they can just spend that time and energy focusing on other things that perhaps more important.

And I love the fact. Yeah. I I've always loved that about them, that they, they do that because I I've been attempting to do that in my own life. Like I get my, I get my food delivered for the week. So for my lunches, I just take whatever it is and eat it rather than thinking, Oh, what should I make? Because that could be a, you know, let's be honest. That could be like kind of a two hour pondering about what to eat rather than they're like, okay, well it's hair. So there's no option.

Definitely. Yeah, no, I re I resonate with that and yeah, no, again, it start planning. It's interesting. I'm perhaps not doing my weekly weekly plan perhaps like I could, but I think there is definitely a how, yeah. That structure that brings then just makes things so much easier and you don't need to worry or think about it. So, yeah.

Yeah, definitely. So coaching has helped you structure. You also mentioned that, sorry, the, the listening won't be able to say this, but he also mentioned an email that's helped you build on foundations. So you've been coaching. How long have you been coaching for?

So, yeah, I guess my coaching journey really starts back in 2004, 2005. And I've got to give a big shout-out to Diageo who, uh, the drinks company who, who have a high performance coaching culture and program that they were running back then. And to all their credit. I was in a presentation with them back in 2004 in my final year at university. And I saw them do a presentation. And I was thinking that at some stage, maybe applying for a job with them and the HR person there. I said, look, I'm doing my dissertation on coaching, the impact of coaching and organizations. And I'd love to interview or speak to someone in your HR department. And she's like, okay, here's my card. Send me an email. And a few weeks I got a phone call from this woman could AMA say, right, we're running a high performance coach course in a couple of weeks in Milton Keynes with some of our senior leadership team.

Would you like to join us? Is that, yeah, please. That'd be amazing. So I went to Milton Keynes and I was there for two days and they fully immersed me in their training alongside these pairs of brand managers for Johnny Walker. And I watch it just snaps a barrier. I mean, it was just amazing. And I got to interview them after the program. And then a few months later to see the impact to the course at diamond, that was my first real

insight to coaching. And I did my dissertation on it. And then I set up a company that now impresses about 200 people. And I was there for the best part of 10 years where I used a lot, you know, just in day-to-day management and the ability to help lead people to achieve perhaps more than they would achieve by themselves. And then I left day-to-day and run another startup that didn't work out, but I'd mentioned already my heart condition and I wanted something that would provide, I could go to sleep every night and wake up every day and I can contribute and help someone.

And going from a startup life of working 12 to 18 hour days is a very different than mentality to go. I can just help one person that will make the difference. It was a big shift for me, but actually the huge amount of value that then coaching, I kind of looked back at what I can do and how I can contribute. And I've done a lot of speaking events and helping giving advice to people, but it was also, you know, with my coaching hat on. And so I thought, well, if I can contribute and do that, my aim was to be honest, have one client a week, one client a day. So five clients a week and go to bed every night going right. I I've helped someone else on that journey cause that's, that feels right for me now. And so the last two years that I've kind of, I live a life of half.

I'm going to say an amazing dream life where I was living in the mountains last year before COVID hit and I'd have a, a client in the morning and then get skiing all day and then have maybe one client if, if they fit in and night. But then that was it one or two a day. But with the background of what shapes my health conditions still quite difficult to manage, but day to day, that feels really right. And, um, so yeah, I'm just really pleased. I've been able to leverage all my experience, that's come together. And I think it's a great example for my clients as well, because they can see, I am really living the best life that I can live, even with everything that's been thrown at me.

I think it's a great example at your clients. I'm going to challenge you on something. So you were saying that it was just helping one person, but I would believe that you're helping more than one person by you helping that one person.

Thank you for calling him out on that. And I, I really hope I am and, and, you know, thank you. And I think it's about intention though. If I know, you know, I guess if you take the other step back, you know, and, and I, I went through, when I found out about my condition through quite a difficult state, you know, depression and mental health and kind of being concerned and being worried and not contributing, I'm going to say at all or very little. And so the structure of having one a day, it kind of isn't the, okay, I've done something I've got up. This is what I'm contributing to, but absolutely my, my aim and my reach and wanting to contribute more people. So thank you for calling me out on that. And I do believe I, it does impact on many more people on the teams and people and, and ripples, uh, that, that we have as teachers. So yeah, it's hugely powerful work.

It is hugely powerful. What, so you started back at university, good old Milton Keynes, which is near where I grew up, did that course. And now I've been coaching over a number of years, and we've talked a little bit about why you went into coaching. I know that you've been doing a pay as you value methodology. So can you tell me a little bit about that and what that is?

Sure. Look, it's interesting. I know everyone I'm going to say from a teacher perspective has got different packages and how it works and whether it be group or individual. And one of the things that I kind of found it's partly because I've been surrounded by a lot of entrepreneurs and founders. My, my natural network is that, you know, that first stage, how do I get, if I've never had a coach before, how do I get a coach? How do I know that there's a fit? How do I understand it? And, um, it sounds funny, but it was in a shopping center will come through Westfield and there was someone they were doing pairs, you feel head massage, there's a 10 minute head massage. And at the end you just pay whatever you want. And there's some research about it actually says, people generally overpay what the rate would have been and some people under pay and fine, but actually on average, people will, will ever pay it and, but do value it.

And I then was approached by someone just for some advice. And at the end of the session, I thought that was so useful. Thank you so much. And I just thought, instead of putting a barrier up for price staying and where I wanted actually different people at different stages. So if someone's just raised a few million pounds and they're growing in high-growth business and I've got some experience, you know, very relevant to that and I can help support them, then there might be, you know, from a corporate perspective or from a, you know, funded startups, but did more money available to do something that I says, you know, someone that's just starting out and doesn't have any funding and actually really needs and wants that support perhaps even more. And so it's that range. And I started, one of my friends said, what happens if someone pays you too little?

And you, you know, you don't agree with that. And what happened here. And interestingly, someone did pay lower than my expectation was. And what was amazing was though they still, it was all about them, you know, taking action and moving things forward and seeing that it was working. And the challenge is when people do something for free as well, there's no value exchange and then people don't value it. And so it's this playing the spine line of actually and demonstrating to people look, and I asked this question very April, you look in three to six, 12 months time. If we achieve this goal, what would that mean to you? How would you value that? And so it is it's aligning, I think in a very powerful way, how we can get those results and, and what that really gets, you know, my clients to really engage with that.

There are a lot of clients as well. A lot of other cases, I know that do you know, a 10 week package, which I think is all fantastic, but for me, what I want to do as well was my clients

would work with me in some, a weekly, something like once a month, but for them to go look, this is really working for me. And I'd like to look in the next three months, I'd like to look at it. And I'm now, you know, in terms of success, I guess I work with a number of my clients for over two years now, since I almost started this, this process. And it's just so rewarding and it's really working for them and a number of clients that said, you know what I'd like to increase now. And during COVID times as well, some people did say, look, I need to decrease it for a little bit, but as soon as I can put it back up, I want to, and I will. And so it's, it's an amazing, I say vulnerable thing personally, to do. And yeah, it's, it's just, I say really working, it's a bit unconventional, but I think that's, I'm unconventional through and through, to be honest.

And I love the fact that you've done it your way though. Like, you're like, okay, well, this is not what everyone does, but this is what I'm doing. I'm James. I can choose how I want this to work.

Definitely. Yeah. And it's, yeah, it's a lot of fun and it's hugely rewarding though. And I, I think, you know, as well, something just to share in the background, I was very intentional. Like this is the money that I want to make every month. And then it just worked back from that and some will over pay somebody underpaid, but then the average comes through and, you know, I kid you not, I know that's a lot about kind of the secret or intention and you put things out and patient boarding, but I literally, again, I guess quite a great example for my clients to say, look, I said, you know, I was doing this April was the main time I started doing this two years ago. And within three months I hit my revenue target and I been basically hovering above and below that sense. And that's very, so that's really, really powerful stuff.

It's really powerful. And it's really good to actually hear, you know, setting that and being intentional, even waive the fact that you're not actually setting the price.

Nope. So you attend to your words, you put it out there and the universe delivers, I had to fill out a form recently that was to do with the bank and my mortgage. And the bank said, you know, have you been affected by COVID? I said, no. And they said, well, what's going to stop you not being impacted in the past. And what's, you know, something about, you know, could you work more? And I'm like, well, if I'm working one to two to two hours a day at the moment, yeah. I could work more, but that's not what I want to. It was just quite, I, I thought an interesting, reflective comment and I feel very lucky that I'm very lucky. I don't believe in luck. I think the harder you work, the luckier you get, but I feel like I've, I've set things up in a great way that really works for me. And could I work harder? Yes. Could I, you know, I don't have a car anymore. There's certain things that I just decided I don't need and I don't want them. And, and you know, not that we can go very far,

But you don't need to call right now. I, what I love about this and what I love about you, James, is this like openness to, despite the fact that you've been doing this for a long time, this openness to, to learn more and to really always put your clients at the center of what you're doing, it feels like you're doing this to really support your clients so you can hold space for them even more effectively.

Yeah, definitely. I, I, it's so interesting again, cause I I've shared with all of them that I've, you know, my background and what I'm doing, I really do on board them in a great way. And I have told all of them that, you know, I'm, I'm kind of upping my game and, you know, being part of the qualification and taking things further and they can see, I think I can see, and I think they can see the level that kind of a shift in the last few weeks and, you know, which is really, really exciting to see, but absolutely it is, you know, really, really holding, holding the space for them. And it's something, again, it's so rewarding, be able to deliver more effectively for them and, and build and they grow. And I think like I've always been one of those I always would read and you know, not so much honestly now attending events, but even online learning, it's a constant, you know, it's life, life, lifelong learning.

And I think that's, I was never very an academic person. I didn't really enjoy the structure around studying. And it was to be honest, a bit apprehensive for me to be like, Oh, what am I signing up for? And I'm not, Oh my God, I'm going back to school and being, being, you know, I'm gonna say evaluate, but actually the evaluations been such a rewarding part already because it's such a supportive group and it's like, you can test things and if it doesn't work, you get that really kind of supportive feedback, which then I can see already, you know, the following week then taking there'll be a new model or a new way back into my clients. They can, Oh, that's an interesting way. And that's different. And even just, you know, one or two different questions that you can frame at the beginning at the end of the session that can really, really, you know, make a difference. So yeah, it's really exciting.

So what's next for James? So

It's funny enough. I'm actually writing a book and it's all to do with, like I said, Sarah, it's all about kind of serendipity. And um, if I can share a brief story, I should do it. My dad's coming down. This is the last chapter. I said the last chapter of the book. So, um, my dad actually was coming down from a train from Newcastle to Milton Keynes and the most important theme and somewhat someone was on the track. So the train wasn't going anywhere. And my dad thought to himself, what would James do in this situation? Now? Now I've got 101, this is where the book comes in. Story is about serendipity and connection and how, you know, you say something or do something anyway. So my dad said, what would James do? So he stood up and goes, does anyone want to share a taxi to North London?

And you know, people in the carriage number of people didn't know where to look, what to do, but these two women said, yeah, we'll, we'll go with you. Fine. So my dad said in this taxi to, to North London and they gave her, where are you going? And they said near Golders green, which is more fun than area. And then where are you going specifically middle way. And he goes, okay. And they get to the house. And the house that the grandmother who I in the house was one of the grandmother. One of these women, um, was living in the house that my father used to own. And it was the house that I was born in or lived. So he went in and he made the ground mine. He's like, we used to go in this house, you know, 20 years or plus ago.

And, um, and he walked back home cause we live now on the right parallel. And it's just that moment where you just think, you know, the chances of one them hearing to them being in the same carriage. And if you think about that situation, how many scenarios are there that we never say anything, even though we could, and we hold ourselves back and there's definitely a Britishness stops about this, but actually, you know, and again, I guess the last line of the book, so if you're not sure what to do, what would James do? And, um, that's, that's the ending and I'm, I'm, I've been writing a chapter and funding the enough. It's interesting because the coaching qualification does you go into it, maybe you do think, cause some people do that actually also going to be doing a huge amount of work on yourself as well, in terms of each week, structurally, what's your long-term goal.

What's the short term goal. What are you what's important for you right now? And the book I spoke at an event a few weeks ago online, and it was all about networking connectivity and all my stories. People like you've got to write a book. And so I took that into my next coaching session and it was like, they've said this and it's like, okay. And then working out the structure, what's the next step. And one of my coaching conversations, like, should I self publish or should I work with a publisher? And it was all of those kinds of stepping. And as part of the structure, now my aim is every week to write seven. So one a day, just one of the little stories that kind of, they all build up. And it's almost like a timeline of from when I started to where I am now.

And so it's not just being on the train and stuff, but there's very a business opportunities and all of these things come together and say again, the course has been, I think, a great structure again, to help, you know, bring this to life. So I'm really excited about that. And hopefully I'm going to say, I know we finished in September. So by September, I'm definitely the whole scripts that I've already got 10,000 words. And some stories may be a bit rubbish and a bit more self-indulgent. But I know that between those ones, which we might ignore and take out and there are some real gems. And so I'm really excited about that.

I am excited. I'm excited to read it. So what did you decide? You're going to self publish or you're going to go for a down

So amazing. I say amazingly we've actually I've published. I took a I'll share the brief story as well. My, uh, before I was 30, I went to a friend of mine, Geico, Fraser, Daugherty, who run, ran a company called super jam. And I went to his book launch and I I'm. So it's like, it was before I started here. I said, I'd love to publish a book before I'm 30. How did this all come about? He goes, Oh, well you need a book agent. So he introduced me to his book agent and it turns out his book agent went to school with my brother, same school as me. And we ended up having this great conversation. And I, to be honest, I wanted to publish a book called behind the beans, which was the story about student beans. And I've actually got a manuscript in about 10 meters from where I'm sitting, which is over five, 600 pages long where I wrote a journal every day for the first six years of the business.

Wow. It's in me like that. I mean, it's out of me even it's there, but the agent at the time said, this is when the business was six, seven years old. And so he just said, look, not yet, but why don't you publish a student cookbook? I said, uh, how does that all work? And so he introduced me to, um, a home economist who wrote the recipes and, and we pitched it to publishers and actually, uh, Ryan who do the Harry bikers and various people took it on and wanted to do two cookbooks. So we published the ultimate student cookbook and the healthiest student cookbook. And they've sold tens of thousands of copies, which is for someone that was terrible at cooking at university. It's an amazing accolade to have, have these out there. And so I've not, I've not yet decided, but I know as an option, you know, I guess I'm well-connected to be able to explore that.

I think one of the things is I just like the original idea was to do behind the beans, which I'm sure will happen at some stage. I don't want to approach a publisher and give them this idea and then say, well, what about this? Because this is my time feels like it's right now for this one. And so I kind of, I want to get much further down the line in terms of I've got full manuscript and this is, so if I do take it to a publisher and say, look, what about this? Or let's say, I might then sell, publish, and maybe do something else that the publisher thinks is a better angle or a better timing or whatever it is. But I'm definitely open to both options still. And that was, you know, the coaching that I had in a session definitely explored the benefits and what I should do. And I am much clearer when you ask me that question, like what, what is the next step? So yeah. That's exciting.

Yeah. Okay. Well, James, this has been brilliant. I've learned new things about you. I've been smiling probably throughout this whole interview. I'm sure people can hear that in my voice. I'm still, people are going to find you online. Can you just let them know where they can find you? Where are you hanging out most,

To be honest, I'm not a big social media pastor. My main hub is LinkedIn. Um, and so it's, my name is James. And then he taught us about E D E R and you'll see a bright beaming face of me. And yeah, you'll be able to find me that.

That's great. We love the bright banning faith, faith. Thank you so much. Thank you for listening to the coaching hub podcasts with me. Ruth could, if you enjoy this, I would love you to join my Facebook group, the coaching community for more of the faith.

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