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CASE STUDY 2 - Bob

Coach Name: xx

Date: xx

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1. Personal Coaching Philosophy

This training has helped me to see more clearly than ever before, my personal motivation towards my work. I believe that to be human is to be constantly changing in response to the events that touch our lives. I believe it is better to reflect on our lives and, through greater self-awareness, create conscious and self-directed change rather than moving forward blindly being lead by the current. At the same time, doing this well involves knowing when we cannot change something and learning instead how to accommodate or work around it.

This belief gives purpose to my work as both therapist and coach. I aim to help people realise their personal potential in life and in themselves. This in turn helps me to realise what I feel is my potential and live my own life with meaning.

For me facilitating this process through a positive coaching attitude is key. It is about maintaining with regard to my coachee, a careful balance between non-judgemental acceptance and holding out for their potential to be more or better (or simply less troubled) than they may now. Closely related are the importance of encouragement, support, belief in the coachee's own ability to implement positive change and developing their self-belief, resilience and their own ability to withstand setbacks.

I am a firm believer in the power of a positive, authentic coaching relationship as the prime instrument for such change. It is part of the coach's responsibility to create and model an ethically sound basis for this relationship as a strong foundation for the work. Trust and rapport are essential qualities with which the coach can offer to meet coachee.

Communication technology and media are all pervasive in the modern world creating a noisy backdrop for all our experiences. Space and time for peaceful self-reflection and meaningful dialogue are more important than ever. I am passionate about offering such a space to a 'non-clinical' client base, which I find something of an artificial distinction anyway.

In the final analysis, the goals and results of coaching need to be tangible, applicable and felt in the 'real world'. I do not believe in process for its own sake, without the need for practical benefit and results. It may well be that sometimes the results may be difficult to define or may change but part of achieving real progress is about recognising and allowing for this. Narrow thinking can lead to a cul-de-sac of stagnation, false solutions or solutions to the wrong problems. I am passionate that change must come from within (the coachee), be genuinely meaningful to them and be sustainable in the longer term. Otherwise, coaching can become merely an exercise in helping someone write a 'do-list'.

All of this came into play in coaching Bob. He was motivated but needed a framework to follow his thoughts through to tested conclusions. He also needed time to make sense of what these conclusions were telling him. He was stuck in a rut of cyclic thinking and stagnation, rooted in the fear of taking the wrong direction. He needed support and encouragement to ask himself the difficult questions and listen to his answers. He needed courage to trust his judgement and begin to move

forward on one concrete path that made sense whilst letting other potential routes fall away because he finally knew they were not right for him.

Theoretical model for coaching

I trained as a (redacted) psychotherapist and have been working with individuals in my private since (redacted). Since then, I have also trained in (reacted) technique, which involves somatic listening to one's own and the client's body (more details redacted). I have been practising yoga regularly for the past (redacted) years. I find yoga maintains self-awareness and mindfulness in myself and my life and also informs my work with clients.

I am aware of the training and experience I bring which may be relevant to coaching. The fundamental principle is a desire to bring opportunities for meaningful dialogue to non-clinical clients, i.e. coachees; to create a space for some time to think.

I believe that well known existential and philosophical themes have much to offer such conversations. These include constructing one's own meaning in life; finding something worth living for. Recognising genuine limitations and differentiating these from obstacles that can be overcome.

Other relevant ideas are the differences between facts and assumptions, making real and informed choices, what it means to have responsibility. Nietzsche's concept of 'the herd' is very relevant in today's society, recognising the tension many of us face between the desire (or pressure) to conform, against the need (or expectation) to stand out as an individual. Coaching can provide a space to in which such difficult questions can be engaged with and worked through.

Phenomenology, the practice of seeing what actually is, not what you wish to see, is closely related to mindfulness and being authentic. This applies to the coaching relationship at least as strongly as to the therapeutic one. Coaching offers a non-judgemental space to think and be creative, free from the limitations and critical opinions of often internalised entrenched ideas.

Working as I do in a focusing oriented way and using metaphor, can go a long way to counter the overly intellectual, cognitive, reason-based style of thinking of many clients, particularly those who have achieved considerable success in the worldly sense and are high functioning. These methods are perfectly suited to actions once a plan has been arrived at. However, if a coachee is stuck or unsure even where the problem lies, an exclusive cognitive approach can do little to help them move forward.

Added to these are the well-established coaching tools, techniques and solution focussed approaches I have learnt over the past year during my T2C Senior Practitioner training. I have found it is essential to be thoroughly familiar with a diverse range of methods. I try to offer them lightly to coachees and, if used, apply them thoughtfully with sensitivity. They can be a powerful route to the area that needs to be addressed and point towards some options and resolutions in a direct

and efficient way. As before any kind of intervention (both in my therapy and coaching practice), whenever I consider using a coaching tool with a coachee, I always ask myself the 5 questions of intent, as given in the T2C handbook:

- Will it raise awareness?
- Will it leave the coachee with responsibility?
- Is the relationship strong enough to withstand the intervention?
- Is it timely?
- Will it leave the coachee with choice?

I am acutely aware that a coaching tool alone can never be an adequate substitute for fully meeting the coachee and engaging with their issues.

Note. In the remaining sections of this case study, any points that support one or more of the Senior Practitioner competencies and capability indicators are referenced directly afterwards in brackets.

Case study

Introduction to Coachee and Background

Bob is a 26-year-old man who wanted to use coaching for his career direction. He was introduced to me by his mother, an ex-colleague who knew about my T2C Coaching training. Bob and I had never met and we knew nothing of each other's circumstances. We exchanged mobile numbers and, via text message, set a time for me to call him. I could tell he was motivated and keen to start because of his prompt responses.

Initial Contact

My objective in this first brief call was simply to:

- establish contact between us
- schedule a time in our diaries for a telephone 'matching conversation'

I explained briefly that the main purpose of the matching conversation was to enable us both to be sure this was the right way forward. I explained that the matching conversation would:

- be based on a series of high-level questions I would ask him about his current situation and what he would like to gain from coaching.
- take about 30-45 minutes and be conducted over the telephone.
- be free of charge and further obligation.

I told Bob that if it went well for us both, we could agree to move to the next step; the creation and sign-off of a personalised coaching agreement. I would send this to him for review ahead of our first meeting (CI 79, 80, 95).

Matching Conversation (Pre-contracting)

This was an important stage of the coaching process because it offered us both an opportunity to check whether the working alliance felt viable, before embarking on the work. In general, a matching conversation allows:

- Me to assess the coachee's readiness and motivation for coaching and to spot any obvious indicators why I may not be the right coach for him, based on the issues he wanted to work on, the match or mis-match of our personalities, any potential logistical or practical difficulties and my particular coaching approach.
- The coachee to assess how comfortable he feels with the coaching process, my coaching approach, me as a person and how what he may be looking for from a coach.

I used as my template the list of questions suggested in the T2C participant training pack, adapting them so I felt comfortable with the wording and style (CI 79, 80). From our matching conversation I learnt that Bob wanted to find the right way to move forward in his career. He had been in his time job since completing his studies 4 years ago. He felt stuck and un-stimulated in his job and felt unsure how he could create time and energy for new training or other job opportunities.

Ideally, he was seeking to be working with new technologies in a creative role which would harness his passion and interest in this field. He was seeking a coach who could collaborate with him to systematically assess his options and consider what felt right like the right direction in which to move forward.

In addition, he was looking to build greater confidence in his decision-making abilities because he was aware of a tendency to avoid commitment to one path and instead procrastinate in an effort to keep many options open.

I used what Bob had told me to personalise the Coaching Agreement. I crafted one paragraph that I felt accurately summarised his current situation and coaching objectives. I checked this out later and Bob felt that I had understood his situation accurately. (CI 80, 95)

I decided not to send him the 'wheel of life' exercise because he had already told me explicitly that he was happy with other areas of his life at the moment (relationship with family and girlfriend, friends, hobbies, health and fitness, diet). It was clear to me that Bob was keen to use his coaching time to concentrate on his career (CI 80).

Contracting Session

The contracting discussion formed an integral part of our first coaching meeting. We agreed to spend the first 10-15 minutes reviewing the Coaching Agreement I had sent beforehand and Bob returned a signed electronic copy to me. This worked well as all the details had already been worked out during the matching conversation and this was simply an opportunity to review and formalise the agreement. We agreed to meet over Skype for a contract of 6, 1.5 hour meetings.

Development of the work (include any themes as subheadings)

We began by putting some structure to the progress he had already made in trying to review and revise his career direction (CI 81, 83, 86, 87, 88, 89, 93). We labelled them as numbered options, shown in the table below. Bob told me he liked the clarity that a systematic approach gave him.

Option 1	Focus on getting part-time work + leaving more time for other training/study	<i>Feels realistic. Would rely on finding a course(s) that felt relevant to long term goals.</i>
Option 2	Apply for full time University/Other formal education + p/t work for some income	<i>Realistic but structured learning feels less appealing, carries risk of being less relevant to target goals and could be costly.</i>
Option 3	Switch focus to part-time study/training + p/t work for some income	<i>Similar to Option 1, different emphasis. Would rely on finding a course(s) that felt relevant to long term goals and getting a job to fit around it.</i>
Option 4	Focus on job/training applications for opportunities at high profile target corporations	<i>Feels unrealistic because of rarity of such opportunities.</i>
Option 5	Stay in current job and maximise training opportunities on offer.	<i>Feels dull, not related to areas of interest and not contributing towards long term goals.</i>
Option 6	Take time out for travelling	<i>Feels exciting and attractive and full of potential but also carries risk and uncertainty towards relevance to long term goals.</i>

During this exercise, I could hear from the way Bob was taking that, left unchecked, he tended to go down to lots of detail and that as a result, I did not have sense of the bigger picture, his life goals, what he most valued and enjoyed in life (CI 80, 83, 84, 85, 87, 93).

When I asked him to tell me something about these, the following themes emerged as relevant and important to Bob's process:

- Whilst clarifying his job and study options was his priority, the exercise had shown him that he had little idea what his target companies were really looking for in candidates. This meant he had not been able to systematically consider whether these were realistic options for him at this stage (CI 83, 81, 88).
- Whilst he knew he was self-disciplined and able to apply himself once he had decided on a course of action, Bob's attitude to risk was one of aversion. He recognised that his efforts to avoid risk had for some time been making it difficult for him to commit to a single direction and this had led to a cycle of

confused thinking and stagnation. He told me he felt de-motivated by the prospect of risk and uncertainty (CI 82, 84, 85, 88, 91).

- He began reconnecting with how much he valued simple living, personal and financial freedom, the ability and opportunity to travel, giving space to the 'free spirit' side of his nature that he had long been suppressing into the demands of a more conventional lifestyle. He remembered that ideally, he had always wanted to work with environmental or green issues, wanting to apply his natural enthusiasm and creativity. He saw he had a strong sense of independence and in the longer term, wanted to work towards his own goals on an entrepreneurial path. His voice and manner became enlivened as he told me all this and I reflected back to him how important this side of his life was for him (CI 80, 82, 83, 84, 85, 88). Bob agreed.

Bob ended the session by deciding to do some market research, something which he had never done before (CI 82, 83, 84, 85, 86, 93). He decided to spend some time systematically finding out about skills, qualifications and experience Google and 4 other corporates for whom he aspired to work, look for in new recruits. I felt this would be valuable because it was an objective exercise that required Bob to get input from the real world and be better informed.

Bob knew that I had an IT background and asked me for my advice on his next career move. He also expressed this request in his feedback form, saying,

"I was curious to hear if also had any feedback on my choices based on your experience in life or other client etc."

And

".....I would like to hear a bit more from you on opinions based on my ideas"

Of course, I resisted answering his queries directly. I explained coaching was not about the coach giving advice but facilitating him to find the best solutions for himself. Secondly, my advice would be irrelevant and out of date at best, or misleading at worst (CI 79, 80). Thirdly, I brought to his attention his need to search for answers from outside himself (CI 80, 82, 83, 93). He smiled and recognised this as a long-standing pattern that he wanted to break. I made a mental note to listen out for this trait and to point it out to him if it arose again so that he could begin to change this tendency (CI 80, 82, 83).

As with other clients, Bob's feedback (CI 95) rated me highly on:

- establishing an ethically based contract (CI 79, 80)
- establishing an empathic and trusting relationship (CI 79, 80)
- listening deeply and tuning in accurately to his emotions, beliefs, language and mood (CI 80, 81, 82, 83, 84, 85, 86, 87, 88, 89, 91)
- using different approaches to enable insight and learning (CI 80, 81, 82, 83, 84, 85, 86, 87, 88, 89, 91)

This was good to hear but did not come as a surprise. These are skills in which I feel well practised through my therapy training and experience. If I felt something was amiss in these areas, I would hope to be at least aware of it as my coachee and probably well before I received a feedback form (CI 74).

Looking back over the following 3 meetings, I feel our work developed into 2 distinct areas:

- In depth exploration of the 6 options and testing out the suitability of each by incorporating tangible actions and external, objective feedback wherever possible. These included:
 - - Writing a technical product review article and sending it to a journalist friend of Bob's who had offered to review it and give her feedback. For some time, Bob had nurtured the idea that technical journalism might suit him as a career path. The experience of actually committing (through our coaching meetings) to writing up one of his article ideas and sending it off (something he had been thinking of doing for over a year), gave Bob some valuable insight into this option. He saw that he did not enjoy the experience of writing to a deadline as much as he had imagined he would and found it more difficult than he had expected (CI 82, 85, 88, 89, 90, 91, 92).
 - Joining a local technology club for networking, inspiration and to get involved in a new technical project. Although he had been thinking about this for many months, making time for this meeting after a long day at work had always been a challenge for Bob. It hung over him as another pending project. Through the coaching Bob decided he needed to make this effort to move forward in his thinking. He signed up and arranged to go along to the next meeting (CI 82, 85, 88, 89, 90, 91, 92). However, Bob did not actually attend a meeting in the months of our coaching. When I reviewed this with him, he explained that his ideas were already moving on and it was becoming less of a priority (CI 82, 95). He could see this path did not serve his wider objectives and he began to let it go and move on.
 - A detailed review and careful update of Bob's CV. Despite his long-term job search for a more fulfilling role. Bob had not got around to updating his CV for over 4 years. I sent him an up-to-date example of a technology CV from an ex-colleague of mine and Bob spent time using this template to update his own. It became more 'grown up', punchy, and presented Bob as the serious, enthusiastic and skilled applicant he knew he was. He noticed an immediate positive response to this new CV which helped him 'raise his game' (CI 89, 93, 94).
 - Ongoing market research for potential employers and job opportunities. Continued job applications. Bob began consistently trying out for various jobs. He reported progress on this at almost every meeting through his own initiative. He felt motivated to try because he had a sense of the bigger picture. I always made a point of reflecting this back to him (CI 82, 83, 84, 86, 88, 90).

- De-brief for an interview Bob had with (redacted company name). This was very valuable for Bob because he saw the reality of what working at an (redacted company) might actually be like. He told me he was surprised by the level of seriousness of the interviewing manager and that he did not get the sense of it being a fun, laid back place to work as he had imagined (CI 82, 83, 88, 89).
- Bob becoming increasingly aware of his wider value system (needing greater freedom, independence, desire to live outside the mainstream with the advantages and sacrifices that might involve) and that the only option that could be adapted to support these was Option 6 (CI 80, 81, 82, 83, 84, 85, 87, 88, 91, 92, 94). He had begun to consider letting go of some ideals so he could fully grasp others.

At the next meeting Bob told me that he and his girlfriend were seriously considering an extended stay in (abroad – country redacted) with the aim of settling there. He told me this had been a vague idea for some time but that recent events and experiences were making it feel like the option they both wanted to pursue. He told me his efforts on the job front had made it clearer to him than ever that this was not the route he really wanted to follow. He yearned a more creative, independent life away from the city rat race. We spent time exploring the benefits, uncertainties and risks of such a move. We discussed Bob's financial situation and the options if things didn't work out and they had to return to the UK. It was clear Bob had thought all of this through already and was able to explain his plans in a calm, confident, realistic and enthusiastic way (CI 80, 81, 83, 88). I reflected back that he sounded more certain of this route than any other I had heard him talk about over preceding weeks and he agreed (CI 80, 81, 83, 88). It felt like Bob had finally found something that felt right for him and that he was moving out of his stagnation naturally and with bold self-direction.

Over the months, I saw my role with Bob:

- Help create clarity in his thinking whilst remaining neutral about the options myself. This felt relatively easy because I was well aware I could not know what would be best for Bob, only Bob himself could know that (CI 79, 80, 81, 82, 83, 84, 85, 87, 88, 91, 92, 94).
- Create commitment to tangible actions (stop procrastination) using more reference to new external experience so that he could be better informed in relation to his options. Build on real world feedback rather than his own assumptions of what was out there (CI 80, 82, 83, 84, 85, 88, 89, 90, 91, 92, 94).
- Build his self-confidence whilst staying realistic. Pointing out to him the things he was doing well, and where he was self-motivated and action oriented. Allowing time for Bob to reflect on these and notice what he was doing differently (CI 80, 81, 82, 83, 84, 85, 88, 89, 90, 91, 92).
- Build his ability to make own decisions and trust his judgement. Getting Bob to reflect on his experiences and use the new information to move forward in a more informed way. Pointing out to him the choices he was making and

exploring how he knew they felt right for him. Allowing time for Bob to reflect on these and notice what he was doing differently (CI 80, 81, 82, 83, 84, 85, 88, 89, 90, 91, 92).

2. Role of supervision and impact on coaching practice and relation to coaching theory

During the course of my coaching meetings with Bob, there were 2 main areas that I took to supervision.

My internal response when I heard some of Bob's career plans were that they felt somewhat unrealistic and overly ambitious for his current skill and education level. I was aware it would not be constructive or even well-founded to share my thoughts with him, because they were only my opinion and could have a discouraging effect on him. I was also aware of the need to remain authentic. This presented me with a dilemma which I discussed in supervision (CI 73, 74, 79). I concluded I had to bracket these thoughts and focus on helping Bob find out for himself which of his plans had credibility through direct action and feedback from trusted others and his own experiences. Once I had established this perspective in my mind, it was easy to stay with Bob and facilitate his process from a genuinely positive and encouraging angle (CI 74).

I noticed that I sometimes felt the urge to offer Bob advice, partly because he was so much younger than me and partly because he would regularly ask for my guidance. I was aware of this from the outset and resisted the temptation to tell him what I thought he should do (CI 74) instead reminding him about the purpose and objective of coaching.

3. Reflection on practice and impact on future practice and relation to coaching theory

I learnt much from my work with Bob that I feel will be applicable to my coaching practice. I have summarised these points as follows.

I found keeping a balance between staying positive whilst remaining realistic about Bob's options quite a challenge. Based on his education, skills and experience and the competition I know exists for the jobs he was originally aiming for, I felt some of Bob's ideas lacked substance and needed a dose of reality. However, I did not know this for sure so had to remain open to the possibility that for example, an application to Google in California could indeed lead to something tangible. Also, even if Bob lacked the experience and training to reach these goals now, he may well have chosen to develop this over time. My job as his coach was not to fall into judging or deciding this for him (CI 73, 74, 80). Rather to remain non-judgemental, open, curious and positive. It was to sustain my belief in Bob's own ability to see the best path for himself, given a collaborative, supportive thinking space. It was to facilitate his own decision making by taking actions that would lead to his own

conclusions (CI 73, 74, 80). I know I will see this kind of scenario many times as a coach and will find this experience valuable to draw from.

In terms of his career, Bob was stuck and he knew it. He had already tried lots of ways of progressing his ideas and plans but with limited success. I saw (and Bob told me) that an important part of what he needed from me as a coach was to be facilitated through a systematic exploration, based on real world input. He also wanted me to challenge him in testing out his plans and to encourage him to see out different lines of thought to a proper conclusion. For this Bob needed to form and commit to tangible actions. He had to stop his habit of procrastinating because simply ruminating about his options indefinitely would not help to move him forwards. He needed to be better informed and to try out some of his ideas in real world situations. He needed feedback from his own experience rather than basing plans on his own assumptions (and sometimes idealistic notions) of what was out there. He also needed feedback from other people who were knowledgeable and Bob could trust to offer constructive but honest feedback (CI 80, 81, 88, 89, 90, 91, 92, 93, 94)

I did this by applying TGROW as the coaching framework for every session and for Bob's meta-goal across sessions. I asked Bob questions like "What could you do to try that out?" or "How could you find out more about this?", which would often lead to self-generated actions. I would close meetings by explicitly agreeing actions and checking his commitment to them, spending more time where I felt Bob was uncertain or vague (CI 81, 84, 85, 93, 94).

I regularly applied scaling, metaphor and use of different language and kinds of questions, to clarify both Bob's understanding and my own. I also used a focusing (somatic coaching) approach as appropriate to explore beyond the well-trodden cognitive pathways Bob had clearly gone over many times before. (CI 83, 81, 93, 94)

- Build his self-confidence whilst staying realistic. Pointing out to him the things he was doing well, and where he was self-motivated and action oriented. Allowing time for Bob to reflect on these and notice what he was doing differently.
- Build his ability to make own decisions and trust his judgement. Getting Bob to reflect on his experiences and use the new information to move forward in a more informed way. Pointing out to him the choices he was making and exploring how he knew they felt right for him. Allowing time for Bob to reflect on these and notice what he was doing differently.

4. Conclusion

In a recent evaluation update (CI 95), Bob informed me his (country redacted) plans were still very much in progress. He was letting go of his long-considered ideas about a corporate future and instead embracing an entrepreneurial and independent route. He was learning (language redacted) and very actively de-cluttering his current life, both in terms of physical possessions and other commitments. He had given in his notice at work and was looking forward to his final day, having saved enough money to finance their travel and up to 1 years' living expenses. He was also enhancing his technical skills and studying ways in which he could put these into practice for a

technology start up once settled in (country redacted). Whilst under no illusions about the challenges ahead, Bob felt happier, more confident and motivated than he had been for years (he noticed he has stopped playing computer games and is watching less TV) and was looking forward to the next stage of his life.

Bob felt the coaching helped him clarify his options and reconnect with what really mattered to him. Over a period of 3 months he reviewed and reframed his goals in relation to the reality of the options before him and his response based on his own value system.

As I compare this case study with my last, written several months ago, I am struck by how much more confident I am with the mechanics of coaching and how much more mental space I therefore had available to invest in the process of facilitating Bob's process. There is more of a sense of my having the bigger, integrated picture in this case study and a sense of where we were in relation to Bob's life journey.

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