



How to coach others

Summary keywords

foundation, confidence, organisation, thoughtful, themselves, perceptive, relationships, innovation, priorities

Speakers

Jake Lloyd, Catriona Horey

Episode 6: How to coach others

Jake Lloyd 0:15

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Hello, I'm Jake Lloyd and welcome to *How to build community*, a podcast and a radio show brought to you by Tearfund's *Footsteps magazine* and *Arukah Network*. How can you help the people you work with or serve to achieve their goals and reach their potential? Well, in this episode, we're going to explore coaching as a tool to do just that.

Catriona Horey 0:49

Coaching is about being of service to someone, being present for them, really listening well and asking questions that provide insights to help them move their own thinking forward.

Jake Lloyd 1:03

That's the voice of Catriona Horey. She's a coach based in London in the UK who works with a range of people, often leaders in charities, social innovation and education to help them set goals and achieve them, whether in their personal life or professional life. And recently I had a really interesting chat with Catriona that I'm about to play to you. And so in this episode you'll find out what coaching is and how it works. You'll hear what kind of impact Catriona has seen it have on people's lives from building confidence to making

progress in that career, you'll learn why you don't need to be a professional coach in order to use coaching skills to support the people around you in the life and work. And you'll find out how coaching is rooted in really focusing your attention on the people around you, listening well and asking good questions. So there's lots to learn in this episode. But I began my conversation with Catriona by asking a simple question What is coaching?

Catriona Horey 2:16

The big question, well if you ask any coach, they'll probably give you a slightly different answer. Yeah. For me, coaching is about helping people to look at where they are and where they want to be in life. And I say that both from a doing perspective. So you know what they might want to achieve in their life and projects or job promotion or things like that through to that being. So what are some of the qualities that they see in themselves that they want to dial up? Maybe some other qualities they want to dial down in themselves? So really it's thinking about where are you right now in this present moment and where would you like to be in the future? And I think that can be something that you can work on in an employer coach and work on them for six months, for example, over a period of time through to just being in a moment, in a conversation with someone about a dilemma that they're having or challenge at work and thinking about where are we, where do we want to be, and what's the steps in order to get there? So it's quite a future focused way of being and supporting people.

Jake Lloyd 3:23

We'll get into the nuts and bolts of it in a moment. I'm just curious, what got you into it?

Catriona Horey 3:29

Well, I was lucky to have coaching myself when I worked at an education charity. And I guess what I take away from that was that really helped to build my confidence, not only in the charity and the work I was doing there, but also laterally to help me move to New York with a new job and have the confidence to do that. I also used coaching on my return from New York after my dad had died and I'd had a major collapsed lung. So I sought coaching out at that point to really step back and think about, 'well, hang on, what are my priorities in life? Like, where do I want to be placing my energy? What do I want to be doing as a job? How do I want to envision my life?' So I've used it both in a kind of a confidence builder and a job promotion type way of thinking, but also in a perhaps more thoughtful, reflective space. And then from that place taking action. And I guess how I personally got into it myself was actually just some mentors around me, people that I really respect. So I thought at the time, I'm far too young to be a coach. I was in my early thirties, but actually I was very lucky to do a course through what's called the MOE Foundation, that's M-O-E and then Foundation. I was being coached by someone who was 18, you know, worrying about that. I was too young at 33 or whatever it was to coach and suddenly realised what an amazing session this was. And this person was 18 and why was it getting in my own way? So yeah, I think it was through that, that I kind of then built my confidence up, that actually this was a place that I could offer my perhaps my natural skills, but also skills that can be learned. I do really believe that coaching and coaching skills are things that anyone can learn is available to all.

Jake Lloyd 5:23

So can you give us a bit of an insight into how the coaching process works? Just tell us about the, you know, the clients you work with and how that process happens.

Catriona Horey 5:33

Yeah. So I work with a mixture of clients. I'd say predominately they're the leaders in social innovation. So people working in charities, social enterprises, schools, organizations like that, and or people predominantly women, but also men who are looking to explore what their real priorities are in life, both personally and professionally, and kind of redefine what their priorities want to be. So I'd say the majority of time people come to me wanting to look at their careers, and often that is the case, and often that's the socially acceptable thing to come to someone with, it seems. And when you dig a little bit deeper, there might be other things at play. So they might want to have a relationship, they might want to get married, they might want to move abroad completely change careers, not just get a promotion or things like that. So it's often people are coming to me knowing that there's something more or different that they want in their lives. And so together what we do is we look at kind of building some foundations around that, thinking about what their values are in life, like what's really important to them that will help their decision making, how we can help them tap into that kind of innate, wise self that we all have, that self that knows that things will be okay and we are resourceful looking at some of the limiting beliefs that we may hold, things that are getting in the way. You know, I'm not good enough to do that. I'm too young to do that. I'm too old to do that. So we really look at the foundations and from there we set goals. So we look at that could be very precise goals like I want to get a job promotion in the next six months and we look into what that might be about through to, to visions about how they want to be. I want to be calmer. I want to be able to have more space in my life. So sometimes it's very clear doing goals. Other times it's more about the qualities and the way of being that they want to have in their lives. And we tend to meet roughly every two weeks, usually for an hour at a time. And I'll ask someone to bring a topic that they want to explore or focus on that will help them move towards that. There's kind of broader, larger goals and that I think that process really helps people kind of tap into their own knowledge and confidence. And really, I'm there to help facilitate the conversation and hopefully ask insightful questions and reflect back what I'm hearing. But really, it's, it's trusting that the person that I'm coaching is naturally creative, resourceful and whole.

Jake Lloyd 8:25

It's interesting you've talked about a breadth of things that coaching can focus on there. So, you know, developing confidence, becoming calmer, but then also the more concrete career goals perhaps so it can be coaching can be about helping people move towards or achieve a number of different things. Are there any particular things coaching isn't about? Because I know that it's distinct from, say, counselling, isn't it?

Catriona Horey 8:53

Yeah, absolutely. And that's a really good question. So when I think about coaching, as I mentioned at the beginning, it's thinking about where are we now, where do we want to be? I'm not a trained therapist or counsellor and there are many subtleties and differences in this, but essentially therapy tends to look back at someone's history and past and try to help understand how someone is. And there's an element of

healing within that. Whereas coaches are very much looking at where people are right now and where they want to be and what's getting in the way. So absolutely they are separate and saying that sometimes I have had clients who will be seeing a therapist for a certain area of their life and can have coaching is very much something that you work together with someone to figure out what's best. And I have equally had people I've had a couple of people have stopped coaching and moved to therapy and equally some people have come to me and actually have suggested therapy first. So there are distinctions between those two. I guess also distinctions between coaching and mentoring. So mentoring tends to be people that have been there and done the thing that the person's wanting to do, whether that's they've done the job they've done, they've had a family, you know, whatever that is, and they're more about giving advice to that person. So I don't have to have worked in a tech company, for example, and yet I could coach someone in a tech company. So yeah, with coaching it's much less about advice than mentoring saying that I guess the way I like to view it, as is a lady called Nancy Klein, who talks about this, letting people's brain go as far as they can without your involvement. And if there's something that feels useful to us, I will add it as a question or suggestion and then the coaches within their rights to say, no, that's completely wrong, Katrina, or that's perfect, or it's somewhere in between, but it gives us something to work with. But essentially where we're trying to avoid advice or leading people, we're trusting that people know themselves the best and actually, you know, they may be the ones that with the problem, but they are also the ones with the solution. And I guess the final difference is between coaching and consulting. Consulting is often again about that advice, but also the doing and the implementing. Whereas with coaching, I'm not going to be doing the work for the client. I'm very much on the sidelines cheering them on and challenging and supporting, but the work is theirs to do.

Jake Lloyd 11:35

Our motivation for setting up this interview was less about encouraging our listeners to go out and get their own coach, although they may want to do that. Yeah. And a bit more about showing them how they might use some of the basic skills and approaches of coaching in their own life and work, whether that, you know, running an organization or involved in a community project or maybe just in their home life or something like that. So I'm interested, you know, what are the skills needed to, to do coaching and do it? Well.

Catriona Horey 12:10

Yeah. So there are many different skills and there are different models you can learn in different schools you can train with. But in my mind when I think about the really important parts of coaching, it's about the quality of our listening and the quality of our questions. And it may sound really simple, but actually that to me is fundamental. And I'll read you a quick quote from Nancy Klein, who I mentioned earlier, which touches on this. Everything we do depends for its quality on the thinking we do first and our thinking depends on the quality of our attention for each other. So really coaching is about being of service to someone, being present for them, really listening well and asking questions that provide insights to help them move their own thinking forward. So that could be, as I've discussed within my own work, you know, over a period of six months, for example, equally, it could be within a dilemma at work. So I guess if I break down those two elements, if that's helpful, if we start with listening, perhaps. So I remember when I did my course with the MOE Foundation and there's a section all about listening on the first day and talking about the different levels of listening that we can have. And some of the levels include things like advising or kind of connecting what someone says to our own worlds and trying to make connections with that person

through that commonality. And I was always very good at networking and finding that commonality. I thought that was listening, but actually my attention was on myself, you know, that was me thinking, How do I make a link to this person? How do I bring myself into this conversation equally with the advice, you know, there is a time and a place for advice. It's not to make either of these ways of listening wrong. But, you know, I'm thinking about from my perspective, what would I do? You know, how can I add to this? Whereas actually, with listening from a coaching perspective, it's about really slowing down. I think first of all and really hearing what people are saying, not from a perspective of wanting to necessarily get lots of information from them. It's about hearing what's important to them, asking them actually what's important here, you know, for them and listening for some of the silences. Sometimes the nuance, what's not being said. So it's really turning up our attention to that other person, taking it away from ourselves and putting it on them and also being aware of what's around us. You know, what are some of the things that aren't being said? So yeah, I think what helps in a practical way in terms of that then is thinking about the types of questions that we're actually asking. So in coaching and you could do this within your organization, within conversations, it's thinking about open ended questions. So beginning questions with things like what or how rather than, you know, questions that kind of give rise to yes or no answers. Also avoiding why questions is often why can have a it might not be meant, but sometimes it can be interpreted as having some sense of judgment too. It's like, why, why? Why do you do it that way? You know? So I guess it's, it's, it's just taking a step back and being thoughtful about the questions that we're asking. So, for example, really simply, what do you want? You know, what will that get you? What's important to you about that? What are the possibilities or so questions that can help people think ahead? So put yourself six months into the future, you know, standing there, what decisions which you make today. So there's some technical things, just about which words to use, but it's really about your intention behind that is the intention to help someone think through things themselves, knowing that by then coming up with their own solutions, it's going to be more powerful for them, more sustainable for them, and actually more sustainable and powerful for the organization.

Jake Lloyd 16:39

You're obviously not just a coach. You're a no. You're you're a mother and a wife and a friend and all this other things that have what you're describing there. I imagine it just has implications for all of our all of our human relationships. You've found have you found you end up using these coaching stories outside of work to good effect?

Catriona Horey 17:08

Yes. And I would say so. My husband's whenever I ask him a question nowadays, it's like, stop coaching me. And I'm like, I'm not coaching you. It's just a vaguely thoughtful question I'm asking. So it's I guess it's I think the quality of my listening has massively increased since training as a coach. I think I, I hope I'm being a better friend to people. I'm taking my agenda out of that that more equally there's, there's time and space not to be a coach, right? To have a gossip to put myself back in the agenda, to make, to talk about myself, you know. So I think what I have learned outside of the coaching work is it can be it can really improve relationships in terms of listening to hear and hearing what's important people and what's not being said. I think there's something for me personally about slowing down as well. I've naturally been quite a rushed person and is still is my default. But coaching allows me to just slow down and to kind of catch myself. And even for me, you know, when someone says something, I guess in the past I might have reacted to

something or made assumptions about what someone was meaning. And let's not, say I never do that. But now the majority of time I can take a tiny bit more time and choose how I want to respond and to question, you know, what's actually being asked and what's behind that. It might not be what I'm assuming. So yeah, it's, I think it's really improved my relationships and I think there's also a place for but not using coaching.

Jake Lloyd 18:52

Because I imagine coaching is often about asking difficult questions as well, isn't it. And that that can make people uncomfortable I suppose come to even if they're very important questions.

Catriona Horey 19:06

Yeah, absolutely. And, I don't want to be, you know, I think, you know, I like the lightness in me as well. And not to say, you know, and I think I bring that through actually my coaching, we can, you can have fun in coaching. You can laugh, you can move. You know, it's not just sitting there being uber serious the whole time. So there is that range within coaching and equally I think something is really important as you must always get permission, right? It's a coach, someone. So even within a conversation at work, for example, it's, you know, could be like, you know, would it be okay if I ask a question and the person can then say no? You know, actually, I'd rather you didn't. And if they say yes, then you've got that permission to perhaps go a little bit deeper. So it's just been really thoughtful, I think is as you do interact with people.

Jake Lloyd 19:53

For people listening to this who, you know, intrigued by all the stuff you're saying and want to employ some of these skills in their own life, what's the best place to start?

Catriona Horey 20:04

Good question. Well, first of all, and I'll share some links afterwards. We can put some good coaching articles. And so doing some reading, there are some organisations that might be interesting to look at. So the MOE Foundation that I mentioned is based in the UK and a lot of the people that are on the courses are from charities or community groups as well as from business. So it's a really diverse group of people. And what COVID-19 has brought around is it's made my foundation international. So now we train on Zoom. So actually it's possible to join that and it's very reasonably priced. And actually there are some charity places available to. So I'll put the link in for that. That could be a place if you want to, to get a good foundation in coaching skills. I'm actually leading some training on that and of course next week is a six week course. So if you are interested that that would be an option. And there's another organisation called Coaches Rising who will set you some, I believe that free or well-priced coach trainings as well. So that would be another place to look. But I can certainly share some resources in the links.

Jake Lloyd 21:17

Brilliant. And finally, I just wonder, it seems to me this might be this might be incorrect. You can correct me this seems to me coaching in my own context anyway, coaching has become a bigger thing like it started out

as coaching. You think of, you know, sports and things like that. Yeah. And then increasingly hear about leadership coaching and these high profile leaders having, having coaches. But it seems to be expanding beyond these boundaries. And you know, you're talking about people and social innovation and community groups and things like this. I wonder why you think it's becoming a bigger thing now.

Catriona Horey 21:55

Like I said, you know, you kind of gets that tipping point where things don't exist. You know, you have enough people starting to talk about it that it starts to expand. But I genuinely and I know obviously I'm biased, but I genuinely think coaching is one of the key ways of helping us communicate and relates better. And I think in this world where, you know, often we're polarised or facing really difficult challenges, you know, you're having someone, whether that's a formal coach, whether that's your boss who might have some coaching skills, whether that's, you know, someone else in your life holding space to think through some of this for yourself is just really valuable. So I think it's some perhaps a shift, a shift in the way that people are thinking. I say that and actually, you know, coaching in a way, has been around since Socrates. I've got a quote here from him saying, I cannot teach anybody anything. I can only make them think, you know. And so actually it's come about, you know, coaching came through psychology and things like that more recently. But it's not a new thing. It's really about helping others to think. And I guess, I guess hopefully as more people experience that and take value from that, then more people will want it and it will expand further. And I think it's something that's really important that it's not just kept as something that's quite an elite exclusive thing, but it's something that people can access wherever they are in their organisation, wherever they are in the world. It's not something that has to be exclusive.

Jake Lloyd 23:32

Brilliant. I don't have any more questions. Is there anything you want to add?

Catriona Horey 23:38

It's been a real pleasure actually taking a step back, you know, when you do this as a career and I did as part time and the rest of the time I'm with my four and two year olds, it's easy to forget, like what is coaching? And actually what I've really enjoyed with this time is just taking a step back and really remembering. It's about the quality of listening, the quality of questions and really the quality of attention on one another. And if those are the few things you take away from listening today, I think, you know, how you implement that. You can do that in your own way. But it's really about the intention behind this that feels important.

Jake Lloyd 24:18

Fantastic. Thank you very much.

Catriona Horey 24:20

My pleasure. Thank you for having me.

Jake Lloyd 24:22

That was Catriona Horey, who is a leadership and life coach based in London. And if you're interested in learning more about coaching, then you can visit the MOE Foundation website, which she mentions in an interview. MOE is M-O-E, which stands for Me, Others, Everyone. That website is moefoundation.com . You can read some articles about coaching on the International Coaching Federation website. Just visit dev.experiencecoaching.com . And if you're a member of the Arukah Network, then you may be able to access coaching for free. Visit arukahnetwork.org to find out about membership.

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But that's it for this episode. Until next time. Bye for now.

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