

Ep #43: The Truth About Coaching



Full Episode Transcript

With Your Host

Kristi Angevine

[Habits On Purpose](#) with Kristi Angevine

Ep #43: The Truth About Coaching

Welcome to episode 43. This is your host, Kristi Angevine, and today's topic, The Truth About Coaching. In this episode, I'm explaining exactly what coaching is, what it isn't, and why it's so very practical when it comes to working on habit change.

Welcome to *Habits On Purpose*, a podcast for high-achieving women who want to create lifelong habits that give more than they take. You'll get practical strategies for mindset shifts that will help you finally understand the root causes of why you think, feel, and act as you do. And now, here's your host physician and Master Certified Life Coach Kristi Angevine.

Hello, hello, everybody. It is very cold here in Central Oregon. It's as if overnight, we went from really beautiful fall weather to a frigid tundra with lots of snow and lots of ice and things being quite dark given the time change. And on top of that, I've been traveling quite a lot and recently have been doing some solo parenting. So when I combine the weather that's made the sidewalks really icy and just a rhythm of travel plus solo parenting, I have found that I have had difficulty fitting in things like going for a walk or having some solo uninterrupted time where I can clear my head, reflect, journal, self-soothe.

I've had so many growth opportunities, and if you can see me, I'm doing air quotes over growth opportunities because when I say growth opportunities, what I really mean is, I've had so many experiences in the last few days where I got really triggered or felt really stressed, and I've had many opportunities to apply the very lessons that I teach.

So this is just my way of saying if you ever find yourself feeling stressed, feeling activated, feeling flooded with emotion, or feeling really miffed that yet again, you look back and you see that you have done something that you really wish you hadn't, you are not alone. I eat, sleep, and breathe all things related to mindset, emotions, habits, somatics, knowing my system and knowing all my parts and all the idiosyncrasies of the way I show up in the world and respond to things.

Ep #43: The Truth About Coaching

And even so, life is not always some highlight reel or serene love fest. And what I'm constantly reminded of is that the full scope of my human experience is a mix and a balance, and it's a mix and a balance of winning and learning. And sometimes, that in-the-moment learning it is not easy. But the more I practice the very coaching concepts and skills that I teach, thankfully, the faster I am to catch myself, to pause, and to pivot.

But I'll be honest, lately, it has really felt like online field in my life, and I am extra grateful for all the tools that I know how to use. So that brings me to this episode.

In my last episode, I did an interview with Dr. Katrina Ubell, and if you haven't already listened to episode 42, you should totally go listen to it because it's really great conversation about the obstacles that can prevent you from reaching big goals and, of course, a bunch of other things that are really interesting. But that interview with her was a real full circle moment for me. It was Katrina Ubell's podcast that I listened to one night when I was on call over four years ago that actually spurred me to want to learn more about coaching.

And as I reflected on this full circle moment and looked back on the last four years, I realized that before I learned about coaching and immersed myself in the world of being certified and getting extra trainings, I really had no idea what it actually was. I will say that when I first learned about coaching, I quickly knew that I needed to just dive in and learn everything I possibly could about it. I couldn't quite logically or irrationally explain why to myself, much less to my husband, but there was just something about it that I knew felt right.

So once I dove into it, what I noticed was that even after studying it for years, I personally found myself struggling a little bit when it came to telling others what this thing called coaching really was without resorting to these highly-niched strange phrases that I will call coach speak, that people who are outside of coaching just don't understand.

Ep #43: The Truth About Coaching

And so what I discovered is I did my trainings, and I coached my private clients, and I did guest coaching and national programs and speaking events and ran my own programs and started this podcast was that a lot of people don't know what coaching is. And even if they do know what it is, they don't really know how to casually put it into words. And this wasn't just with clients or people who were interested in personal development.

I saw this in my husband. My husband understands what I do, but even he found himself a little tongue-tied when acquaintances would ask what I did. Did he say I was doing burnout counseling, that I was doing wellbeing work, consulting? What the hell is coaching and how do you explain it to somebody who maybe isn't familiar with it? So today, this episode is going to explain exactly what coaching is, and I'm going to demystify the murky aspects and then share why it's so pragmatic when it comes to your habits.

So, what is coaching? So first of all, coaching has been around for a very long time. If there's a field or an issue that humans grapple with, there is a form of coaching that targets that. Executive coaches help with things like leadership and running teams. There are trauma-informed coaches, relationship coaches, intimacy and sex coaches, parenting coaches, business coaches for entrepreneurs, mindset coaches for farmers, negotiation coaches. There are coaches who help with looking at your relationship with alcohol.

A month or so ago, I was on a flight, and I happened to sit down next to a coach who coaches parents of children who are placed in group homes. There are coaches that help you see how socialization influences how you see the world, how patriarchal, capitalist, heteronormative, theocentric socialization infiltrates your self-concept. There are strengths coaches, and you may have heard some coaches who specialize in things like job transitions, where they help people spruce up their CV or sail through interviews without excess stress. There are coaches that only work with artists or teachers or physicians or women in politics and leadership.

Ep #43: The Truth About Coaching

If you can think of a field or you can think of a problem that somebody grapples with, there are coaches that focus on that. So that said, before I tell you what coaching actually is, let's talk about the coaching stereotypes. Before I became a coach, when I thought of the word life coach, there were extreme caricatures and stereotypes that I had in mind, and these are a few of them. I had this idea that a coach was a cheerleader for the wealthy elite, somebody that they could go sort of complain to or whine to, and somebody would tell them really nice things. I thought coaches were maybe an accountability partner that you could get validation from.

When I thought of life coach, I thought of some larger-than-life figure that could make even the most introverted person want to walk on hot coals and dance in public. It brought to mind these personal development conventions where there's music and cheering and this rah, rah, rah feel good messaging that might be a little out of touch with many people's reality. I had the connotation that coaching was some pyramid scheme to make money, and maybe there was some unethical aspects to it, sort of like commercials where it functions to persuade you that there's something wrong with you that only the product that they're selling can fix.

When I thought of life coach, I thought of someone who frankly couldn't cut it as a psychiatrist, a psychologist, a therapist, a social worker, I imagine kind of quirky, tie-dyed, new age self-appointed gurus. And I definitely thought of things like navel-gazing. So life coach had all these connotations like snake oil scam, elitist therapist wannabes. And what I have come to find out is that all of these were quite narrow, negative, and very inaccurate. But that said, these connotations and misinterpretations, they were not without good reason.

There are really exaggerated Hollywood portrayals of life coaches. And in fact, because it's a highly unregulated field, that means that pretty much anyone who wants to call themselves the life coach is allowed to. So there's a very wide range of experience levels, training, quality, and lack thereof. So what is coaching really? If you ask 10 people, you're going to

Ep #43: The Truth About Coaching

get 10 different answers, and there are a myriad of really great definitions and opinions on what coaching is and what it is not. And a lot of people argue over how to succinctly define it.

So here are a couple definitions that I really like. Anthony Grant says, "Coaching is a collaborative, solution-focused, results-oriented and systematic process in which the coach facilitates enhancement of performance, life experience, self-directed learning and personal growth of individuals and organizations." David Peterson says, "Coaching is the process of equipping people with tools, knowledge, and opportunities they need to develop themselves and become more effective."

Now, I think Anthony Grant and David Peterson do a great job of really distilling what coaching is, but I want to give some juice in life to these definitions because what I've discovered from doing this for the last four years is that coaching is one of the most effective ways to understand why you do what you do, and one of the most effective processes for learning to be deliberate with this one short life that we have to live.

So, the way I think about coaching is this: it's the systematic examination and systematic evaluation of how your mindset and your somatic bodily experience interact and shape your life. Coaching is a conversation and a collaboration done with the intention of increasing your awareness of the root causes of your experience.

And I want to emphasize that it is collaborative and non-hierarchical. The coach is not some guru with all the answers. They are a guide. And as I mentioned at the beginning of this episode, even guides are human and experience the full scope of challenges in life. So basically coaching shows you the root causes for your life experience and teaches you skills so that you can be intentional with how you think, feel, and act.

Now coaching is a complex multidimensional field, and it synthesizes lessons from fields such as neurobiology, mindfulness, psychotherapy,

Ep #43: The Truth About Coaching

cognitive behavioral therapy, positive psychology, the field of trauma, emotional intelligence, somatics and puts them together into tangible tools and concepts that you can use in your everyday life. Coaching is an invitation to be curious. And this means coaching is an invitation to interrogate your assumptions to explore how a connection or a core belief that you hold came to be, to wonder why a pattern developed and why it continues.

This means coaching will pose questions that you don't think to ask yourself. This means you get help seeing things from an alternate perspective, and it will call on you to learn how to slow down the life as usual pace in order to really understand what's actually going on below the surface. So, I want to emphasize that coaching is an invitation to slow down by encouraging clients to slow down and carefully inspect what usually goes unnoticed. It's almost like taking a photograph.

And you know how if you hold a photograph really close in front of your eyes, you can't really see it very well. It's just too close to detect all the details. But if you take your arms and you extend them out straight so that the photo is out from your face, you can see so much better and you have such better perspective. That's what coaching does. And it helps by giving you clarity and perspective when you have someone else who is trained to look for the ways your thoughts and your emotions interact, and help you see them the way that they see them.

Slowing down also helps you notice exactly what and how you are thinking and exactly what and how you are feeling. Slowing down helps you appreciate what parts of you are most present in certain circumstances. And coaching helps us deeply appreciate the connection between our thinking, our emotions, and our lived results.

And it's in this way that it helps with a sense of agency because when I realize that the circumstances of my life, the external things, the other people, they aren't 100% the reason for how I feel and the way I act, then I

Ep #43: The Truth About Coaching

can see how I can get into the driver's seat of my own life instead of feeling like someone else is always at the wheel. This type of slowing down paired with curiosity cultivates a deep understanding of why we do what we do. The next aspect of coaching is that coaching teaches powerful life concepts and transferable skills you can use in a variety of situations that are beyond the discrete episode you might bring for coaching.

Coaching teaches concepts like "thoughts create feelings," the conscious and subconscious ways we think about something, color, how we feel about it. These feelings drive actions and inactions. The way we behave, our actions create our lived experience and therefore it's our mindset, our thoughts and our emotions, not external things like other people in life circumstances that play a huge role in creating our experience.

Coaching teaches concepts like the manual, which you can hear more about in episode 23. Coaching teaches concepts like the internal family systems paradigm that puts forth the idea that we are all made up of a multiplicity of parts. Coaching also teaches great skills. Skills like noticing your thoughts, thinking about your thinking, how to slow down and process and feel emotions instead of suppressing or numbing them. You can hear more about that process in episode six and seven. Coaching teaches the skills of learning how to meet yourself where you are without judgment or an urgent need to fix things.

Coaching teaches things like self-regulation that can help you when you feel flooded with an intense emotion. And you can hear more about that in episode 26. When you put all this together, channeling curiosity, slowing down and learning these concepts and skills. They help you get deep understanding of why you do what you do and subsequently how to change. Now, coaching is not a one-size-fits all cookie cutter formula.

Sometimes coaching involves more cognitive thought work based approaches. This might entail bringing attention to default thoughts so that you can interrogate them to see if they're useful or if they're simply familiar.

Ep #43: The Truth About Coaching

It might be a process of bridging from a thought that you currently believe to one that you want to believe with latter thoughts, like shifting from I can't do anything right to a thought like, sometimes I miss the mark, but sometimes I do pretty well, to another thought like, I can handle anything and when I miss the mark, it's just another chance to learn.

Other times, coaching focuses on emotional processing and focusing on your bodily experience. And there are other times where the coaching process is one that simply makes space so that we can meet ourselves where we are and learn skills of self-compassion, emotional regulation, and how to create internal safety and validation. And notice that yes, I said self-compassion is a skill. So I think this is a perfect spot to just take a little tangent with a caveat here.

A lot of what I'm saying might sound similar to what you get from a friend or a loved one. So, I want to talk about how coaching is different than an ordinary interpersonal relationship from somebody that you like or that likes you. So how coaching is different from a friend. From friends, you can get perspective with a friend, we might vent, and they might say, "Oh, I totally get it. I know what that's like."

And they might give us sympathy or brainstorm different points of view or different ideas. They might normalize things, validate things, encourage us, they can commiserate, they can be our caretaker, they can be our cheerleader and commiserating, inventing, and care-taking and cheerleading, they have their time and place, and they are highly valuable in certain circumstances. But those things alone do not qualify as coaching.

A coach is different than a friend because they are trained to look for very specific things. And as much as they may sympathize or personally be able to relate to a situation that a client is telling them, instead of simply commiserating and being a sounding board for venting and saying, "Oh gosh, I totally get it," what a coach will do that is different than a friend is,

Ep #43: The Truth About Coaching

we'll hold up a mirror to show you something that might not be comfortable to see.

And a coach is willing to do this because they are always on your side and they have infinite belief in your full potential, and they are willing to point out things that might not be totally obvious or totally easy to hear, but they know are going to be in the service of your highest growth.

So for example, instead of pointing out all the ways you are wronged like a friend might, when you have a situation where somebody treated you in a way that you really didn't enjoy, the coach will point out the ways that you're thinking might be contributing to your suffering of the experience. The coach might point out what's blocking you from navigating the situation with more confidence and clarity. The coach may be friendly and maybe very sympathetic, but they're also totally okay if you get a little bit irritated with them when they point out that you keep sitting down on a proverbial tack.

So while many coaches may be extremely friendly and very personable, and take it as their deep mission to help you be able to thrive in the ways that you most want to, they are very different than a sympathetic ear that you get from a friend. The next thing that I want to mention is that I think one of the most beautiful things about coaching is that many of the skills and concepts that you learn can be self-administered. It's in this way that coaching is not simply some didactic teaching of really cool-sounding ideas. Effective coaching not only teaches you the ideas, but helps you apply them in your real life.

Applying the concepts you learn in coaching looks like self-coaching, self-inquiry, and live-in-the-moment awareness that you learn by going through the coaching process. So in this way, the very tenets of coaching become a practice and a way of life.

So when you're coached with a coach asking you really powerful questions so that you can examine your thoughts and examine your feelings, you

Ep #43: The Truth About Coaching

learn how to ask yourself these same kind of effective questions. When your coach shines the proverbial spotlight on ruthless self-criticism, for example, or a desire to fix yourself before you love yourself, they are modeling the act of meeting yourself where you are.

When someone helps you see your thoughts and see your habituated patterns, you learn how to have in the moment awareness of your thoughts and your patterns in real life. When you do this, you develop a higher level of awareness of your emotions and a more attuned state where you're really connected to how your body feels when your emotion is say, a two out of 10, in contrast, to win an emotion is a five out of 10 versus when an emotion is a completely flooded state at a 10 out of 10.

When you have this awareness and this attunement to your physical sensations that you learn during coaching, then you take this skill, and it transfers to something that you can use every day. And this is exactly why coaching is so practical for habits. This is the way I think about it. Habits are the automatic reflexive ways that we think that we feel, and that we act, and our habituated beliefs drive our habituated emotional responses and therefore our reflexive behaviors.

It's when we slow down so that we can better understand what our thoughts are. And when we deliberately bring in compassion and curiosity, then we turn into very kind, loving detectives where we can see how our thoughts make sense, even if perhaps they don't serve us today, and we can begin to understand why we reflexively feel as we do and do what we do. And this next part is essential. Awareness, validation, and understanding of ourselves are the currency for change.

So once we are aware, once we are curious, once we figure out how our habits and patterns may still make a little bit of sense, even if we don't love them, then we can start changing even the most deeply ingrained habits. So that was quite a lot about what coaching is and how it's effective and why it's effective and how it's so good for habits.

Ep #43: The Truth About Coaching

But now as we wrap up, I'm going to explicitly normalize coaching. It's my belief that there's a stigma attached to both coaching and therapy, and it's to the tune of if you need them, it's because there's something wrong with you and you can't figure it out for yourself. And in the west, this stigma grows from the cultural idea of rugged individualism where you should be able to pull yourself up by your own bootstraps, suck it up, move on from life challenges, and if you can't, you're essentially weak, you're less than, you're broken.

This is why some people will talk about therapy or coaching and hushed tones. They don't want anyone to know that they see a therapist or anyone to be aware that they have a coach. The messaging we receive commonly is that to seek and receive therapy or coaching is an admission of incompetence of a defect and an inability to be self-reliant.

So to counter this, I want to offer something. Coaching is not there to fix something that's broken. Coaching is there to maximize our strengths. Coaching is there to take you from surviving to thriving. Coaching helps facilitate a deeper understanding of why we have the patterns of thinking, feeling, and behaving that we do, so that from this deeper understanding, we can get rid of the internal and external obstacles that slow us down from doing the frankly precious and super important work that we are here to do in this very brief time that we are alive on this planet.

Now, think of sports or theater or playing an instrument or dance. Coaching in these disciplines is not done because the musicians or the athletes are deficient, and they need extra attention to bring their performance from abysmal to mediocre. Having a mentor for something like playing the piano or a trainer for working on your triathlon technique has the purpose to help the musician help the athlete see their unique challenges, train to leverage their strengths, learn resilience, and achieve the highest level of performance possible for their unique body And mind.

Ep #43: The Truth About Coaching

Coaching outside of the arts and coaching outside of sports is much the same. And it's my thought that eventually, the ideas taught in coaching are going to be so commonplace that people will look back and they will find it funny that back in the early 21st century, kids weren't taught in kindergarten or first-grade or second-grade because social/emotional learning will be in every school so that the next generations grow up with an entirely different perspective on their mental wellbeing.

So let's summarize. Coaching is the systematic examination and systematic evaluation of how your mindset and your somatic bodily experience interact and how they both shape your life. It is collaborative and non-hierarchical, and it is a very specific process with the goal of exploring root causes for why we do what we do. It teaches concepts and tools and how to implement them in your everyday life. It is super practical, and coaching gives you perspective and support and encouragement, but it is different than the perspective support sympathy that a friend might offer.

And discovering coaching, just to wax a little sentimental at this moment, discovering coaching for me has radically changed everything about my life. It has changed my thoughts about myself and my self-concept. It has completely helped me shift my identity. It has changed how I process emotions. It has changed my marriage. It has changed how I parent, it has changed my perspective on sport and my body.

And in the future, I'm going to share more about how it has changed all of these things. But suffice it to say that I would be in an entirely different place in my life that I don't think would be very pleasant and I think would be very difficult for me right now, had I not discovered all the things that I discovered in coaching.

So I hope you found this really useful, and I really can't wait to hear how this lands for you. So to connect, you can find me on Instagram. It's Kristi.Angevine, K-R-I-S-T-I-A-N-G-E-V-I-N-E. Or my favorite place to hang out is on Facebook. And there's a Habits on Purpose Facebook group you

Ep #43: The Truth About Coaching

can join. The other way that we can connect is if you're not already on my email list, just go to habitsonpurpose.com and you'll see a place where you can join the email list and you can always just press reply and you'll get to me, and I'll send you a message back.

So in the future, we're going to dig into the differences and the overlap between coaching and therapy, and that's going to be a really amazing topic to explore. But until next time, I'm sending lots of love and I'll see you in the next episode. Take care. Bye-bye.

If you want to learn more about how to better understand your patterns, stop feeling reactionary, and get back into the proverbial driver's seat with your habits, you'll want to join my email list. Which you can find linked in the show notes. Or, if you go to habitsonpurpose.com, you'll find it right there.

Thanks for listening to *Habits On Purpose*. If you want more information on Kristi Angevine or the resources from the podcast, visit www.habitsonpurpose.com. Tune in next week for another episode.