

## **Why and how I coach?**

My coaching philosophy underpins my coaching and helps connect it to my beliefs and values which motivates me to do the work I do and gives meaning to my life.

What gives me meaning is people. My purpose in life is to bring energy, compassion, and connection to all my relationships and enable those I work with and love to grow and find what they want in their lives.

I believe that coaching is relational – you are sitting with a fellow human and the relationship you have with that person is crucial to the effectiveness of coaching.

The core values that underpin my coaching are compassion, fairness and connection.

I bring a compassionate approach by empathising with my coachees, to feel what they are feeling, to care deeply about their wellbeing, happiness and distress. This creates an environment where I believe coachees are more likely to do their best thinking, to learn and make the behavioural changes they want. The fairness value is highlighted by the qualities of non-judgement and equality that I bring into the coaching space.

It's also important that I can be self-compassionate and bring all of myself into the coaching space.

I believe that coachees are whole and resourceful, that their story is important and they have the capacity for lifelong growth and change. Coaching is based on change, through increased awareness, making explicit choices, and changing behaviours to improve wellbeing and performance. This can only happen through a deeply connected relationship.

## **Who I am as a coach**

I believe our unique human story and lived experience has a huge impact on how we engage with world, often on a subconscious level. Part of my role as a coach is to explore this and explore my coachee's view of the world and how that might impact their relationships. What I call joining the dots backwards.

This is my journey to coaching. My parents had strong northern working-class roots; my mum became a teacher, my dad a pilot. I was brought up in a middle-class environment and was always aware to the tension between those very different worlds. Originally trained as a physiotherapist I have 15 years' experience as a

physiotherapist in the NHS where I worked with patients with a variety of conditions. Listening to the different stories of illness and health, mental and physical journeys, I began to focus on the connection between the mind and body.

I became more interested in why people recovered at different speeds from a very similar injury and realised that their emotions and mindset played a huge part and so I was drawn toward human psychology and completed a Masters in Human Rights and development. The physio - patient relationship is 1:1 and built on trust and so the shift to coaching felt an organic one. In physiotherapy you always take a history of the illness or injury and so I was particularly interested in my coachee's history and after my coach training I trained in narrative therapy. As a coach with a strong narrative background, I explore people's connection to their own story and identify patterns from the past might be manifesting in the present. It is these connections that determine who and how we are in the world.

When I coach and support people to make these connections and have insights, it's a bit like pulling a connection out of Dumbledore's pensieve from Harry Potter. We can then examine it and the coachee can make choices about how to do things differently.



## How I coach

### Beginnings

#### *Chemistry:*

I start the coaching journey with a chemistry session to ensure we are a good fit to work together. Essentially this is a 'gut' feeling of trust and confidence for both of us to experience and decide if the fit is good.

### ***3-way contracting:***

If appropriate I would request a 3-way contracting with their sponsor or line manager. I believe this is best practice and enables clarity of outcomes for both the coachee and the organisation as well as setting clear boundaries. It often strengthens and supports the line manager / coachee relationship and speaks to my value of fairness.

### ***Pre coaching questionnaire and contracting:***

I would then ask the coachee to complete a narrative pre-coaching questionnaire. This collects data about a coachee's personal history as well as their learning styles and their outcomes for the coaching. The outcomes may be about perceptions and beliefs as well as observable behaviours and concrete actions. They can complete as much or as little of the questionnaire as they wish and we then discuss it at our first coaching session along with the contracting.

The contracting is important as it sets out the boundaries of our work together. It includes the practicalities such as how many sessions, how long, where to meet, cancellations, costs etc. Then the psychological aspects; looking at confidentiality, GDPR, ethics, calling out our differences and what to do if something doesn't feel right. Honesty is a key indicator for the success of coaching. We also discuss the edges of the coaching space i.e. when confidentiality would be broken and boundaries of my practice, such as needing to refer someone on to their GP or other talking therapies.

In the personal history discussion key values and identities often surface as we build an account of their life and its emotional meaning.

The coachee can reflect on any patterns that might be emerging, or any areas to focus on that might be sitting behind some of the current issues they are bringing. Depending on the coachee we may draw out the reflections in the questionnaire in the form of a visual iceberg drawing – to “see” their history.

### **Middle:**

With clear outcomes set we can begin to work together. I usually contract for six 1.5 hours sessions and I ask for feedback at the end of every session and check their progress toward their overall outcomes.

### ***More data collection:***

At this point depending on the outcomes and the issue presented I might suggest more data collection in the form of a psychometric such as SDI or Firo B or a communication model of competence such as VoicePrint or a Key Driver assessment from the work of Transactional Analysis.

We would use this data to help raise self-awareness

There may also be an opportunity for the coachee to gather 360 feedback from their colleagues at work, and this is a really powerful developmental tool as the coachee gets a sense of their impact and performance.

### ***Raising awareness and change:***

As the coaching progresses, I help bring unconscious patterns into conscious awareness in order for them to make different choices, changing and moving toward their outcomes. I help them to identify, surface and normalise feelings and beliefs evoked from adopting new thoughts and behaviours, reframing limiting beliefs and to building their strengths, I would continue to feedback links I might notice between different domains of the coachee's experience or ask questions that help them make these links. As well as working with any resistance by helping the coachee make sense of conscious and unconscious blocks.

### **Endings:**

If contracted for I will finish with a review 3-way meeting at the close of the coaching. It helps celebrate the coachee's development and for the coachee to get feedback on the changes that their line manager/ sponsor has noticed and speaks to the return on investment for the organisation.

I will always gain in depth feedback on the overall coaching via a feedback questionnaire to understand the overall impact of my coaching and continue to grow and develop as a coach. I would take anything I wanted to work on to my supervisor.

## **What methodology underpins my coaching?**

All my coaching is underpinned by neuroscience and psychological human development and our emotional responses to that.

I aim to create a Nancy Kline coaching space that says to the coachee they matter and an environment where they can do their best thinking. I like to start the session with a mindful practice to allow them to arrive in the coaching space.

I particularly lean on compassion-focused coaching by Paul Gilbert which is rooted in an evolutionary model of human psychology. It explores the difficulties that the human brain encounters as a result of its evolutionary history. The theory behind Transactional Analysis and attachment theory as well as the research of Brené Brown help develop emotional granulation if needed.

I often use Jenny Rogers' OSCAR model to give an overall structure and forward momentum to a session.

O – Outcome

S – Situation

C – Choices

A – Actions

R – Review

Any other specific tool I use depends on the coachee's learning style and particular outcomes and issue.

For example, if someone was having difficulty with a particular relationship, I might use tools such as NLP's perceptual positions or TA's Drama Triangle or constellation work.

If the coachee has a strong visual or experiential style of learning I might choose metaphor, drawing, image cards, poems or writing. We may have a walking coaching session.

If the coachee is working on their wellbeing I would use tools that help them build their resilience and resourcefulness – such as NLP's resilience timeline or a resourceful state.

I believe that coaching is so much more than the application of specific tools, and rather is fundamentally based on a strong coaching relationship.

## **What people say about me?**

“Sue is an empathetic and supportive coach. She creates a safe place where you can talk about anything in an open, honest and open judgemental way. You feel seen and heard. Sue helps you understand more about yourself and your impact. She challenges your thinking when it gets in the way of you reaching your outcomes.”

“You are a different person after your coaching with Sue.”