

Audio file transcript

Brigitte coaching Josh – May 2024

00:00:03 Coach: Hello Josh.

00:00:06 Coachee: Hi, Brigitte.

00:00:07 Coach: Hello, lovely to see you.

00:00:09 Coachee: Yes, and you too.

00:00:11 Coach: Looking forward to having our conversation this afternoon and curious to know what you would like to spend our time together talking about?

00:00:22 Coachee: Yeah, there's something I'd really love your help with, which I've been trying to get started on for a while and if I'm honest, been procrastinating and I need to start fitting into my daily schedule some exercise because I've fallen into some bad habits with spending a lot of time at the desk and prioritising work over other activities and I really want to get started on, not necessarily to come super fit, but just to get a bit more activity back into my lifestyle. And I'm struggling to make that first step.

00:01:13 Coach: OK, alright, so some exercise currently as you know, understanding that you had some bad habits as you call them and sitting at desk and prioritising work over your exercise is that what I'm hearing?

00:01:30 Coachee: Exactly, yes.

00:01:31 Coach: OK. What makes this an important topic for you to bring today?

00:01:41 Coachee: It partly well, mainly I suppose well-being. And a growing awareness that, particularly at my age, you have to put some effort into being in shape and I really feel it would benefit me in all ways to have to be fitter, but there's also that question of balancing work with other activities. And moving on from that, mindset of feeling that I should be working all the time. So it's partly fitness, but it's also perhaps about rebalancing what I do with my life, what I do with my time.

00:02:32 Coach: Yeah. So I just want to catch what you've said there around: should be working all the time. And I'm wondering, what makes you think you should be working all the time?

00:02:49 Coachee: I have thought about this, because that was a revelation I had a couple of weeks ago and I think it's a consequence of the job I do, which has been increasingly demanding over the last couple of years. And I think I, without realising it, slightly slipped into a habit of, almost being validated by being busy. You know, by constantly working or being at work or working at home.

00:03:31 Coach: And how do you mean being validated? By whom?

00:03:41 Coachee: I think I'm someone that values peer recognition and I also quite like to achieve results and have outcomes. But, I think it's that sense of being recognised for doing a good job, which perhaps is a motivator. And so it's that. And it's just a perception, I think, but just that perception of if I spend a lot of time working either at work or at home, then somehow that would be valued by my peers and would almost be something that I'd be recognised for; which actually I know not to be the case, but that's the, I think, without realizing, I think that's the mindset I've slipped into almost imperceptibly over the last two years or so.

00:04:42 Coach: And so when you think about when you started this conversation, highlighting that you wanted to do some exercise, sort of sitting at the desk and acknowledging that you're prioritising work and you've just highlighted to me what's behind that prioritising the work, you value that peer recognition. And it sounds like that's preventing you from moving forward with doing the exercise or taking time for you, is that what I'm hearing?

00:05:15 Coachee: I think it is. And that's really useful to think of it in that way, because basically that is a barrier to me actually saying I need to spend time doing something else now, rather than just spending time doing work activities.

00:05:39 Coach: So you mentioned earlier that you value the peer recognition, you know, and at the same time you said, you know that that's not true in terms of you have to work all the time. You know that that's not the case in terms of being valued. So I'm wondering, what's standing in the way, actually of you creating that balance that you're desiring?

00:06:09 Coachee: Probably me actually and just having taking time to step back from this and have that realization that I don't need to be coming home and sitting at my desk until 9:00 or 10:00 at night, every night. That's not necessary or expected. And that it's OK not to do that and I suppose it's that realising that it's OK, is the key barrier that I need to work on.

00:06:48 Coach: So how would you now define the challenge for you? You started off with the exercise and we've talked about the prioritising work and the idea of valuing that peer recognition and that recognition. So how would you define now the challenge?

00:07:17 Coachee: Well, actually, just in this short conversation, you've helped me see a little bit clearer cause I was really seeing, I suppose, making time for some exercises, and that's sort of a measurable outcome. You know I've been. But actually there's something a bit deeper that, which is the what's preventing me from making time to do that. So it's not actually going out to get on the bike and go for a walk or whatever, it's what is it that's stopping me from doing that? And then actually this is a series of habits I suppose I've picked up, initially through being busy, and if I'm honest, not managing to fit everything I wanted to get done in during the day and then allowing that to spill over

into the evening and I suppose just thinking that through a little bit more I perhaps have become perhaps not all that efficient during the day as a result.

Where there's that sense of OK, I can get that done in the evening and then almost that, so the day almost perhaps being made-up of three shifts now, you know sort of morning, afternoon and it evening and so perhaps recognizing that and focusing on getting tasks done during the day, but if I don't get the done saying well that's OK I'll restart those the next day and that that then would create the space for exercise. So rather than exercise being the solution, it's perhaps an outcome that will be made possible by finding a solution to this habit of spending a lot of time working.

00:09:04 Coach: And so, just to clarify, the spending all the time working that you've talked about, what do you make that mean for you?

00:09:23 Coachee: I suppose there's a, almost a sense of worth, sense of value, in that you know, so I suppose in simple terms, spending a lot of time being busy working means I'm doing a good job, or that what I'm doing is worthwhile, or that I have value, because of that, I suppose that's really, what's behind them.

00:09:54 Coach: And if you were to feel that sense of worth, in a way that allowed you to have more balance, what would that sense of worth look like or and then feel like - I've stacked that question - look like and feel like?

00:10:26 Coachee: It would actually look, and that's a really good way of making me think about this, it would, look like I had a bit a healthier balance of work versus other activity, friends, you know, going out, hobbies, you know? That that sort of thing. And what it would feel like would be actually a more, more I'm gonna use the word worthy again. It would actually feel like a more worthy life actually, as a result. So the you know, because although it's easy to start to see workers worth, I'm realizing that, a good lifestyle that involves a range of other things outside of work, things like, you know, friends, family, hobbies, going out, those sort of things. And so it would feel actually, that I was, I'd regained you know, a good lifestyle, a worthy lifestyle, as a result.

00:11:45 Coach: So it sounds like if I'm hearing you correctly, Josh, that what started out as being exercise, so sort of adding to creating that balance because of the prioritising work over activity, evolved into considering that your sense of worth is coming from prioritising work and always working and that in turn could potentially mean that you have that peer recognition because you're working those long hours. And at the same time, you recognise that that's not necessarily true. However, you're getting that sense of worth in a sense from doing that.

00:12:37 Coachee: Yes.

00:12:40 Coach: From that point you talked about there's another way to get a sense of worth that could be more balanced. And I'm wondering, given where we're at now. What would you like to walk away with at the end of our time together today? What would you like to have accomplished?

00:13:13 Coachee: I'd like to have set myself some clear goals and I'm seeing now that probably there would be a series of goals. The final one of those would be that I actually get out there each evening or morning and make, them probably in the evening, make some time for exercise. But I think there's some goals I'd need to achieve ahead of that, in in terms of thinking through the questions you've just asked me and uh, which may well in involve perhaps talking to friends, family about these, those sort of aspects about activities other than work and just helping me to sort of reinforce those. So perhaps having some conversations because I'm not really talked to anyone about this so far. Having some conversations, with people that could just help me just really and see that way forwards. But the sort of end point would be the beginning of a regular pattern of exercise. But I can see now that won't happen unless I deal with these other points first.

00:14:41 Coach: And when you think about that, that goal of balance and doing some exercise and getting out and seeing friends and creating, potentially that experience of worth, that you align with those activities.

What uncomfortable thoughts or feelings come up for you when you think about living that life where you're doing the exercise and allowing yourself to do those things?

00:15:16 Coachee: Uh, yeah. Well, I suppose the obvious one which I know is actually not a reality, it's just that potential uncomfortable thought about well, I'm not working this evening so, you know I'm not doing what I should be doing, and I know that's not real, but it's a perception I've developed, so that's one thing.

If I'm honest, it might take a little bit to get back in the saddle as it were on social activities cause I've realised again I've got sort of quite used to not to doing much. I used to be very sociable and be out a lot and I think there's a certain confidence that goes with that and I think the potential discomfort might be regaining that sort of social confidence, and that's the, and I suppose, right, it's like just making the effort.

Because it's quite easy not to. So I think there are three really good things for me to think about. They're all sort of me things. But again, I think talking to friends and family will probably help those.

00:16:46 Coach: So it sounds to me like the goal what you're wanting to achieve is that sense of worth and self-confidence.

00:16:57 Coachee: Well, actually, yes, yes. Yes, it's sort of materialised around all of, it's taking shape around this idea of exercise, but I think you're right, there's something bigger than that.

00:17:14 Coach: So, what insights are you gaining so far through our conversation today, Josh?

00:17:24 Coachee: Well, actually a lot, I have to say because what started off as a fairly simple almost, I'm being lazy because I can't, you know, I can't make time to go out on my bike kind of conversation and picking a bit while that might be and I can see actually I've gained a lot of insights into the reason why that is happening. So it's not just that I'm

lazy, you know there are actually some quite fundamental things to do with stage life, work patterns, the job I do, the sort of mindset I slipped into almost subconsciously over the last couple of years. But I really like that question about what might be uncomfortable because they're all things I'll need to really address as well, because they're things that I can see could stop me from doing it. So actually what seemed like a very simple thought at the start, you've really helped me unpack that into seeing what's behind that and actually fundamentally why it's not been easy for me to do because it's not just a matter of getting the bike out of the shed and going for a ride, there's a bit more, there's a lot more behind it than that.

00:18:52 Coach: And earlier on you talked about that sense of worth in terms of the amount of time that you're placing into your work and the validation that potentially comes with that. What's the truth around that in terms of your work ethic and the fact that you'll be valued or found to be worthy if you're working those long hours. What is the truth?

00:19:22 Coachee: I think the truth is, I mean, I'm lucky and I need to really recognize this, that the role I have is mainly around achieving goals. So it's not about the amount of time I spend doing things, it's about the outputs I achieve. And so the truth is, is that it doesn't matter whether I spend, you know 4 hours a day or 14 hours a day on work, it's what I'm measured on is delivering the goals I've been set. And I suppose it's in a way, there's some comfort in spending a lot of time doing work activities because their work activities you know that it, it's a fairly easy and to fall into, but in truth I think it's a good question because nobody knows if I spend 14 hours a day working. All that people see, all the people I report to see are that I deliver what I'm required to deliver, which is why I think the thoughts you've triggered, earlier about, perhaps focusing on being a bit more efficient and not seeing the day as being made-up of three shifts such as much if I'm not very productive in the morning so I can always pick it up in in the evening being a bit more disciplined and saying no and you know and not going to work in in the evening, so it's done during. So that I think, yeah, there's some interesting sort of things I've slipped into subconsciously, I think behind all of this.

00:21:14 Coach: So what will that give you if you are to place your work day within those working hours and leave yourself that time in the evening for other things? What will that give you in terms of your sense of worth?

00:21:34 Coachee: Yeah, it would. I think actually I'd feel a lot better because there be a sense of probably more sense of accomplishment, I suspect. And perhaps a sense of satisfaction in containing the effort but getting the same outputs from that and I think there'd be a sense of lightness that would come from this. Cause you know that sense of feeling should always be working is a bit of a burden. So, you know, I think, I think actually perhaps paradoxically, even with the way I was thinking at the start of the session, my sense of worth would probably increase and I'd feel lighter and probably better generally I suspect.

00:22:32 Coach: Lovely. And what would that? How would you know that you were feeling lighter and not burdened? I can hear the difference in the sound of your voice too. How would we know that you were feeling lighter?

00:22:48 Coachee: Well, I think there be a general sense of happiness and one thing I'd love to think, except I know that you know, in reality we all think about work a lot, and it has a habit of creeping into your thoughts when you're when you're not at work, but that that would happen less often or would that not then take over. So that you know, yes, I might have a think about something, but it wouldn't then feel like this sort of this cloud or this weight that was and that was on my shoulders as I was going about doing other things. So perhaps a sort of background chatter many of us have would become less noisy. And just a sense of, you know, I think fundamentally, it's OK to do something else and enjoy doing something else rather than feeling guilty about it.

00:23:56 Coach: Sounds like you are starting to value your own time with what you're saying and starting to understand how to allow yourself that self worth and value. So where are you at, at the moment with this conversation compared to where you started and where you would like to go?

00:24:31 Coachee: At the start I was actually for something that seemed like quite a simple thing to talk about, I was actually struggling to see, well understand why I was finding it difficult to do and also if I'm honest was not very clear about what I'd do about it because it seemed like quite a simple goal. So compared to that now I've got to actually, I feel very reassured and settled, having talked through about why I'm finding it difficult and I've got some real understanding now about what's behind all of this and that then gives me a clear sense of what I need to do to deal with what's behind it in order to get to the place I'd like to be where I've got that better balance and being more efficient at work, not spending evenings working and actually having time to do other things, manifested by what was the thought about exercise, but that is a much bigger piece about that balance in between work and non-work activities.

00:25:45 Coach: And so Josh, now that you've had these insights around the what's underneath the exercise piece or the prioritising work, based on you know the worth and the value, what will you do now moving forward?

00:26:10 Coachee: I'm going to, so the first thing we're going to have a good conversation with my wife and about this because I know she'll be very supportive, and I know for a fact she thinks I spend way too much time working. There's a colleague at I work with who actually I think is very good at balancing work with non-work activities, is widely regarded as being very productive and successful and I know I'm pretty sure he'll be very happy to sit down and have a coffee and talk about how he manages these things and me being me, I think I will need to actually set a day and a time when I will actually get on the bike.

But I need to have, I think I need to do those little preparatory, those two preparatory conversations first, just because they'll help, just run through the ideas you've helped me to think about and just sort of get those settled because I can see that I need to get those, ideas into perspective ahead of so, in other words, just hopping on the bike when

I'm force myself to do it isn't going to really achieve the outcome I'm looking forward to something bigger than that. It's about that sense of work-life balance, worth, happiness, I suppose you know, it's all those things.

00:28:06 Coach: And so if you were to take yourself forward in time to a time where you were experiencing that lightness that you were talking about, and that happiness and that sense of worth, what do you envisage will be different if you had that true sense of worth?

00:28:15 Coachee: I think, yeah, it's a good question, I think actually probably more self-confidence. I think. Yes I'd feel lighter, I'd feel better balanced, happier. But I think probably the really great thing would be a return of self-confidence because again, having thought about this until these questions, but that's something I've gradually lost a little bit of with this emotion in work and that sort of sense of whatever you do, it's never enough kind of thing which is the, I realise it's the consequence of spending all your time doing one thing. So yeah, I think in addition to the likeness happiness probably self-confidence.

00:29:22 Coach: That's lovely. I just want to catch something that that you said there just in terms of whatever you do, it's not ever enough. Where does that belief come from?

00:29:35 Coachee: It's a mainly me. I'm a bit of a well, not a bit of I'm a lot of a perfectionist, which I recognise, but I've never managed to really lose that trait. There's a little bit of a workplace culture like that, that sort of fuels that a bit in the background, but it is largely self-created.

00:30:10 Coach: OK, so whatever you do is not ever enough. I'm wondering moving forward then, how will you know when what you do is enough?

00:30:36 Coachee: Yeah, that's a really important question and I suppose actually it's moving away from goals, objectives set by the people, to actually starting to set my own goals and objectives a bit, recognising the things I have to get done as part of my work. But actually starting to take perhaps a bit more control of my life and my time and actually setting some goals and objectives that means something to me and that I can then you know, I'll get that sense of accomplishment, and I suppose you know, satisfaction from that, that sort of that sort of calmness that comes from a sense of, yes, I had the serious things I wanted to get done and I have got those done, because that's something else, I've sort of got out the habit of really almost everything I do is defined by goals itself set by other people, work mainly, so yes, I think, thinking that through and I guess it's part of that theme about taking a bit of charge back.

00:32:19 Coach: Having the confidence to do that.

00:32:22 Coachee: Yes, actually.

00:32:26 Coach: So thinking about confidence. How do you know confidence for yourself? How do you know that feeling?

00:32:46 Coachee: Yeah, because it is very much, well, obviously it's a feeling. But I suppose it's that sense of going out, feeling strong into the world, if you know what I mean and it's in the everyday things, whether it's, you know, how you feel when you're walking down the street or when, you in small things, when you step into a shop or just daily interactions in addition to that sort of self-confidence in a in a work sense, interestingly not, now you mentioned it, I suppose cause that focus on work I've not really, not really lost that self-confidence at work. But I have actually in a lot of my everyday activities and there's days when you sort of definitely you know I mean it is a feeling but you know just not feeling very on top of things today and then, but when I step into that sort of regulated, recognisable framework of work, it's almost stepping back into character where that sort of confidence returns. So yes, it's that sense of being on top of things, feeling good about things, stepping out, feeling strong I suppose, and having more of that would be a terrific outcome.

00:34:20 Coach: So it sounds to me like what you're saying to me and if I'm what I'm hearing is correct is that holding on to the work piece for such a long period of your day, that's where you're feeling confident. And that's where you're feeling comfortable. So you're wrapping yourself up in that in that particular confidence field, which is not allowing you to step out of that and feel the real confidence and self-worth that you're wanting to express and wanting to feel outside of that space.

00:34:52 Coachee: Yeah. And comfort is a good word though, that yes, that actually captures it really well, it's a comfort.

00:35:02 Coach: OK so I'm wondering, Josh, what are you learning?

00:35:15 Coachee: Uh, well, actually, in quite a short time I've learned quite a lot about me, which is has been really insightful. I have to say and I suppose you know, having time to think about what's going on behind the sort of obvious thing I was thinking about, which is why aren't taking of exercise been really, really useful to unpack that and I think thinking about how things would feel and look if I wasn't wrapped up in this comfort blanket working very motivating to think about what this might look like on the other side as it were. So yeah, and again that's a useful perspective which I didn't really have at the start, so you know, again I was just focused on getting out on the bike or whatever and that, you know, and I'll feel physically better, perhaps something like that. But actually I'm saying that it's the other benefits that are going to be the real benefit in tackling this issue and of course there is some physical benefits from that too, but they're going to be much more and benefits now I feel.

00:36:43 Coach: So you mentioned earlier a couple of actions that you were going to take in regard to speaking to your wife and doing a couple of things. So where are you at now in terms of what will you now do with what you now know?

00:36:59 Coachee: So just think, I think those are sort of three things, three actions, so to speak to my wife, Bridget, and speak to a colleague at work and I'll have that conversation with Bridget this evening. And you know, I know that she'll be pleased to have that conversation because this is something that's been worrying her for a while now. I'll need to make contact with the colleague at work, but I need to set a short deadline on that so I will set my deadline and making sure I've had that coffee with that person by Wednesday next week. So by 11:00 to 12:00 on Wednesday I'll need to set that up. And then I think I'll need to make myself commit to taking bike out. That's my, I hate running and that sort of thing, but quite enjoy bike riding, taking the bike out across the following weekend.

00:38:12 Coach: Lovely. Sounds great. And so, Josh thinking about who you want to be taking into account that sense of worth, that sense of value, that feeling of confidence taking those things into account, what will it look like moving forward for you if you're able to move forward with the plan that you have and the insights that you have?

00:38:54 Coachee: I think it would look to other people and would certainly look to me, would feel to me like a much more rounded life, probably more interesting life, I think. Because again, just, you know, you sort of helped me to think about things, that the really successful people I know in my sphere of work aren't actually people who spend all the time working. You know, they are people that and if I was asked, there's one person I'm thinking of in particular who doesn't work with me now. But I've worked with him in the past, you know, if you trust people to describe what he looks like, what his lifestyle looks like would say yes, very successful at work, works very hard, gets a lot done. But he does loads of things outside, is very active, you know he does a lot of hiking, sails and all that, and so he's someone who's known for having that. And I think thinking about it a lot of the really successful people I know are like that. They don't just do one thing you know, they have got that balance and that's what, that's what I hope it would look like for me.

00:40:19 Coach: Lovely. Yeah. And so, Josh reflecting back on our conversation now thinking about the insights you've had, what else do you need from this conversation, that's going to make it more complete for you?

00:40:45 Coachee: I can't. I mean, I'm amazed actually at the ground we've covered in this, what, 40 minutes? Amazing. Gained a lot of insight. I think you really articulated some, you really pull together some of my thoughts very well and I think this sense of comfort is something that I'll keep hold of I think that's a really good, good phrase and also thinking about focus on what it would look like and feel like once I've done this is a really, really good motivator. You know that that's going to really help to deal with any potential barriers that I encounter. So actually Brigitte, I can't think of anything else that would be good to cover but be really good to check in again about this in the future though.

00:41:48 Coach: Absolutely very happy to do that. So how are you feeling about wrapping up our conversation today, Josh?

00:41:58 Coachee: I feel really good. Because I've been wrestling with this myself for months if I'm honest. And just keep putting it off and I couldn't really understand why and that was frustrating me because like I said, it seems like such a simple thing just get on the bike. But actually I feel really good about this now because I can understand why that's not been happening. And I can see this is a tip of quite a big iceberg and you've really helped me see what the iceberg I've seen under the water. You know, I can see what in and I've got actually, I think for the first time ever, really since I started thinking about this, I can see a way to start to deal with these issues. And like I say that that focus on how good all this look and feel when I've done that will be the sort of my, my beacon that will keep me on track.

00:43:05 Coach: Well done, well done. Josh, congratulations for the insights that you have discovered for yourself today. I've really enjoyed our conversation and I certainly look forward to checking in and catching up with you again. And we can organise that to do is there anything else you'd like to talk about now that's going to complete our conversation.

00:43:39 Coachee: No, that's absolutely terrific, Brigitte. Thank you and really thank you very much.