



PROFESSIONAL CHRISTIAN COACHING TODAY

Chris McCluskey & Kim Avery

*The podcast dedicated to Raising the Standard of Coaching...
and Changing the World*

Episode 015

Pastor Turned Coach with Steve Cromer, DMin, CPLC, ACC

KIM: Welcome today to one of the episodes that you have been asking for. So many of you - and I really appreciate that - have been writing in saying we would like to hear from what we would call a typical coach. He's an average person who has come into coaching, learned how to coach really well, decided to launch and grow their own business, and make a success of it. So not some superstar, nothing against our guest today, but just someone who is very typical of our students who come to Professional Christian Coaching Institute, and we are excited to have Steve Cromer here today, as you know Chris, who is willing to share some of his journey for our listeners.

CHRIS: This should certainly resonate with a lot of our listeners. In fact, if you've looked at the title of today's podcast, you know that it is Pastor Turned Coach. Steve Cromer of course is a pastor, pastored for many, many, many years of his professional life and probably figured at one season that was what he would do all the rest of his days. Steve, I'm going to introduce you in just a moment but okay if I give a little bit of background information on you?

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STEVE: That's fine. I would welcome back

CHRIS: Steve came to Professional Christian Coaching Institute back in the fall of 2012 and started with our introductory course, The Essentials of Coaching. As he made his transition to the field you know the old adage that the real learning of anything starts when you begin doing it.

So Steve began doing coaching early and did throughout 2013, continued training taking other courses, moving toward then eventual certification as an associate certified coach through the International Coach Federation. He secured our internal certification here at the school, certified professional life coach, and in July 2014, July 1st I think you told me, Steve, you made the plunge. It was your first "I'm all in" full time coaching practice and to your delight had a fantastic 2014. We're now in 2015 wrapping it up and Steve is here at a place - he authorized me to share this - now pulling down six figures in the practice and he has served enough clientele to be able to apply back to the International Coach Federation again for his professional certified coach designation.

That's moving through in a pretty ideal kind of a sequence but definitely rapid, and so Steve, it's exciting to have someone come in here who kind of saw what was available, sensed God call and said, "Okay, let me at it. Let me go." Welcome to the show.

STEVE: Thank you so much Chris and Kim. It's good to be with you today. Yeah, a lot of it was driven too by the fact that I was hungry because I was out of work. I left. It was just marvelous looking back on it. It wasn't at that time, but really, a marvelous move on God's part. Coinciding with a call of that had, by the way, I'm going to name the day of the week, on a Wednesday, back in February 1976 when I had this incredibly profound call in my life to follow Him, to enter into the ministry. I was the first person on either of my family to enter into, at least since that call, into the ministry. I was still in college, went on to seminary, and that I was a premed major thinking I was going on track for doctor. I ended up in doing some of my early training actually in hospital settings. I went to Duke University

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Medical Center, did a clinical pastoral education there while I was finishing up seminary, but ended up going into a local church field and did so for 30+ years. Like you said at the beginning on the introduction, saw myself, my wife saw ourselves finishing out in that career, but I left it three years ago at the age of 56 and a lot of things went into that. That was the encouragement of family, the failing of health and just another marvelous call that grew out of that that I'll be happy to share.

CHRIS: That's pretty exciting. I remember our very first few connections as you were inquiring about the school and to be here, quite frankly, such a relatively short number of years later and see how much has unfolded. I know that it was a painful period of time there as you initially recognized where you were and the need for a transition, but this has been pretty dramatic in terms of your not just the movement you've made but the movement that came out of your recognition. This really is the Lord's call for this new season. This is not just me kind of bailing on the ministry and trying to figure out how to feed my family. As you said, you were hungry. There was motivation to generate income for sure, but you actually sensed there was a bigger thing going on here than just you being in a state of having to examine health and having to make some career decisions, right?

STEVE: Well, yeah. There was and there was part of that too but this was a calling of God, no doubt. I left actually, I've been to struggle. I'm going to openly share this and it's something that a lot of pastors don't admit, but the stresses of the job lead to a high degree of burnout, depression, and so forth and I never thought I would be in that category, but the last 3-4 years of pastoral ministry, I had to stay on antidepressants just to function. My wife and children at a family get together. We had rented a beach house. I have four grown children, the oldest three are married, and so all the children, my daughters-in-law, my wife, all rallied around me. I had an intervention, so to speak, and said, "Dad, something has got to change here. You're just not the same self you used to be." I never thought about leaving the ministry. I thought it was a lifelong call to serve in the church, but

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they said, “You’re not doing well. You don’t see it,” and two days later, I ended up in the emergency room. They said to me, “Something has to change.” Well, two days after the emergency room, I was in my doctor’s office who knew me fairly well but not a church member, and said to me, “Steve, something has got to change.” I go, “Okay. All right Lord, I’m hearing that now from you.”

CHRIS: I’m getting the message now.

STEVE: He said, “I’m going to write a medical leave of absence and I want you to just take the time to sort some things out.” I took it to personnel committee. I did not have to leave the church. I had a great relationship with the church family there. The personnel committee said, “Hey, yeah, he said six weeks, you take eight weeks. You can’t come back until he okays you. We want you to take care of you.” During that summer, I went on three different prayer retreats and the last one was a weeklong and I went to a place that was, I think with the Christian Missionary Alliance Church, very secluded, no contact with outside world, no phone, no internet, no TV, no radio, nothing. Every night, I would call Geneva on a landline in the building in the center of the compound just to tell her what the Lord was saying.

During the process of the summer, it was just getting clearer, do I want to go back? Can I reenter in a way or is this time of ministry over because I thought more and more why I went into the ministry to begin with, and it was bottom line to help people grow. I did love to preach and I love to teach. I love to counsel and I had a lot of training in pastoral counseling. I was good in pastoral counseling and had a pretty good load with that, but the larger the church grew, I was here in Myrtle Beach 13.5 years, we’d gone from one worship service to four. We had a staff of 50 people, 40 of which were in a yearround daycare that we have preschool and it was just all managing yet still having to preach and teach during the week, supervise staff, see people in hospital. Because in the certain denomination I was in, I could have staff but if the pastor didn’t go see somebody, nobody from the church has been to see them. So it was a lot of pressure to keep

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functioning a heavy level. I thought I'd love to spend the last good years. I thought like I was at my best years in doing what I love doing but I didn't know what to do. As a matter of fact, I'll tell you at this point, that prayer retreat was in July 2012. I had no clue what I was to do and like people in the ministry think we can't leave because who will think we're qualified to do anything else outside of the church.

CHRIS: Isn't that the truth? That's one of the internal messages, isn't it? That's what we keep fearing. I can't believe there is no other option.

STEVE: And it was compounded by the fact that in 2008, we're trying to transition to another home. We got stuck with two homes for 2.5 years. It wiped us out financially. We had no resources, nothing extra, no lines of credit, no savings, no stock, nothing and we were heavily in debt. So on a Wednesday night of that prayer retreat, I felt so clearly. I stayed up all night just journaling God's calling and reading Abraham's story. "Steve, I just want you to trust me, to leave everything and trust me." Immediately, I started thinking of all the reasons I couldn't do that. "That makes no sense, Lord." It was the scariest thing but over the course of 12 straight hours of being in one place and writing, thinking, and praying, I said, "Okay, I'll do it." It was on a Wednesday and it was the same type of response I gave going back in 1976. I go, "Okay but now I've got a wife that's going to go along with this thing." I called home that night and Geneva says, "What did the Lord tell you today?" I said, "Well, He said I'm to trust Him. I'm to walk away from the church ministry and into a place He's going to show me," and there's just quiet flutter on the other end of the phone.

There was this pause for a little bit and her next words were, "Steve, we have no savings, no stocks. We're upside down on our house. We don't really have any retirement. Our youngest son is about to start college next month and you want to walk away from a six-figure paying job?" I said, "Yeah, that's pretty much it." She said, "Well can you go back until you find something else?" I thought that one through and here was the key for me and it's not the key for everybody. I'm

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not advocating doing this. I said, “I could do that but that won’t require the faith and the trust that I think God is wanting me.” It’s this kind of an Abraham thing and I said, “But I’m not going to force you to it. I’m not going to do it if you’re not in agreement but if I go back, you’re going to have to start going back to church,” because she was so fed up she had quit going. I said, “I’m not going to be the pastor of a church my wife is not going to attend.” She said, “Well, you’ve got a point there.” I said, “We’ll talk about it when I get home.”

I stopped on the way to see Reggie McNeal on the way home who is an author about eight or nine books now on church leadership. He’s a friend of mine. He said, “Steve, you might want to rethink this one.” When I got home, our best friend, a couple about our age, he’s a very successful businessman. I went to Dan and I told him what I was feeling what God had asked me to do. He said, “No way God would tell you that.” So here are other people trying to talk me out of it but over the course of the weekend, Geneva came and said, “You know, I’m with you. It makes no sense,” and I said, “All right, I’m not going to ask the church for anything. I’m going to resign. I’m not being asked to leave.” There was no trouble except I felt like I wanted to minister in some other ways, but I had no clue. As a matter of fact, Chris and Kim, at this point I’d never even heard of coaching. I did not know what it was. I had no clue what I was going to do.

So the church, we kind of had a goodbye reception and they didn’t make an offer or anything until a week after I was gone and finished, everything moved out of the office. The week after I left, they had a business meeting and voted out of appreciation to give us six month’s salary and a year’s worth of health insurance. Just about a year of the ministry, which was beautiful. So that was the first of God’s many provisions. If I might add, what was really cool about three weeks after that, I’m still trying to figure out what am I going to do here? Will I go into counseling but I didn’t want to do through all the hoops? I met with a counselor that was often referred to and made an appointment with to see her just want to know if I could make a living doing that. She said, “Yes you can but why would you want to?” She had this bag sitting next to her and she pulled out two books

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and said, “Steve, I don’t know if you’ve heard of coaching but I think you would be great at it.” She handed me, listen to this, she handed me coactive coaching.

CHRIS: Oh.

STEVE: Ah, how about that that you’re using the essentials, and Patrick Williams and Menendez’ book Becoming a Professional Life Coach.

CHRIS: Oh my goodness.

STEVE: She said, “Look at these.” I read those two books in two days. I read them cover to cover. I said, “This is exactly kind of how I do my pastoral counseling. This is great. Why haven’t I ever heard of this?” And then I started looking up, well, where can I go learn how to do this? A week later, I was speaking to a friend, someone you may know, Linda McDowell.

CHRIS: Sure.

STEVE: She had taken a class. She said, “Well, have you thought about PCCI?” I said, “What is that?” I thought it was a credential. She told me about it. I went online and looked at it. I was most impressed. The cost was a little bit better than some other programs. So I enrolled. I left in August, started in October at PCCI. In August, like I said, I’ve never even heard of coaching. That’s the start. I felt it was just God all over it.

KIM: Wow, I want to say thank you first of all just for sharing so transparently. I know and I’ve met so many people, pastors, who can identify with your story. So being willing just to say what was on the line, just thank you. That’s a gift to people right there. We appreciate that.

CHRIS: Indeed.

KIM: And I’m hearing, wow, God saying, “Leave everything and trust me.” What a big call of faith and how He has after your active obedience come behind and provided step by step especially through the vehicle that we all love of coaching is

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just wonderful to hear. I know you, Steve. We've gotten to know each other through the Essentials class and working together. Coaching is just the start of a journey, isn't it? Talk about what that was like for you to sit in a class, to hear about coaching if it resonated. What happens next?

STEVE: Oh yeah. You and Michael Pfau were teaching that Essentials class and the listening part wasn't hard, but when people come to you as pastor, they are looking for some spiritual direction and advice giving. That was a tough habit to break in the triads so it's going through some critical learning there. I jumped in on your marketing momentum because in January that following year, just learning how do I get a website up? I didn't know anything. I had everything done. There was no marketing in the ministry. People came to me. People came to our church. We had 10,000 visitors a year on Sunday mornings at our church because we're located at a beach resort area and visitors from all over the world. So now of course I spent all those years of people say, "That's a great sermon, Steve." You know, you're the humble part and you thank the Lord for that. I mean, you can't take any credit but now, you've got to market yourself. Talk about feeling weird and to charge people, big stumbling jokes. So those there when I did what Chris said, "You go to people that you know and ask can I coach you to get some experience. I won't charge you much." That was a major hurdle charging them anything.

CHRIS: Yeah, this really hits. I think I need to kind of help our listeners maybe get on page even with some of what the significance of what you shared there and talking about how the Lord brought you here because everybody experiences the Lord differently. Everybody seeks Him in different ways. We hear that Jesus very rarely performed the same miracle the same way so God so oftentimes shakes up how He works and moves in our lives. When Steve said those two books that were shared with him by the counselor friend that he went to, those were two of the three texts that we use as our core texts for our introductory course. The other one that was missing was Gary Collin's Christian Coaching, which of course I know you've devoured.

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STEVE: That's right yeah.

CHRIS: But to have had those sitting right there such as they reached down, pulled them out, and hand them to you and that just greases the shoot for where the Lord is leading you next though there are not other clear signposts. We only see those kinds of things in retrospect, but to have come in, hit the ground running with the material as enthusiastic about as you were, as much as you felt like this is answering now so many of the pieces and parts of who I am and yet here you are sharing with us your learning curve, the areas that didn't plug in. Yeah, I have never had to think like a business owner and a marketer on this front and charge for my services, and now I've got skills learning, yes, but I've also got business learning and marketing learning to do in a big, big way and oh yeah, the church gave us six months' severance but I've got some debts breathing down my neck here. As Kim said, I mean carrying us through the story but that's just important for our listeners to be able to track with how dramatic this very rapid transition actually began to unfold once you obeyed, once you responded to what you sense very strongly God was calling you to.

STEVE: Right. You were so kind at PCCI to let me double up on some courses, taking Accidental Entrepreneur at the same time I was taking in the next level, the coaching development, the skills development class, and so I was learning how to start a business, how to open a bank account, all of those things were brand new. Had about 10 clients, again, these were low paying and having to go out and get more, but I got a speaking engagement, a pretty big one due to a mutual friend with a Fortune 500 company. It was Jones, just a regional meeting, nothing big at headquarters. They don't want to misrepresent that. There was going to be about 150 people there and what I did not know until I got there was that the head person over North and South Carolina was present and also some other wholesalers like from Pacific Life, Lincoln Financial, and those kinds of people were there.

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I'm sitting in this room and scrambling with Kim's help to get a website up so I can have something to point to. I didn't even know what I was walking in. I was sitting down in this thing for two hours before I get up to speak and they are talking all these financial terms and languages that marketers are doing. I understand none of it and I'm as scared as I can be. I'm thinking all those negative thoughts. I'm out of my league. I don't belong here. What am I doing here? Who am I fooling? Just all of those things which are the voice of the evil one who would have you think you misheard that call. So I was sitting there thinking, "Wait a minute. I know what I'm going to talk about today. I may not know what they are talking about but I know what I'm going to talk about and I'm an expert on that and they are not." I just have to keep remembering that. I wanted to drink a glass of water so badly while I was talking but my hands were shaking so much so I didn't dare raise that glass, but I got two clients from that talk and then that started to snowball. Again, I had that six-month window so around into February, I had to get a part time job 20 hours a week for a friend selling garage doors which he needed help because it was a new business so I was learning new product on that end, learning coaching. I was working seven days a week long hours just trying to absorb everything. I kept that job for about a year and four months, backing down the half time and then finally even though I could not make the numbers work as you said, in July 14 decided I can't build the business anymore while working half time. There comes to a leap of faith got to finish taking.

KIM: Yeah. Well, not just dealing the faith, another, in a series of big leaps and small steps of faith. It's fascinating to be able to get you kind of retrospective on the whole situation and it sounds like there's almost a couple of parallel tracks going at the same time, Steve. One is the external skills that you do need to be learning. You want to be a fabulous coach so that people will refer you and recommend you, and taking those skills development classes and then taking Chris' Accidental Entrepreneur which is now the called the Successful Coach Class for Business Building and then you and I working on marketing, whoah, tons of

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learning, but then for you to also identify so clearly what a lot of people can't quite put voice to, those internal struggles – I'm not good enough. It's not going to work out. What if people find me out? What have I done?

STEVE: Yes.

KIM: All those voices that go in our head. So it's almost like you're fighting two battles at the same time and then like you said working very, very long hours. I have to ask, if you would share one, two three, whatever, what kind of things helped you persevere to get through that initial growth period which is so hard?

STEVE: Obviously, you want to say the Lord. That's a general way but let's talk about how the Lord does that. Primarily, He did through some fellow coaches that I met in the triads that we just kept up calls after the class was over just to encourage one another. I made sure I was in a support group. I meet with a group of folks that I love that love me. We meet for breakfast every Thursday morning. I've got a core group of people who were just encouragers and I really needed that too because one thing I have not said is just how hard this was for my wife. There's no security in this. There's no guaranteed paycheck that we'd had for years. We had no margin to fall back on. That call was so clear. It was a year and two months before I really doubted it, I mean sincerely doubted it.

I was working on the numbers and I saw a low month was coming up the next month. I just said, I told Geneva, "I don't quite know how we're going to handle this. We had always had enough to pay the bills and a little bit left over but not much." One month I hadn't gotten any new clients. I have finished up with several others and I said to her, "I can't see how we're going to pay our bills this month." She started crying and I was really scared. I'd like to say that I had this resounding trust that never wavered, but it did waver. I went to the Lord about that and just said, "Honestly, I'm scared and I'm ashamed that I'm scared because I want to claim that I believe you and I do trust you, but it's a fragile one here but I'm going to go back. I'm going to remember that word you gave me that somewhere on New Hampton," and I kid you not, the next day, a prospective

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client called me up and said, “I heard you talk awhile back. I want to start. I’ve just had a little bit of windfall come in. Will you give me a little bit of a discount if I pay you three months in advance?”

KIM: Beautiful.

STEVE: I had to think about that for a while.

KIM: Three seconds, four seconds.

STEVE: It seemed like forever but I said, “Sure, I’d do that” and so I threw out a figure and then thought, gone it if I didn’t have. Three days later another client wanted to start and pay me three months in advance. What has turned out to be, I went back to Geneva by the end of the week and said, “You know how I said we weren’t going to pay the bills? We’ve just now had our biggest month to date,” and God just keeps sending the man up like that when I didn’t know where it’s going to come from. I didn’t generate those. He’s so faithful but the support group, just staying honest before the Lord and admitting those times, you don’t want to deny you’re scared but admit them.

CHRIS: Well and thank you again as Kim has said for being so transparent to admit what the struggle has been like because we did say at the beginning of the show, the desire for us in interviewing students who have made their transition or are in the midst of their transition is to be able to reflect accurately what it’s really like. No fairy tale kind of story. You were not hyping something. We were not trying to sell snake oil. We’re not going to package everything up with a nice neat little bow on it and say, “Well, everything just went wonderful from there.” I’ve already shared my story here very transparently. Kim has done likewise and you have shared about the internal struggles, the doubts, the fears, the not knowing, and the importance of trust. The cornerstone of our faith which is faith, hoping things not seeing, right, but then you also hit on, as Kim was putting out a moment ago, some other external kind of practical things like you said, “Well, I took a part time job 20 hours a week.”

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In your case, instead of staying on at the church which you could have done, you instead realized, “No, I need to create some space here and we still got some financial needs. So how much are those financial needs? Ah, I could work for this friend of mine who sells garage doors and at 20 hours a week that would generate X. That would kind of get us through. That doesn’t have all the other built in pressures of my former position. I can learn about garage doors and I can go out and sell garage doors and help people know how to install garage doors. I could just do that and it isn’t taxing some of my other reserves that really need to be borne upon in order to make this launch.”

I did the same kind of thing, Steve. When we moved out here to the country and the launched proved harder than originally, in crunching my numbers, originally anticipated to be, rather than bailing on the whole thing saying, “Ah, I must have misunderstood. I got the wrong call. This can’t be right because it doesn’t add up numerically.” I said, “No, I know that was the call. I know where we’re supposed to be. I spent the time in discerning that and – not but – and the numbers don’t add up quite yet. What can I do?” Practically speaking, all I got to do is generate income. It doesn’t matter how right now as long as it’s legal. How can I generate some? I started a little snack food delivery route only on Fridays here in the area. We’re out in the country in Statesville. It was a 30-mile drive range around here but I just went into a little mom and pop shops, little restaurants, little gas stations, and put out snack foods, high grade nuts and licorice, beef jerkies and that kind of stuff, and they sold really great. I could do that on a Friday. I can restock with my son with me that’s why we called it Daddy’s Snacks. You make the best out of it. You generate enough off of that.

Once the practice was up and running, just like you jettisoned with the garage door career, I jettisoned Daddy’s Snacks. I sold that to somebody else and moved on, but the key message that I’m hearing you say is once you spent time before the Father over and over, open, transparent, realizing fully, “This is what He is calling me to” and you checked it with those you trust, those who you support you with need, then you commit. You make the plunge and you move forward, and

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you deal with the internal obstacles and the external obstacles one at a time just boom, boom, boom. Press into them, move forward. Don't let them cut you out at the knees and halt this thing you've so recently committed to.

STEVE: One other thing I would remember, you and Kim both I heard each of you say at one time, "It will take you three or five years to build a coaching practice that you can make a living on." See, I didn't believe that because I believe I can do this in 18 months to two years. That's part of the optimist that I am, but when I got discouraged because that did not happen, I remembered your words and said, "Well, here are experienced people who are wise counselors, maybe there was some truth. I will believe that. I will not consider myself a failure or whatever." The constant things, the impressions you folks make upon your students when you open up and tell us what it would really be like. You're not just selling us a weekend coaching and go out and make six figures. It's a lot of hard work and it takes time and it takes skill building, but you offer all of those support systems to make that happen.

KIM: I have to ask you, now on this side of it, not that you've probably arrived to where you ultimately want to be. I know there are always things to tweak and change but what are you most excited about this new lifestyle that your faith in God has allowed you to create?

STEVE: It's far more relaxed. I'll tell you what, I don't have to work with people that I don't like.

KIM: Which is huge.

CHRIS: Which is huge. I set the schedule I want and it's full. I mean, I'm not at the point where I can back off. The hardest thing about this still at this point is locating new clients and new prospects. It's not to the point where I've got people who are established and they are coming to you because you've got enough referrals out there, but it's a good place. I enjoy the benefits. I've been asked, "Would you go back?" Because a lot of people said, "You're gifted at that. You need to

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do that,” and sometimes I wonder, learning the coaching skills that I have now particularly now that I’m working with businesses, managers, and leaders, what would I do differently if I did step back in the church and sell? I’m tempted to think that and when I go there very long though, I start getting sick to my stomach and I realize that I love the pace of life that I have now mainly because I’m not trying to please or make a lot of people happy, just me and my wife basically and hopefully clients through good service.

CHRIS: Very, very good. There’s a saying in standup comedy when people are trying to break into that very high pressure field. You may not be that funny so they always say, “As you’re making your transition, don’t quit your day job.” You might not be that funny. We do always emphasize to our students, as you discern the call to this profession and as you begin then your training and start to make your transition, do anticipate a typically 3-5 year transition period and the way I always break it down, the first year, you’re just going to be learning like crazy. You don’t even know what you don’t know. You’re going to make mistakes and that’s the best way to learn. The real learning starts when you begin doing. So you do it but you’re going to finish up that first year in the red. So know that going in and look at either can you stay on your day job or can you cut back to three-quarter time? Can you pick up some side income or can a spouse help you out with income? You’re going to need a nest egg of some sort somewhere in that first year.

That second year typically, persons begin to really find the pay off. I call it “turn their corner” somewhere in the midst of their second year. As you said, it doesn’t mean that everything just starts suddenly flowing, but they probably will finish up that second year if not in the black at least breaking even. It’s not until the third year typically that you’re actually being able to predictably take out of the business month after month running the business in the black and still it’s not running like a well oiled machine. As you said, you don’t yet have enough word of mouth out in the street. There aren’t enough people that are satisfied clients just sending you other clients and such. That 2-3 year transition where your turn

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your corner, finally figuring out, starts to pay off and you're drawing steady salary, your steady income from it, that's a much more typical transition and I think that's what Kim and I are both hearing in terms of the general path that you have shown forth. These next couple of years should be principally marketing. Now that you know what you're doing, you are a known entity, and you do have a network built, you keep tweaking, modifying, and expanding. You improve that website presence. You add some other key talks that you can give etc., and it does start to eventually run like a fairly well oiled machine, but it's a process.

STEVE: It is. As a matter of fact, I'm rebuilding a site now working with someone because the old one doesn't fit. One of the things to move a little bit more quickly because of our circumstance towards outcome, if it is strictly a life coaching business, I think that would take longer to build that kind because you've got to have a lot of clients, which takes some time. I started doing and because my coaching niche, I thought about who came to me mostly as I was a pastor, who wanted to seek counsel, and it was usually the professionals because I've got their mindset, what their leadership challenge is. So I marketed those. Well, some of those clients then said, "Hey, would you work with my manager?" or "Would you come and work with my team?" You could charge a little bit more for that when it's coming out of a business pocket than an individual's pocket. My first love is the life coaching piece, particularly life coaching the leaders, but I'm also morphing into doing not business coaching but the soft skills of leadership coaching, team building, communication, vision setting, those kinds of things. So I'm having to come up with a website to reflect that a little bit more. A pretty cool thing that's also happening, you mentioned my son, Clay, is now taking his second class through PCCI going into the ministry. He is going to come and do some part time coaching for me. I have a daughter-in-law that went through Duke Integrative Health Coaching and so adding her to the staff. We're growing a little bit now.

KIM: What fun to be bringing your family, the same family that had an intervention with you out of love.

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STEVE: Exactly.

KIM: To be inviting them into the abundance of this new piece of life that God has given you. It's a beautiful picture. If I could just highlight or connect some dots for what you were just sharing, people I think understand the importance of choosing a niche and we're going to talk about that more in a dedicated way on another podcast, but targeting specific people that they know they will be good with and they can communicate well the value that coaching would add to their lives, but I hope people hearing your story, the reality of niche, it's rarely if ever, I sit down one night and choose a niche and then I wake up the next day and I'm good to go. It's much more this morphing process because clarity comes with activity.

It doesn't precede activity and so for you as you've been out there, as you've discovered about life coaching, what leaders are willing to pay for that, what would they were willing to pay for more business type coaching, those different types of things, you have shifted, changed, grown, and refined to the point that you were doing your whole web presence to better reflect a couple of years later what you thought you were going to be early on. That is so typical of the way that unfortunately, it's just the way life is though, the way that niching journey grows. We need to keep moving, putting one foot in front of each other working with people and learning, be willing to adapt as we grow. I just wanted to point that out for our listeners so that they would feel normalized hopefully in what they are experiencing and what they are going through right now.

CHRIS: That's a good word, Kim.

STEVE: Back in March this past year, I went and got certified to become a partner with Everything DiSC as a team and another piece what I find will help coaches if they will kind of become an expert around a certain tool that not only will it add a little bit of speed to the coaching process. It's something tangible that clients can put their head around and it's something that you can charge a little bit for and make a

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little bit of a profit on the tool itself, which becomes another stream of income. For several reasons I think that's a helpful thing.

CHRIS: Excellent point, yeah, developing not only your niches but then special tools that will help you serve those niches better and those do then begin to expand your primary base of income. Normally when we launch a practice as private clients, but you've mentioned now working with teams so you get group coaching kind of opportunities and speaking that you start to get paid for, and then if you can do assessments and inventories, that's yet another stream of income. Many times, the best way to build a solid base under yourself once you get going is to diversify those income streams. They all start kind of feeding and supporting each other.

Steve, this has been really, really rich to have you share so transparently about the realities of how you discerned this major life transition, how your family actually helped you in that, how friends came alongside of you, how you have continually sought the Lord's direction for whatever the next season was to be, and how He typically didn't give you all the pieces going up front but instead said, "I'm also working on some other things here maybe that are more important than just what your next income source is going to be. Obviously, he has grown you tremendously in terms of your own trust and faith walk. That's something to rejoice in, huh?"

STEVE: Yes, I think the real richness out of all is how much being introduced to this whole field of coaching has helped me grow as an individual spiritually, relationally, and a lot of different ways. The association with PCCI with folks like you, with other coaches, I thought my life was already rich and blessed enough. It has become even more so. Thank you.

CHRIS: Well for those who are listening and you heard in Steve's stories some of your own story, it's really easy to connect with him out on the web. You'll find him at SteveCromerCoaching.com. While you're there, he actually has a free download inventory that kind of ties in with a lot of what you heard him sharing here today and that is in managing anxiety, stress, and difficulties, managing it for positive

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change as a Christian, how we walk toward it and allow the Lord to use it. The title of that download is Don't Just Swing Harder, Change Your Stance. Of course that's a baseball metaphor for those of you that are baseball fans. Ted Williams, all time batting record holder, famous for having said, "When you're in a slump, you don't just get out there and swing harder. You examine what else you can do. You change your stance and it will come back. You'll get a fresh start." Again, that download out there at SteveCromerCoaching.com and of course you can connect with him individually there. Steve, thank you so much for such rich sharing. Bless you, brother.

STEVE: Thank you. I appreciate it. God bless you as well.

KIM: That about wraps us up for today. If God has been stirring up in you the desire to make some shifts and changes around your most important values, we would love to help you by giving you access to our free Align Your Life Inventory. It's a quick checkup with God and you can find that at ProfessionalChristianCoachingToday.com. If this has been helpful to you, can I encourage you just to pass it on to others who are in the ministry, in the business when sometime of decision in their lives so they can be encouraged by Steve's story as we were today.

CHRIS: Until next time, keep raising the standard of coaching and changing the world.

KIM: God's richest blessings to you.