



PROFESSIONAL CHRISTIAN COACHING TODAY

Chris McCluskey & Kim Avery

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

Episode 016

Journey to Joy: Kim Avery's Story, Part 1

CHRIS: Well, we have a neat episode today and I am personally very much looking forward to this discussion. Many of our listeners would remember not too many episodes ago that my co-host here, Kim Avery, turned the tables on me and we did what actually turned in two episodes of her interviewing me on this show about my story, about who I am, where I came from, the walk that I've had with the Lord. How I feel like He pulled me in, drew me into the field of coaching, and how we came to the season of life that my wife, Rachel, and I find ourselves at right now, kind of taking a snapshot and a retrospective on our lives.

You know what they say, "Turnabout is fair play." Today, I get to turn the tables on Kim and interview her. I'm looking forward to what I'm about to discover and to learn through her willingness to share here. Those of you who know Kim know that she is a fairly private person and does not just naturally gush out her personal stories. She is full of information and always happy to share and serve, but just on the personal front, unless you have an opportunity to like this, sometimes you can feel like, "Hmm, I wonder what Kim really feels or thinks, or where she comes from." We're about to get to experience that. So Kim, sincerely

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thank you for being willing to come on here, be vulnerable, and to share. We know that our stories are such a valuable way of bearing testimony in this world to the world, so thank you.

KIM: Amen. I have to say, it is harder being on this side of the microphone than on the other end, but God is a good God and anytime we can testify to His greatness, I think we should probably take the opportunity to do that.

CHRIS: Very definitely, yeah. Our stories are important and our stories are the witness to the fact that each of us was known by Him before in this together in our mother's wombs. He sent us here with giftings and calling. He has a plan and a purpose for our lives. His eye has always been upon us. His hand has always led us. He has always gone before. His shield of protection has been around us. We're about to trace 50 or so years worth of living here on this planet as the Lord's child. I guess begin at the beginning, huh? Tell us a little bit about the early years of Kim Avery when I guess Avery wasn't even your last name.

KIM: No. Chris, for as long as I can remember, maybe like everybody in the world, I really thought I just want to be happy. I want to enjoy life. It seems like a good goal and noble goal – and it is in many ways – but in some ways, I think we could title my life looking for happiness in all the right places and not finding it. When I would think about my early childhood, I was one of those girls who really like to color in the lines. Life was very important in my home that you obey the rules, you do the right things, say the right things, you get the right grades, you hang around with the right people, and for me, that was easy. I drew a lot of life and happiness, meaning and identity from pleasing all other people all the time. It built this little rhythm within me that if I could be good enough and perform enough, I would get pats on the back. I would be happy and I would feel good. That's probably not such a bad way to live until you hit adolescence.

CHRIS: Ouch!

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KIM: And then all of a sudden keeping the rules is a little bit harder and the grades maybe not as high and my friends going through adolescence of their own aren't quite as rewarding and affirming, and then I really remember becoming more determined and dogged in my search to try to find happiness. I knew something was lacking in my life and so I was always on a search for it. Now, there was a time in my life when I was in high school where to a different church than my parents just because they had a larger youth group and so this church was close to home and I could be very involved. It was what we would probably call a hellfire and brimstone kind of church. There was a lot of loud preaching all the time and they basically defined Christianity by the list of things you didn't do. I'm a Christian because I don't do this and I don't do that and I don't do the other." Well, this really fed my little, "I'm going to be a good little girl and everybody is going to be pleased with me" kind of tendencies. So I actually fit in there pretty well, but what happened is one day, I remember in particular, God really spoke to me that even good little girls need a savior. There's a very real heaven and there's an eternal life, and you can't get there by being good all the time. So I entered into what we would call a saving relationship with the God of the universe and a lot of things changed for me instantly that day, but in all honesty due to all these misunderstandings I had about God and Christianity in my mind, a lot of things didn't. So I felt this assurance that "Okay, I'm good to go. Someday, I get to have eternal life and be in heaven, be happy, and be with Jesus for the rest of my life," but between now and then, what am I going to do to be happy?

I looked outside of me trying to get some clues and I thought, "Well, if I just leave home because again adolescence, escaped my parent's thumb and go to college and that will make me happy." It did for about a week. It wasn't just the happiest thing I ever did. I began looking around again and again and this is a pattern in my life. It's so interesting, Chris, because it reminds me of that verse in Jeremiah 2:13 where God is speaking. He says, "My people have committed two evils. They have forsaken me, the fountain of living waters, to hew for themselves cisterns, broken cisterns that hold no water." I think you can define

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almost the first half of my entire life as well digging. Frenzied efforts to dig well after well after well, convinced that this would be the one that would finally make me happy, and then all along, I had God, the fountain of living water, with everything I would ever want or need in my life, but I would turn my back and think, “Oh, if I just have the right job, if I just do the right majors, if I just buy the right things then I’m going to be happy” and so it went.

Ron Avery is a perfect example. I saw him across campus one day and knew that I knew that I knew that now, I was going to be happy. Here’s the cool thing, not only did I love him, Chris, better than that. He loved me and he thought I was the center of the universe, that I hung the moon. He existed to make me happy and so I was. I had somebody who loved me fully and that worked well until the day after the wedding. That is like he didn’t get the memo that it was all about me. He actually thought it was all about him and so you put two radically selfish, self-centered, big egos in a tiny apartment and it’s not pretty. So there we went again and I thought, “I just want to be happy.” I remember sitting in church one day and I saw it. “This is the well I needed to dig.” She was sitting on the front row holding this little baby. She was all wrapped in pink and she had a pink bow taped on top of her head, and this baby would look up at her mom and smile like her mom was the center of the universe. Nobody ever told me that that was just gas. I didn’t really have a lot of experience with kids up close and personal, but I could see that this was the thing that was going to make me happy. I just needed to have children. So I had my first child, and Bethany Linnell Avery, bless her pink little heart, screamed 23 hours out of every 24.

CHRIS: Hello colic, huh?

KIM: Yeah and it’s as if she didn’t get the memo either that it was all about me. On and on it went, and so I finally became so desperate that I turned to probably where I should have turned early on, to Scripture. I sat on the couch and I remember I didn’t watch TV, I didn’t read books, I didn’t go out with friends. I didn’t do anything. I read it beginning to end it seems like again and again. I knew there

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had to be an answer. I played by the rules. I sought happiness in all the ways the world says you're supposed to find happiness, but inside was that gnawing discontent and I knew something was missing. One day, I ran across a verse. Have you ever noticed how God kind of pops a verse in the Bible sometimes that's never been there before?

CHRIS: Yeah, right, overnight.

KIM: Or at least it seems that way. That verse was John 17:3 and this is where Jesus is praying to His Father. So it's His high priestly prayer what we call it, and he starts out His prayer this way. He says, "This is eternal life." I thought, "Oh, I know what eternal life is. Eternal life is what I want. It's when I finally die and I get to go to heaven and live forever with Jesus someday." That's what eternal life is, but that's not what He said. He said, "This is eternal life that they may know you, the only true God, in Jesus Christ whom you have sent." I don't know if there's any way to describe the seismic shift that just happened in my world, but all of a sudden, the light bulb went off and I thought, "Eternal life is not a thing. It's a relationship. It's a person and I have it now. I know Jesus. I don't have to wait until I die to get eternal life and to be happy." All of a sudden, all those verses that have been in Scripture all along made sense to me. Jesus saying, "I came that they may have life and have it more abundantly. These things that I have spoken to you that my joy may be in you and that your joy may be full." It went on and on and so I finally understood that I have an interactive friendship with Jesus Christ who is joyful, the source of all joy. He is that fountain of living waters. My world changed that day with that verse and the awareness that the joy I spent my whole life looking for had really been mine all along.

CHRIS: Wow, I can't help listening with that coaching ear and hearing that so much of what you're saying, when people share their stories, oftentimes we're kind of expecting to hear the train wreck. Where's the horrible stuff that had to be overcome first before I could surrender my life to the Lord? You're saying, "Actually, my life from the beginning all the way through college and into

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marriage was about doing lots of really good things and desiring to please others and serve well. So on the doing front, there wasn't a whole lot that anybody would have faulted you for. You were just saying on the inside of Kim was this, "Gee, I'm doing. Why am I not receiving the state of being that I am desiring, this thing called happiness or joy?" The being that you're talking about now, this state truly of just being in relationship, of knowing the Lord at that deep relational level, that seismic shift you're talking or sounds like, that's how I'm hearing it, that seismic shift from the doing focus to the being focus, not that it chucks the doing, not that the doing was bad or that you don't still do all you can to please and serve, but that wasn't the path in and of itself. It was kind of cart ahead of the horse. Is that?

KIM: Yes, the Lord is giving me many blessings in my life up to the point my family, my children, my husband, just tons of things, but they were never meant to bear the weight of being the source of my happiness. They were just blessings to show God's love for me. Only God can be the source of my happiness. No one else can live up to that pressure, that weight, that hole that we have in our hearts. I think St. Agustin expresses it so well when he said our hearts are restless until they find their rest in you. That's the restless heart that I'd had all my life.

It has changed everything. Life is not perfect and there's lots of growth as we go on that needs to occur in my awareness of God, my relationship with God, all sorts of things, but that foundational moment really changed me and changed where I go to source my happiness. But the sad part is, once I had that kind of light bulb moment, I went back to the church I was attending at the time, which was no longer the hellfire and brimstone but a much more balanced church, at that time with my family and I. We're so excited. I thought, "Now, I'll finally going to be part of the conversation and we're all going to understand what's going on together. I looked around and I saw a lot of other restless hearts.

CHRIS: Yes.

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KIM: Pasting on the Sunday smile, pretending everything is perfect because that's part of the game somehow is that appearance to one another, but you scratch it all below the surface and I found that so many, at least in this particular church and a lot of the churches I've gone to were just as restless and just as hungry as I had been. That really broke my heart.

CHRIS: So what did that then do in taking you back? Now you're spending this just soaking time in Scriptures and before the Lord in His presence and seeking to know Him better, you bring that back and you begin with a different set of questions?

KIM: Yeah, well a different set of desires. It's still, like you said, the doing now flows from our being and joy always overflow. It's the very nature of God. It's the very nature of joy to overflow and to want to spill onto other people. I really wanted to try to make a difference, to help people who were struggling, who were unhappy, which like I said, seemed like a large majority of the people, but of course my eyes were immediately drawn to those who, we would say our candidates for counseling – struggling with depression, anxiety, mental illness. It's just that 20-25% of the population which just goes through horrific mental torment on a pretty ongoing business. So I decided to go back to school and got my Masters in Counseling while we were living here in the State of Florida in an effort to try to serve. I kind of had a two-pronged approach and the other thing I did is I really poured myself into teaching discipleship groups, Bible studies, and different things like that because we know only the truth will set us free.

Counseling is important as people help in being Jesus with skin on to people and having the skills to help them during those difficult times, but it's also important that people know the truth, know who God is, who He is for them and in them, and all of those kinds of things. So I spent years and years doing those two things quite happily – doing the counseling first with the local hospital and then later some pro bono counseling just in the church as I was home schooling my children and needed to cut back a little bit, teaching Bible study and enjoyed it immensely.

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Interestingly enough as I still go to church – different church now, different congregation – and look out, the vast majority of the people were restless, unhappy, and it seemed like no matter what I would try to tweak or do differently, or bring to the table - and this is my all consuming fashion to try to make a difference - it didn't seemed to move the needle much in the church. I was really stomped and puzzled by that whole thing, and I guess in a way almost began to resign myself as to you got to do the best you can do, and so that's where I was with that situation.

CHRIS: Hmm. Let me see if I can trace and kind of even track where we are years-wise. So you got us up into your 30's now and you've had this shift with the Lord and it's about you and Him and His love for you and that relationship. Now you're doing other things – serving, ministering to people in states of brokenness as a counselor, Bible study, etc. Although the doing still looks similar, it is about helping others, it's out of a different center, a different internal state for you, and the frustration now becomes about it doesn't to be helping other people. Am I tracking or no?

KIM: Yes, absolutely, helping as much as I wish. Of course it helps.

CHRIS: It's not helping as much as you wished, okay.

KIM: Yeah. I mean people in Bible study are transformational, but when you look at this proportion of the church that I'm thinking about who are well, they are healthy. They are not necessarily in the state of brokenness, but a lot like me or like I was in that they weren't joyful. They weren't happy. These things were very circumstance-dependent in their life. They weren't purpose driven in what they were doing. They were reactive in their mode. It's just a large proportion of these people, they are not attracted to Bible study. I mean, if my marriage is struggling and somebody says, "So, we're studying Daniel. Would you like to come?" It's hard to get them in the front door no matter how many different ways I try to go about it and approach it so that they could have a closer encounter with this living God who wanted to be in a more interactive relationship with them,

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and they weren't necessarily candidates for counseling. I was doing what I wanted to do but it didn't seem to be affecting this group that I had such a heart for, this group that was like me in so many different ways. I think I probably would have discontinued and just done the best I could with what I was doing, but then God's so faithful when He wants to make a change in your life. I think in your story you called them the dark years, Chris. So then we've got some dark years coming where God is repositioning me amongst many other things.

CHRIS: Okay. So we're heading into your version of the dark years. We've got you in a better internal state in terms of your understanding of relationship with the Lord and your doing is flowing out of a better center although it's frustrated that it doesn't seem to have an impact that you would like, but the Lord is relentless. He is calling you into some deeper place and he chastens those He loves. Here we go, what's the chastening? What are the dark years?

KIM: Let me sum it up with an example that helps me at least this side of it makes sense of those seasons I think most of us have. We call the dark night of the soul or those times when God seems unexplainably silent in our lives. So this is the analogy that God has given me recently. I have two granddaughters. My oldest granddaughter is Payton and she is 4 years old. One of her favorite things to do is come over to Nina's house - that's my house - and play hide and go seek. She's come in the door and she'll say, "Nina, let's play hide and go seek." I'll say, "Okay," and this is what she'll say, "I'm going to go hide in your bed. You come find me." It's not a complicated game. It's not hard but I look around and pretend to look several different places and inevitably, I find her right where she said she would be. It builds relationship and we enjoy each other's company, and it's fine.

I think about those years after God showed me that He wanted to be in this interpersonal intimate relationship with me like playing hide and seek in that kind of way. "Here I am, come find me. This is where I am." It was enjoyable. It built relationship but I knew that I knew that through prayer, through Bible study,

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just through daily life, He was always available and seemed so fully present. Of course He is always available whether He seems present or not, but He always seemed present to me. Then about a year ago, so this is the other side of hide and go seek. Payton was 3 years old. She was living with her family – my son, daughter-in-law, and the baby – in the Mojave Desert outside the marine base in a really not great part of town. Ron and I were driving going to do some Christmas shopping. We got that phone call that no parent or grandparent that wants to get while we were in the car. I pick it up and my daughter-in-law sobbing. I said, “Okay, take it easy, breathe. What’s wrong?” She said, “Payton is missing.” What had had happened is they have a two-storey house and they were upstairs with the baby – Jonathan, Carissa, and the baby, and Payton they thought was downstairs watching cartoons. They came downstairs that clever little child had learned how to undo the deadbolt. The door was wide open and she was gone. They had no idea how long she had been gone. So here you have a beautiful little girl in a very rough part of town and she’s missing. They had looked everywhere before Carissa had called.

CHRIS: Oh my gosh.

KIM: So we pulled over the side of the road and I prayed with her, try to help her understand. “Call the police. Call the Marine Bay. Surely, marines can search and find, and do these kinds of things.” Ron and I drove home and we waited and waited and waited. Hours went by, no little girl. So finally we said, “We probably ought to make plane reservations just in case the worst has happened and they don’t ever find her.” Two women had recently gone missing and had been found dead in their town, marine wives, and so we were getting ready to do all that but not wanting to get on the plane for six hours knowing we wouldn’t be able to touch base by phone while we were up in the air. Thankfully Chris, they finally called and said, “We found her and she’s fine.” That’s a different kind of hide and go seek, Chris. That intensifies, crystallizes my love for that child like no other game of hide and go seek ever will. At that moment, I love that girl. I

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will die for that girl in a heartbeat and it has bonded me to her in a unique and incredible way.

CHRIS: You bet.

KIM: And sometimes for reasons of His own, it seems like that's how God is playing hide and seek, not the "here I am come find me" but the "I want to intensify your love for me, your awareness of me and so for a while, I'm not going to seem as present as I have in the past." So I entered this season of migraines. We'll call them migraines. I had had migraines from early adulthood probably once, twice a month. Chris, you suffer from migraines. I know a lot of people do. It's no light. It has got to be completely dark in the room. The birds chirping outside are like jackhammers going through your head. Your nauseous and throwing up, and all of this is going on at the same time. It's incredibly, incredibly painful. So two or three days a month is one thing but it seemed like I got a migraine that just never went away for years and years. Of course I'm in bed the majority of the time. I managed, I think. I don't really remember much about those years, to parent a little bit. I actually taught Bible study. I don't know how I did that. People would come and drive me and prop me up.

It was life to me to be able to do that, but anyway, I just basically spent them in bed and I remember that at least the first year laying in bed and you can't think a clear thought. It's not like you can dream and plan and talk on the phone. I mean you can't read a book. You can't watch TV. There's just nothing to do but be in pain when you have that kind of pain and about the only word that I would just utter all day long everyday was "Jesus! Jesus!" It was this like pleading, begging, desperate cry like, "I know that you are all powerful and you could take this pain away in a nanosecond. I know that you love me enough to die for me. Why won't you come just for a minute, just for five minutes? Will you just come and relieve the pain?" It just drives you deep into God, into faith, and into understanding. About halfway through this period of time, and I'm terrible with dates so don't ever pin me down.

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CHRIS: You're talking years here. This is not a period of several months.

KIM: No, no.

CHRIS: And no diagnosable illness that you knew of. You were just chronic migraining months and months on end.

KIM: You know how it is. Try this medicine and that medicine, and the side effects are almost worse than the migraine. It's whether it's massive depression or some sort of seizures. The list goes on and on of things they try and doctors you go to. You know how that goes.

CHRIS: So you went to all kinds of specialists. You tried all different kinds of allopathic and naturopathic, chiropractic, anything worth trying, you tried it and this just persisted.

KIM: Nothing would change it. I remember one night that I just had to get out of the house. I just had to be amongst people and they were having some sort of service at our church. I have no idea what it was. We were there and for some reason, we broke up kind of into small groups of 4-6 people to pray together. It was Ron and I, another couple, and the pastor and his wife. We were sitting in a circle and we're praying and I started crying. I remember the pastor felt a little awkward but figured, "Poor thing. She's probably miserable and in pain," and I was. So he was trying to say all these nice comforting things and I didn't realize that this was too until I heard it come out of my mouth, but I said, "No, no, no. Really, it's fine. You don't understand. I'm just so happy," and I was. I realized for the next year or so, however long it was, I would lie in bed and all I could do was to say the name of Jesus again and again, but it was so different. It was awe that He would love me, that He would care about me, be with me, and comfort me. It was good.

CHRIS: The pain was not lifted.

KIM: Oh no.

CHRIS: But your state with it before the Father changed - is that what you're saying?

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KIM: Yeah. It's that intensifying and the distilling of what's really important in life, and He is there in that pain. I mean, it's not fun but that fountain of living waters resides within us and it promises that it will bubble up in us. So the ability to be joy filled, maybe not happy but be joy filled for every moment to be Christ saturated, that invitation is there. It's always there.

CHRIS: Wow, what comes to mind immediately is Paul saying, "I will therefore rejoice in my weakness for when I'm weak, I'm strong."

KIM: Yeah.

CHRIS: The weakness is not taken away, it's actually part of the path to the deeper relationship with the Father that says, "No, I'm with you in this. I'll work through this. My work will be perfected in your weakness." Again, I got to ask though, is that what you're saying?

KIM: Yeah absolutely. There's a verse in Acts where Paul is talking to King Agrippa. Paul is in chains and he said, "I only wish that every man were in such a state as I am except of course without the chains." That's what I was able to, I'll be proving it out for the rest of my life. There's always new ways to prove His faithfulness, but that's what He allowed me to experience and to prove out through that period of time that it really is independent of what's going on in my life.

CHRIS: Wow. That is such a different state of being and of faith than I would venture to say probably most people ever find. We pray so earnestly and naturally understandably for the lifting of the illness, the handicap, the suffering, whatever the trauma is that's having to be born up under in this painful life. You're talking about a very different way of being with the most difficult of trials that we face in this life.

KIM: Mmm.

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CHRIS: I know, Kim, that you, still to this day, suffer with migraines. Perhaps not with the frequency you're describing here but that's still a pretty regular part of your life, right?

KIM: Oh yeah. I just don't know how to say this. People pray for me all the time that my migraines will be gone and I appreciate that. Thousands of millions of people across the world will also say the same thing. Suffering is a gift. It's an opportunity to remember where we draw life from and it's not a bad thing. It's not a fun thing. We would never seek it out. I'll be the first one to pray not to be in pain, but it's also a gift and God is so good. He's so much bigger than any. It doesn't matter how loud pain screams. God is bigger. So it was a good season. It's a happy memory in some ways. I regret not being involved with my family, with my children, but God was moving me in a new direction. I'll share a little about that because it's what led to the coaching, me coming into coaching.

Towards the end of this period of migraines where they were just constant and chronic, the insurance company finally relented and decided they were tired of paying all these money for me to get all these expensive drugs that weren't working and all that. So they decided they were going to send me to a headache clinic/pain clinic kind of inpatient to see what kind of treatment I could get for these migraines. Off I went and this particular headache pain management clinic had what they called, and it was tongue in cheek so this isn't like some Third World Country thing, they called this miracle cure. They said, "Really, we have this stuff and we put it in your IV and it takes away your migraine within 10 minutes and it's as if you never had it." They also all the other traditional diagnostic tools and medications, physical therapy, blah, blah, and so I go and of course immediately get very sick with a migraine because they took me off the medicine I was on. I'm instantly sick with a migraine and they come in with their little IV and they stick in my arm and 10 minutes into it, I'm like I'm done throwing up. I feel good. I could go out. No headache, no sound no light sensitivity. It was crazy good. So there I am. All right, Kim has found a cure

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granted she'd have to go to the hospital and get an IV every time she wanted it but hey, who cares, right? It's good. I'll come home and I'll be fine for a while.

There was a team of doctors and one of the doctors comes in and they were still going through my records. They had run of course all these tests when I first got there. One of them was an EKG. She comes into the room almost holding the papers, her hands almost shaking with one of those kinds of "stop the presses" kind of thing, "Stop the medicine. Take her off the medicine." I was like, "No, don't take me off the medicine." She said, "Why didn't you tell me?" I said, "Tell you what?" "That you'd had these heart attacks? You can't be on this kind of medicine." It's another one of those light bulb moments, I'm like, "Is that what that was?" Over the past few months, two different times, I can look back now and think, "I had a heart attack and I didn't know what it was and I probably should have died if not the first, time the second time."

My husband travels sometimes. So he was out of town. The kids are a little older so they are fairly independent. I remember both times just early in the morning when women are more prone, blood is moving a little slower, and I was on the medicine that one of those rare remotely side effects that very few people get just gives heart attacks in otherwise healthy people was way down there in the fine print. So both times just classic, the chest pain, the nausea, fainting, passing out, all of that and I remember, who knows how long I was out, it took me hours, maybe half the day before I have enough energy to even kind of crawl over to the bed off the tile floor. I remember Ron calling that night, my husband saying, "How was your day?" It was just so funny because as somebody who suffers from chronic pain, Chris, you know you never complain because you wouldn't have any friends.

CHRIS: You wouldn't have any friends, that's exactly right.

KIM: So everything is always fine. He says, "How was your day." Here I've had this massive heart attack and I said, "You know, I didn't feel too good today, babe." He said, "Oh I'm sorry." That was the end of it until I had the next one which

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also no one was home. With that all happening there at the headache clinic and they took me almost off all medicine families and that's really not realistic way for me to try to prevent or treat migraines anymore just came this realization of the fragility of life. It's one thing to be in pain and be in your 30s or 40s, but I'll manage. I'm coping and thinking you'll go through your whole life that way, but it's another to realize, "I should have died." It's a miracle that I'm here. It's just a miracle. So you take all of those things together and I came out of the headache clinic managing them much, much better and they are much less frequent.

Shortly after that, I heard about life coaching and I think what that added to my strong desire for myself and for other people to live lives that are full of joy, saturated with Christ in every single moment of the day is that desire to be purpose driven. We can't be reactive. Life is way too short. We have to know why we're here, what God has put us on this earth uniquely to do and we need to be pursuing that with all of our heart, soul, and mind with whatever days that we have left. I heard my daughter actually said something about, "Maybe I'll become a life coach." She was talking about herself. I had no idea what that was but those two words, something resonated deep in my being, a coach for life. Maybe that's what the church needs. Maybe this tool would bring some of the things I've been yearning for the church to have and didn't know how to help them find it. All of that kind of ushered in a transition to a new and better season of life for me.

CHRIS: Wow, what a path. What a journey. You wonder in retrospect always, "Lord, did it have to be that difficult? Couldn't there be a less circuitous route?" But it's kind of pointless questioning and His ways are not our ways. Surely, we did get in the way at various points along the journey, but you're saying that throughout all of that suffering, although the suffering has not been lifted, it is better than it was but you feel like through that, there was a literal coming to the end of yourself. You absolutely should have crossed out of this life into the next and instead, the Lord gave you back this life even with its pain, but you got a different perspective on this life even in the midst of pain and how better to steward it.

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KIM: Right. I needed to be more proactive and really spend some time trying to understand why am I here? Why did you leave me here? What do you want me to accomplish? Still again, hopefully not a bunch of doing but realizing for any of us, as long as we're here and we have breath, God has things to accomplish. He had things for me to learn and accomplish while I was lying in bed and He had things for me to learn and accomplish now that I was doing much better and I was functioning again. For me, going into coaching, coach training, and all of that really helped me refine and understand that purpose for my own life anyway.

CHRIS: Well, there is a verse that comes to mind in reference to that. We've been talking about Paul here because he certainly was one who was acquainted with suffering in this life, but we know that our faith teaches us that suffering in this life not just the Lord's sacrificial suffering for the redemption of our sins of course but that all of our suffering can be redemptive. The Lord does often choose in His ways which are not our ways to use our suffering and even to allow suffering because it does accomplish redemptive things that apparently are best accomplished, He's sovereign and He knows and we don't. The verse that comes to mind is Paul letters to the Colossians, Colossians 1:24. He says, "Now I rejoice in what I am suffering for you and I will fill up in my flesh what is still lacking in regard to Christ's afflictions for the sake of His body, which is the church." That is surely one of the most misinterpreted, misunderstood passages of Scripture there is and I'm not about to lean into it as if I have cornered the market on its truth, but it is truth. There is truth in that and it is speaking to our sufferings in this life being used by God for redemptive purpose.

KIM: Absolutely. He is good.

CHRIS: I'm watching the clock and I'm aware. We probably need to turn this into two episodes, Kim. I'm going to do to you what you did to me. Can I ask you to hold the rest of the story because you're about to take us into your pursuit of coach training – why you went into the field, kind of what your own metamorphosis was

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into training and then setting up of your practice and such. Can we pick this up in an episode two, a part two of Kim's story, is that okay?

KIM: Absolutely. It will be a more cheerful part so that will be good.

CHRIS: Okay. This was rich in good and so in the end whether it was all cheerful or not, far less supporting than just thank you again for sharing so vulnerably, so transparently. I'm always aware that our listeners can't see the screen as I can here. I'm in Missouri, you're in Florida, but we're on Skype and a lot of tears shed during that story. Our tears say things from the depths of our beings that no words can begin to articulate. Our body expresses in lots of different ways its full state and so I guess I kind of have that special privilege that I'm able to see you as well as hear your words. For those of you listening, if you felt that your spirit resonated with exactly what was going on with Kim and thank you again for that transparency, Kim.

KIM: Yeah. It's a privilege. Thank you.

CHRIS: All right gang, if you are already resonating strongly with Kim and want to connect with her and maybe you've never done so, it's pretty easy to do so. You can find Kim out on the web at her website which is simply KimAveryCoaching.com. You can interact with her directly through there. You can also comment to both of us on our Facebook page. We don't usually give that address but I'm going to put that out here for you. If you want to find us on Facebook and share back and forth with us, we're on [Facebook.com/ProfessionalChristianCoachingToday](https://www.facebook.com/ProfessionalChristianCoachingToday). It's a long URL but it's just the name of the podcast here, Professional Christian Coaching Today. Until next week when we pick up with the rest of the story gang, keep raising the standard of coaching and changing the world.

KIM: God's richest blessings to each and every one of you.

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