



PROFESSIONAL CHRISTIAN COACHING TODAY

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

Episode 032

The Distracted Coach (and how not to be one)

KIM: Welcome. We are so glad you are here today because we have not only an interesting but an intensely practical topic to unpack for you today. We're going to talk about the distracted coach and how not to be one. Whether you're coaching in private practice or a leader having key coaching conversations, no doubt you like me, you want to be 100% connected, completely engaged, hearing what your client is saying and not saying, picking up on the hesitations or pauses and of course listening for the Holy Spirit. I would like to be doing that 100% of the time. How about you, Chris?

CHRIS: Well, you don't do that 100% of the time, Kim?

KIM: Well, I wish.

CHRIS: Not even close, right? This is a topic that as you said is so practical because sadly, painfully, if we're at all honest with ourselves, we know that all of us as coaches become distracted coaches and so what we're really addressing today is a topic that hits everybody right where we live, where we make our livings, where we provide our service, and that is just in the place of having to attend to, having

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to deal with, compensate for distractions. Not being able to find some magical Nirvana place where they just don't exist but it says like, "Yup, they are there" and you're distracted by them. So let's see if we can have a productive conversation about what to do.

KIM: Yeah and I think one of the reasons they will always be there is because we're there, and one of the biggest things that kind of gets in our ways sometimes is ourselves. We're pulled away by those external distractions, by the internal distractions, even by spiritual distractions. So today, we want to help those who are listening identify what their key distracters even if they have previously been unaware of them, talk about ways to either prevent them or recover from those that are controllable and then move closer to bringing our best selves to each and every conversation. Chris, why don't you start us off?

CHRIS: Yeah, you mentioned external distractions and internal, and we're going to deal with both of those but we would suggest that maybe before we even dive into the specifics of the environment that you're working in and what's going on inside of you in your own life and how you slept last night and all that external and internal stuff, just thinking about how you prepare for, how you organize your calendar, how you schedule your clients, and the order and organization that you bring to your coaching, maybe that's as good a place to start as any. I'm not sure that needs to go any particular order.

Back when my practice was full time, all I did was one on one coaching, which of course is not the bulk of my work now, but back in the day when that was the primary thing that I did out here in my private practice, I found that scheduling my clientele in the mornings from about 8AM until 12NN seemed to allow me to be more organized, more focused, more energetic than when I got of the afternoon. For whatever reason, my energy flags sometime after lunch and I could still do coaching. I would still schedule one, sometimes two sessions in the afternoon, but I experimented with different times throughout the day and sometimes even into the evenings. I just found that my sweet spot was in the

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mornings and I could do four sessions – 8, 9, 10, and 11 just back to back with breaks in between. Each session was about 30-40 minutes or so. There was time to shift gears and be prepped for the next one, but that initial thinking through, when am I freshest? When am I most energized? When am I least likely to be distracted? That was one of the key starting points for me.

Look at your schedule, track your energy, be real honest with yourself as to when you're up and when you're down, when you can find the zone and when you feel like you're all over the map, and then schedule accordingly. You'll benefit from it, your clients will benefit hugely from it.

KIM: Yeah and I think bringing that experimental mindset because it's funny, I used to assume that mornings would be the best time for me to be fully present as a coach and actually for me, it's afternoons, which surprised me, but experimentation has been very helpful in to learn to work around that. When we talk about preparation for our coaching sessions, I think some of those outside environmental factors come in. I've realized that when I sit down, whether I'm preparing or I'm on the call, my environment makes a big difference. If it's cluttered, if it's messy, it catches my eye - the unfinished pile of things I need to do or just the desire to straighten and clean things up. So part of my preparation these days really includes cleaning off my desktop and at least the place I'm going to be facing while I'm working. It can't be the whole office that day but the place I face when I'm working and having it just be clean, as pristine as possible and that makes a huge difference in my ability to be fully present.

CHRIS: Yeah, yeah. I'm going to back up for a moment because I'm glad that you said that your higher energy, your better kind of finding the zone time is in the afternoons because I'm remembering now my early conversations when transitioning to this field with Judy Santos, our friend and colleague who has passed on now for many years, but back when Judy was structuring her clientele, she kind of did what everybody assumed what you would do – you worked during normal business hours – and she found in resting that her best time was evening.

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Judy was a night owl. It was very unusual for her to be in bed before midnight and she kind of got like, I don't know if it was a second wind or something, but get her in the morning, oh my goodness, no. She was just slogging through tar but by sometime after lunch and then definitely rolling into the evening, that was when she took off.

Again, I think it does underscore the importance of us listening to where do we work best, what seems to be our sweet spot and then working your clients as best you can around that. Certainly, we need to be accommodating to a certain degree, but it's amazing. Clients will work with you when you say, "These are the times that are available." They will take what you have and if you know the reason you made those times available is because that's when you're going to do your best work. Well then they are better served whether they ideally like those times or not. Pay attention to those things. Kim, I'll just piggyback on what you said about the environment. I'm probably not as neat and orderly as you are.

But, I actually have a couple of comfortable overstuffed chairs in various places in my office and I have one of those set up with a swing arm desk that sits in front of it, a good light behind it, a little plant stand beside it, a garbage can there and it's just this little work space that is always perfect. It just calls to me and it says, "Okay, when you're ready to be with nothing else and nobody else except your client, you come visit me here." That's my spot. That's where I go and I definitely find I can do my best work there and I won't have any idea what's going on back at the computer terminal. There might be all kinds of emails coming in. I'll catch them when I get back over to that other space.

KIM: I think that brings up an important point. I think we can train our bodies to cue our minds and our spirits to whatever is appropriate just as we train ourselves to have a good sleep routine so we can sleep at night. I think when it comes to coaching, if we tend to do the same types of things – for me pull up the file, stop, pray over the client before the phone rings, clear my mind – it's all a matter of building up into a routine so that I tune in in that certain way much like you go

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into your chair and sitting down with your clipboard and those things. On that note about the computer, I know several coaches, many coaches that I've been talking to who actually have their smart phone on and their computer on while they are coaching. It would be a superhuman person to me who could ignore your phone buzzing in the background, text messages coming in, things flashing across your computer screen. Simply because our client can't see us, I don't think that gives us permission to be distracted or to be pulled in a different direction. People can sense on the other end of the phone whether you're really fully with them or not with them, and it makes a really big difference. I'm a firm believer in a technology free zone while we're talking to clients.

CHRIS: I'll say a big amen to that because you're right. People can tell and certainly even if they can't tell, if we think we're masking it well enough, it's still not right. This client has paid for our time and we owe them as much of self as we can bring because even that's going to be pretty insufficient, right? I mean, the Lord is going to be the one who has to do the work but we're to be the sharpened and ready tool, and we're just really bringing a very poor tool when we're only three quarters of the way there because we're allowing for the possibility of distractions and eruption - the phone is buzzing there as you said or ringing or we hear the ping on the computer. We really need to be as proactive and attending to those obvious potential distractions as we can. Like in our case, I let the kids and Rachel know when I'm going to be either a client call, teaching a class, facilitating a mastermind group or something like that. I give them a heads up because I want my family to feel free to pop into the office. I work up on the third floor so they come in at the stairwell at the bottom on the second floor, but I want them to poke their head in. I've got a bubble gum machine up here for the kids to come up here after lunch so they can pick their 2 pennies out of the jar and put in for the bubblegum machine. I love the distractions but not during the coaching sessions. That time needs to be as guarded as it possibly can and I'm totally with you, technology free, yeah that's pretty much a must.

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KIM: Yeah and for me sometimes, I have big picture window over my desk. I even need to close the blinds. I'll never forget one time I was on a call and a squirrel tried to jump from the tree to the roof, missed, all four claws were coming down my window like a loony toons cartoon with the squirrel flattened against my window. You could hear him scraping all the way down until he crashed and burned at the bottom. I'm trying to be present with my clients. I'm like, "Okay Kim, don't watch the squirrel. Don't watch the squirrel."

CHRIS: I remember you having told that story on here and I would make a confession because I go ahead and laugh about those things when they happen and I acknowledge those. Maybe you did with the squirrel as well, but I wouldn't have been able to keep from busting up watching that squirrel hit the window and slide all the way down.

But I think it's okay if we have an unplanned for distraction to do something maybe in addition to or other than just trying to grit our teeth and tough it out. We can also just acknowledge it, laugh about it, and deal with it quickly. Maybe it's the UPS man that drove in or the person that's there to fix the refrigerator or something. Some things are going to happen. They have to. It's okay too to let the client know instead of trying to mask it and risk again that we're hoping they can't tell but they really can because we know we can't multitask. We just give bursts of attention here and there, here and there. If a distraction comes up, probably best most times just to kind of acknowledge it if you can't make it go away quickly and let the client in on what your reality is.

KIM: Yeah and what's interesting is what happens on the other end of the phone because one time, I don't remember exactly what happened but there was one of those massive distraction moments that I couldn't avoid and I wasn't sure whether to acknowledge it or not, and so I was actually just pausing to think about it and then I decided better to acknowledge it just so they know and then move on. So I briefly acknowledged it and the response was, it was so interesting. "Oh, I'm glad that's all it was. I thought maybe I said something wrong."

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CHRIS: Whoah.

KIM: You see how people just, we tend to internalize things and think maybe they are about us and so for client, for me to have not acknowledged it and them to have thought it was quite at the wrong moment on my end because they had misstepped what have just really hurt the trust and intimacy of the relationship. So yeah, being upfront about those unavoidable things is always, always a good thing to do.

CHRIS: I couldn't agree more and in addition to distractions that can surprises when we're working by telephone, actually many of our listeners also do coaching either a little bit or sometimes a lot or even all of their coaching face to face. So we don't just have the distractions that can come up in our little private world where we're working in our home office but maybe you're at your client's place of work, at their home, on the golf course, or at the retreat facility or you are in Starbucks, a restaurant somewhere. You meet for breakfast for your coaching sessions or a lunch. There are all kinds of settings in which coaching could occur and so in those face to face settings, they are certainly going to see if we're glancing at our phone or notice if our phone rings or whatever, but we also have the other unexpected or kind of semi anticipatable distractions like the waitress is going to come up and ask for our order or bring our food and place it around us, or somebody might see us in the restaurant and come say, "Hey Bill, how have you been?" and want to chat for a while and we're trying to be gracious with them but also not burn the client's time up here, or you're in an office setting and there's a knock at the door, their boss pokes his head and asks something or a secretary has a phone call that has come through, lots and lots of potential for distractions.

I think for the coach coming in and playing some degree of role in setting expectations, having control over the process that we're going to be engaging in, I think it behooves the coach to kind of give a heads up on how to handle those things and how to plan for those things, and kind of decide ahead of time what we want to do if those kind of things happen so that they don't just catch you by

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surprise because they really shouldn't be a surprise. You don't know what they will be, you just know they will be. They are going to happen. So how will we deal with those kinds of things so that we still get the meat out of the session that we want to. Maybe this isn't the best setting for us, maybe there's another place that we could meet that would be more conducive. Whatever the conversation needs to result in is fine, it's just important for the coach to go ahead and initiate that conversation to avoid distractions.

KIM: Absolutely, everything upfront and on the table. It's one of the things I really like about coaching is you talk about it and you don't just assume. So that's perfect. And then other than all those external distractions, some of which are controllable, some maybe not so much, we also have those internal distractions which I think they surprise us and they sneak up on us. For example, you may be attending to a client and they bring up a topic and it's one that triggers a life event that you're struggling with or working through on your own, and your mind just naturally starts to go down, "Oh how am I going to respond to that situation?" or "Oh no. That's going to be a terrible thing for them to do" simply because it wasn't a great thing for us to do. Our mind wanders and gets off track and so under those kinds of circumstances, Chris, what is it that you do?

CHRIS: Well, I go back again to that piece of ordering and organizing ahead of time as much as I can first because I think, again, your point about like the space in which we coach, the rituals that we bring to our coaching that will make it most likely that we can be internally fully present there for the client and not distracted by all of our stuff. I really am prepping ahead of time to be as fully in that client's space well before the phone rings or well before we meet face to face. I know you do the same thing. Blocking out time not just for your sessions but for the prep time for each session and so I think a very proactive thing for a coach to do is to make sure that you have at least 10 minutes. I like to have 15 minutes if I can that's why I always schedule my sessions, my client's contract for a half hour. I book on the hour. If their session bleeds over to 35 minutes, which is very common or

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even 40 minutes, no big deal. I'm just a very nice coach. "Wow, thanks for the extra time. I really need to keep processing it." If it even goes to 45 minutes, really not a big deal. I still have 15 minutes to get up and stretch, get my energy back up, you know the strengthening and stretch thing there, maybe go to the bathroom, grab a cup of coffee or fresh filling of my water bottle and to come back then and not only review their prep note. Hopefully, I read their prep form the day before when it came in or that morning before I got anything started for the day. That was my pattern anyway. I always read everybody's prep form. What's today going to hold but then I want to reread through their prep form before the session starts and in addition to reading their prep form maybe make this little notes or underlining some keywords, I want to go back to last session's notes – the prep that they sent me and the notes that I took, my little scribbling.

Periodically, I will make a point of going back and reviewing the last couple of month's worth of notes quickly. I use black pens and red pens, so I go back and look at my red pen notes and my red pen underlines or circles, but the idea is that again, before the phone rings or again if you're doing face to face, before they show up, you're already back in the track. They might be coming in saying, "Oh, wow, I couldn't believe that today is still coaching session. I looked at my calendar 20 minutes ago and realized, ah, so here I am but I haven't even thought about it." That's okay. We've thought about it. We're already there ahead of them. Where? In their space interestingly because we've prepared ourselves to be in their space not to be in our own stuff, the last session we just finished up or the need for a cup of coffee or fetching a little water or whatever else. We've attended to us and now we're fully there for them again so we can really kick in. I think scheduling that time and establishing those rituals is critical for being really, really sharp, really present with them.

KIM: And I absolutely agree and I think it's a huge help, but I do want to say just in the efforts to be honest and upfront about this, there is still those times when things come in, different kinds of things. I know for new coaches, often, it's that

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distracted thinking of “What’s the next question am I going to ask? What’s going to be a really powerful question to ask?” They don’t mean to be distracted. They mean to be serving the client but in the serving the client, they are actually not really fully present and they are not listening because they are thinking about the powerful question. Another one that I have heard that our new coaches struggle with is self judgment. They are critiquing their performance as a coach as the session is happening. “That was a dumb question” or “Oh, why didn’t I say that?” This is one very common, “I hope they are getting their money’s worth. I wonder if they think this is worth it.” And so all of a sudden, there’s two conversations going on – the one with you and the client and the one with you and you going on in your head. Again, it pulls us in two different directions and so I think it’s important to be aware of it but also to have strategies for recover because these things do happen.

CHRIS: Very definitely happen. They will happen to all of us. Actually, no matter how long you have been coaching, a session can head south pretty fast and you have to step back from it in your own mind, ideally not stopping the session entirely but pull back enough to be self aware, to kind of get perspective of the dynamics, what else might be going on here, what questions seem to be begging to be asked but I’m not catching them yet, and then step back and then fully engage, but boy, that self awareness is a critical skill.

There are some things that are just only learned the more you do them. The real learning begins when you start doing it and it gets better and better only as you do it more and more and more.

KIM: Mm-hmm. It’s having a training mentality versus a trying mentality. If I go into a session saying, “I’m going to try to do this well or that well,” the self judgment will come. It will start scoring me like Olympic judges – 2, 4.5. The Russian judges never give me a good score. Those types of things go on but if it’s a training mentality – I’m training my mind to come back on track. I’m training my mind to save the critic. Critic is not a bad thing. Save it until the session is over.

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I often want to take 5 minutes after a session to look back and think, “What would I do differently? How could I have asked a question more powerfully so that I am training to be better and better versus just trying? It sounds like that learner’s mindset is just a real important piece of this coaching dance.

CHRIS: Well, I couldn’t agree with you more. Let’s shift over for a moment from what you and I know typically think of when we do coaching because we both coach principally by telephone and we train by telephone, but again with the idea of internal distractions that can derail pretty quickly in a face to face meeting. Back when I ran my psychotherapy practice and I did supervision with my interns, we utilized a book that is still on the market and is still a huge bestseller for psychotherapists. I’m not sure I would recommend it for coaches although you would certainly gain a lot through it. It’s called *On Being a Therapist* by Jeffrey Kottler, excellent, excellent book. He addresses many things but a lot of them have to do with self awareness, monitoring your own internal dialogue, yes, but your internal experiences – how did I sleep last night? How am I feeling right now? Am I hungry? Am I fighting some kind of a bug or a sickness? What did I watch most recently – movies, television, some video I pulled up on the internet? What have I been listening to? What am I reading currently? Why is it important to monitor those things?

What he points out over and over, I saw this in therapy all the time, I see it in coaching all the time, when we’re listening to a client and really listening, very fully listening, the things that they share with us trigger internal experiences in us that are similar. It’s not the same thing but it’s similar enough and normal human social interaction, not contracted “I’m paying you for your skill” kind of stuff like coaching but normal conversation, has its bantering back and forth “Oh yeah, I did something like that. My goodness, have you seen the movie such and such?” or “You know, I was just reading a book the other day and let me see if I can find it right here. I’ll bet you I could give you a quote from it.” “That’s normal conversation. That is generally rarely good coaching because it’s more about

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what their internal processing triggered in you that you think might be helpful for them but you're probably already beginning to kind of do some of your stuff through them. You're inserting your story into their story. You're thinking that what helped you will help them. Now, that doesn't mean that there can't come a point where you may offer that but it's always going to be with a request. "As you were talking earlier today, you mentioned something and I jotted myself a note here. Would it be okay if I suggested to you a book that came to mind?" Sure, you can offer that and they can take it or leave it.

That internal self awareness whether you're becoming a psychotherapist or becoming a coach is critical for monitoring what's going on in you that might, though you intend it very well, might unintentionally not be what's going on with the client and they are sharing instead just triggers it in you and you start spring boarding off of your stuff instead of theirs.

KIM: And you suggested a great strategy for learning to manage those nearly uncontrollable I would say impulses sometimes, which is really to jot yourself a note and if you feel prompted by the Lord, bring it up later, I've learned the same technique if I just land on my impulses, sometimes I'm going down the wrong road, what seemed like the right road but the wrong road from where the client was. If I jot myself a note, I'd say 7 times out of 10, it's irrelevant in 2-3 minutes. It wasn't important and it went somewhere else. So it's just learning the art of the pause and then if it's truly important, there's always a time and a place for it.

CHRIS: Kim, I love it. I'm so glad you said that. If we do that oftentimes in 2-3 minutes, we find out that it's just not what's needed for right now. That doesn't mean it was entirely irrelevant. It means that it's not what's needed to further their exploration, the work they are doing internally right now and it would prove then an external distraction to them inserted by their coach. Their coach brought a distraction to where they needed to be able to stay and just keep working. What an important insight. I'm going to toss another couple of internal distractions if I may, Kim, before we shift gears here yet again but in those face to face meetings.

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This was one of things because psychotherapy, of course, is always practiced face to face or almost always, these are external cues, you could call them distractions, but they trigger us internally when you're with a client and so for example, the client's appearance, grooming, attractiveness or lack thereof, piece of food on their teeth, dirty glasses that you really wish they would clean, cologne that they are wearing that's a little overpowering, or perfume that reminds you of some place that you need to not go right now, or body odor that's distracting.

Those are cues. Any of our five senses, when we're face to face with somebody and we see something that cues us internally or we hear something, a particular word or reminded of a particular movie or smell something, these things again it's not that we can avoid them happening, it's that we need to be very consciously aware when they happen, that they have happened, and that is not about this client. It is not my role here right now to process that. I'm not going to beat myself up for being triggered. I'm not going to go down the rabbit trail of trying to figure out of why it triggered me or what I need to do about it. It's just there. Maybe jot myself a note at the most and get right back to what's going in with my client, be as fully present as we possibly can be.

KIM: So we're managing our external distractions, we're managing our internal distractions. We're trying to manage our way of being and then as Christians, maybe the most important piece is really that spiritual side, that part of the relationship. When we bring our being, we are also bringing of course the Holy Spirit with us and what's going on between us and God at that given moment in that place in our relationship and our day is very important and will impact that day's session.

CHRIS: It will big time. When I was prepping for today's call, Kim, I actually grabbed my Scriptures because I couldn't pull up chapter and verse but I was able to find it. There's a verse that came to mind. It may seem like an odd one at first but 1 Peter 3:7. This is the passage speaking to husbands about the treatment of their wives and wives about husbands, "Husbands in the same way be considerate as

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you live with your wife and treat them with respect, etc.” and it says, “So that nothing will hinder your prayers.” Now just hold that thought. Whatever the thing is, in this case, instructions to husbands in how they treat their wives, but whatever the issue is, attend to the things that are of a spiritual import because to the degree that we don’t, devotion times, time in prayer and worship, time of fasting, time of silence and solitude, the disciplines of our faith, our daily walk, attend to those things so that nothing will hinder your prayers.

Now if we’re coming as Christian coaches, whether our clients are Christian nor not, we know the Holy Spirit lives in us and we’re inviting Him whether praying outwardly or simply praying between us and the Lord before the session begins that the Spirit would use us, that we’re His tool in the end and that He would be free to move through us. But if we have stuff, spiritual stuff that is getting in the way, it’s gumming up the works, what this passage is really addressing and there are other places in Scripture that speak to the same thing is that God’s ability to work through us as His tools can be “hindered.” He’s God. He’s sovereign. He’s all powerful. He can do whatever He wants to. He can use an evil king to do His work. He can use whatever He wants. He can use a donkey to talk to Balaam so it doesn’t always depends on us but in the case of us wanting to be a ready and available and effective tool for the Lord to use, we have to deal with our own spiritual walk on a regular basis so that we show up as a sharpened tool and nothing is hindering our prayer. Then He would then just do whatever He can do through us as a Christian coach.

KIM: Some of those spiritual attitudes and things in my relationship with God that I’m particular conscious of when I think about coming into the relationship is I want to be in a place of faith. I want to be believing that not just in the client and in the process but that God can do what He is laying on their hearts no matter how unrealistic it seems to me or maybe an odd way to go about the problem, I don’t want my doubt to get in the way of what’s happening in that session. I want to

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believe that God can speak to them powerfully, clearly, and believe and be in that place of faith and bring that to the session.

CHRIS: I'm reminded of Mike Pfau, one of our instructors at the institute teaching on this at one point and a student was asking about, "But what about if you just really feel like the Holy Spirit is prompting you to blah, blah, blah?" Mike said, "Well, that may be the case. Remember that that's the same Holy Spirit at work in your client. Do you trust the Holy Spirit to draw out from that client through your questioning the same thing that you're so well intentioned but maybe misdirected wanting to drop into the client because the Holy Spirit told you about it? Tough, tough place of learning to trust that, "Oh yeah, that's right. It is the same God, the same Spirit. He is at work." Even in non Christians, we've prayed His presence in this time. We can oftentimes impair the work that the Spirit is wanting to do because we want to help so much, right?

KIM: And that's where it comes from – a sincere desire to be helpful that we need to manage.

CHRIS: Very good word. I think before we wrap up this episode entirely here, I want to go back to your comment about taking notes one more time if I could and I realize you may have another thought or two you want to put in here as well, Kim, but the issue of note taking, when I'm on the phone, I find it to be tremendously helpful. I always have my clipboard with me and a pen, and people will ask, "Well, what do you write?" Well, I don't really write a whole lot. I might fill up a single page, just a standard size yellow notepad during a session. I might even fill up part of a second page. Occasionally, there will be just a doozy where there might be two or three pages, but if you were to look at my notes, first of all, they are in kind of a Chris McCluskey designed shorthand. I'm probably the only human being who could read them but I'm the only one who has to.

Mostly what I write in my notes is verbatims. A literal capturing of a half sentence, a bullet point, a key value, a piece of vision, a powerful statement that

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they made, self talk, a lie they are believing. It doesn't matter what it is but it would be like a sentence or a half sentence and I put quotation marks around it. I'm trying to capture their literal words so that it reinforces them to me and so that I have them for both of us to go back to either in that session. "You know, just a moment ago you said something. In fact, let me read it back to you. You said..." and I can read them exactly their words back. They go, "Huh, I did? Wait a minute, what did I say?" You read it back and they will go, "Yeah, I did say that." So they are thankful that you captured it but my point is, that process of writing, again, because we cannot literally multitask. We give bursts of attention one place to another, as soon as I begin to write down the verbatim, in my mind's ear, I'm listening back to the words and trying to capture it exactly in their words and I'm using the part of my brain that writes. So I'm losing a little bit of whatever they are saying right now. I'm at least not as fully present with it as I would have been had I not started writing.

For that purpose, I encourage people if you are going to take notes, and I do encourage that, keep them brief, consider developing your own little personal version of shorthand if you don't know shorthand as I don't, and don't hesitate to even let your client know. Just like we were talking earlier about distractions that are unavoidable, if they get a real doozy that you know needs to be captured, hey, don't hesitate to say, "Ooh, wait a minute. Okay. I'm going to write that down. And you said..." and you're talking as you're writing it. You're letting them know what you're doing. They can't see you, they are blind but you're pausing and this does not have the effect usually of just causing them to lose their train of thought. If anything, it's another way of underscoring the value of the thought they just shared. So it is validating. It is still you tracking with them and it's saying, "I think you just hit something there that we need to hold on to" and you're reflecting it back. They will maybe kind of say the sentence again themselves or maybe expand upon it a little bit further.

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That whole process of you still capturing what they said but speaking it back to them or letting them know that you're writing it down and then reading it back to them perhaps, sometimes that can be as powerful of a prompt, a question like a probe to get them to go deeper as anything else you could do. Don't hesitate to do whatever is necessary within reason to capture in writing the key points from a powerful statement or insight, some kind of an "aha."

KIM: I agree and I also do that in face to face settings and also over Skype and in interest again of the client understanding if it's over Skype, I'll say, "Forgive me if I'm not making eye contact all the time but when you share really important thoughts, I want to make sure they are captured." I'll say the same thing when we're face to face with a client so that they are trying to read my notes upside down. Like you said, nobody could read my notes anyway. They only make sense to me but I explain what I'm doing and I believe they would say that they are honored, honored that they are saying things worthy of being captured and remembered and written down, and so it helps me not be distracted because I'm employing more senses and I think the client sees and understands the value and appreciates being honored as a person.

CHRIS: I entirely agree with you. I love that word "even honored" and I think it definitely communicates that where else in life do we experience someone listening to us so intently that they have dealt ahead of time with the possible distractions for us. If they are meeting us face to face, they took the seat with their back to the door of the restaurant so they don't have other distractions. They are looking at the wall. They are making eye contact with us. They are listening intently by telephone away from their computer. Whatever it is, where else do we experience that and then if they stop us mid track to try to scribble down something, doesn't that just hugely honor say to us, "Man, I am so in your space. I'm kind of serving as your transcriptionist right now, your personal note taker for the monologue that you are in with self and the communion you're having with the Spirit right now in you.

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It's a rich gift that we give our clients when we give that kind of full attention with as little distraction as possible.

KIM: And Lord willing, that's what we want to bring as often as possible. So today, you've heard us talk about being a distracted coach and hopefully how not to be as distracted as a coach. Minimize those external distractions, prepare ahead of time. Learn to manage, set aside, or even note verbally to the client any internal distractions that kind of get you off track, just don't name what they were but simply just say, "Forgive me. I missed that. Could you repeat that?" and come back to it. And we talked about our way of being – spiritually and physically and bringing that best self to the table. So lots of rich material today, Chris.

CHRIS: Mm-hmm. So coaches who are listening, those of you who are already in this profession or you're transitioning right now and you are maybe still in your training, we want to alert you to a free resource we have that we have not yet promoted on this podcast. We think it's going to interest you coaches in particular. For that matter, those of you who are listening and who might be interested in hiring a coach, it will certainly be of interest to you as well. We have a specially designed search engine that is a resource on the internet. It comes up most times on page 1 of the Google search for various terms - for Christian coaching, Christian coaches, Christian life coaches, Christian leadership coaches – and that is to be able to list yourself as a Christian coach, whatever your training, whatever degree to which you practice, you can list yourself for free on this search engine that is just for other people who are going on the web trying to find Christian coaches. You wanted to find you, what a great resource.

If you are interested in listing yourself there or if you're interested in using that resource to find a Christian coach, all you need to do is go to our podcast website and that of course is ProfessionalChristianCoachingToday.com. You'll see a tab that says, "Find a coach." Click that and it will take you to that internal search engine. You can tailor your search for more than 50 different niche specializations in the field. You can identify denominational background, fee

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range, ICF level of certification, all kinds of criteria that may be important for you. If you're searching for a coach, if you're a coach who is listing yourself, of course you want to be able to build your profile there and again, it's free. We also have an upgraded listing and a premium listing, and those are for \$5/month or \$10/month, so very, very cheap. Your first client, your first month will pay for a year, probably pay for 2-3 years worth of you being listed there. Again, you'll find that resource, Find a Coach, you'll find it on our website at ProfessionalChristianCoachingToday.com.

Between now and next time, just keep raising the standard of coaching and changing the world.

KIM: God's richest blessings to you.