



PROFESSIONAL CHRISTIAN COACHING TODAY

Chris McCluskey & Kim Avery

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

Episode 039

Persevering in the Face of Trials

CHRIS: Persevering in the face of trials, this is a topic that hopefully has drawn a lot of attention but generally, it's not necessarily the kind of attention you'd like to draw because it's not an attractive topic, it's just one that most of us could relate to pretty well and it's a painful topic. If you're experiencing some pain as a Christian coach launching or growing your practice or trying to maintain and diversify it as it is growing, and you recognize the need for perseverance, welcome. We're glad you're here. You're in the right place. We are going to take the gloves off and no holds barred today. We're just going to address very honestly and probably painfully at points the difficulties of dealing with painful trials and challenges that come our way specifically in launching and growing a business, in this case, a private practice as a coach.

One of the things that we do at Professional Christian Coaching Institute for our student body is we provide free Telebridge calls as a way of ongoing support. So every two weeks, we phone in to a bridge line for an hour for what we call the Christian Coaches' Power Lunch. It's a luncheon. It happens at 12 Eastern Time but whatever time zone people are in, we're having a virtual luncheon together and we're discussing topics that are raised in our private Facebook group that we also facilitate for our students. That's a place where they can post any of the

PROFESSIONAL CHRISTIAN COACHING TODAY

challenges that they are facing, questions, things they don't know about the industry, marketing questions, certification questions, next classes, tips and pointers, new practices, whatever. When that comes up in our private Facebook page and then you recognize, "Ah, this probably deserves more than just a sentence or two post in Facebook." Well, we take those topics up on our every other week live power lunch calls, these bridge calls. So on a recent one here, we took up today's very topic, persevering in the face of trials, and after that call, Kim, my co-host here Kim, you contacted me and said what?

KIM: That we definitely needed to cover this on the podcast. Several reasons, one, it's just an issue every coach faces without exception. We begin to move into this new vision and mission that God has called us to and things get in the way and they threaten to derail us. But the other reason is as I sat and listen to the call last week, I was struck by the deep, deep resonance that this subject had with those who were on the line. Several people were vulnerable and honest enough just in tears to talk to about their feeling of being understood, that they are at this difficult place, that this is just the topic, just the encouragement that they needed to wake up and do it one more day. So we want to kind of offer that sort of encouragement and any wisdom we've gleaned along the way to our listeners here on the podcast today.

CHRIS: Yes indeed and one of the points that we started that out with is appropriate as a springboard for us right here and that is that almost all of us who are coming to the launch of our private coaching practices are coming from the land of employment. In other words, we've been employees working for someone else for most of our professional careers. Many of us, that's all we've ever done. Some of us have dabbled in entrepreneurial ventures and a very few have actually launched and run very successful private businesses, but the vast majority of coaches transitioning to this field are coming from a professional and career background of having been an employee.

PROFESSIONAL CHRISTIAN COACHING TODAY

When you are an employee, one of the great, one of the many great blessings of being someone else's employee is that you have benefits that include sick time and vacation time and maybe paternity or maternity leave programs and even family needs policies if you have special family issues with problems with your children. There are lots of perquisites that go with being someone else's employee that the moment that you take the entrepreneurial plunge and start your own business you no longer have. Now the value of those things is of course you don't want to have to use your sick time. You hope that you aren't sick. You like using vacation time but otherwise, if there are family challenges, you don't want those family challenges and yet isn't it nice that a lot of employers will work with you, be very flexible and not only give you time off but many times, even pay you for some of that time off or many weeks worth sometimes, six-month sabbaticals in places of ministry and such.

When we don't have that and still life happens, you are an entrepreneur now. You are a small business owner and you have a personal health issue or your loved one has a health issue or a family crisis, or even something positive like we need a vacation. We really need a vacation but nobody is going to pay us for that vacation. If we're not on the phone or in the chair doing coaching, we are not making income. That's one of the first big challenges of entrepreneurship. That's why it's often referred to, those benefits are referred to as the golden handcuffs in places of employment. It's maybe even an unfortunate way to refer to them but the truth is, they are part of what keeps us stuck many times because man, talk about a rich benefit. To know that not if but when life throws you curve balls, you have a backup. You have some coverage. You may not even suffer financially. Somebody else, your employer, is going to cover for that and once you're out on your own, there is no such thing until and unless you build up a nest egg, some reserves of your own.

KIM: Chris, I can really relate on a personal level, on a level maybe that everybody understands. We think about in theater the star of the show, they break a leg,

PROFESSIONAL CHRISTIAN COACHING TODAY

something happens and there's a saying that we carry to all areas of our life, "the show must go on." I know recently I struggled with that laryngitis that plagued me for months, Chris, for months.

CHRIS: Mm-hmm.

KIM: And if I can't talk, I can't teach, I can't coach, I can't even go to a drive through. I can't do so many things and I didn't have the benefits of sick days and leave days and colleagues to step in for me, and so being an entrepreneur is wonderful. We have this huge "what" in front of us. This passion that God is calling us towards and we know why we're doing it. We're doing it for the personal reasons, for the freedom and the flexibility that entrepreneurship provides, but also because of this deep mission and calling we feel to serve other people through this vehicle of coaching. But that "how" piece, that takes more faith especially in light of difficulty and hard times.

What I'd like to do, Chris, is on that call, you kind of introduced a metaphor through a true story of someone's life that I think brought about some of that deep resonance about this topic and what we're dealing with. Why don't we go ahead and just play that portion of that call for our listeners and then you and I can dive back in with some more practical suggestions.

CHRIS: Right. We've actually pulled a small segment from that call that we did with our students. It doesn't reveal anybody's private matters. It's just me talking on the call, none of the students posing questions, but it does kind of illustrate the point that we're addressing right here. So let me kind of preface that by saying what preceded this was the old saying that in military battles, when you go into battle, you don't go in with Plan A is we win and Plan B is we lose but we somehow compromise. You just go in with Plan A – we win. But then the saying in battle is that no battle plan survives the first contact with the enemy. As soon as the first shots are fired, the first sword is drawn, or the horses charge over the hill, why every battle plan begins to be modified. You don't dump it. You don't go to Plan

PROFESSIONAL CHRISTIAN COACHING TODAY

B – we're going to surrender – you stay with Plan A but you modify in the face of the realities of war or the battle before you.

That's kind of what this little segment that we're going to play here from the call is addressing is it's the mindset that we go into everything with. As entrepreneurs, having made your plunge now as Kim just said, you know your what, you know the why, now the challenges of the how. So here we go in. Let's cue this up as we talk about the difficulty of sticking with the challenge.

[START OF TELEBRIDGE CALL]

But you know how big I am too on mindset so I'm starting out today's call just challenging some of our mindsets as entrepreneurs now, no longer somebody else's employee and all prone to some degree actually to start to look back longingly at employee land, kind of like the Israelites looking back at Egypt and saying, "Oh, it was so nice back there. We've got our freedom now but oh gosh, we're going to die out here." Wait a minute, do you believe God called? Has God called or moved in your life in many miraculous ways, undeniable ways to get you to where you are? Then don't you dare begin to question that and second guess that and complain about the challenges. Just adopt a mindset that says, "God knows the way and His ways are not my ways but He will make a way. Mine is first and foremost to be faithful, to keep pressing on, keep seeking to discern, keep walking by faith not by sight, trusting and obeying and moving with the light that I'm given.

Let me just say a little bit more about that from something that's in the media right now and like I said, I'll give a pause here and see what things this has stirred up. We all saw this this last week that Muhammad Ali passed away and in some ways, that feels like it has been a long time coming. The poor man has suffered terribly with Parkinson's disease for a long, long time. We keep seeing occasional glimpses of him in the media as his health was failing and now, he has passed on and the Lord has met him before the throne and we are reflecting back

PROFESSIONAL CHRISTIAN COACHING TODAY

on the man's life. There are many things that could be said about Muhammad Ali. That's not my purpose here but rather some of what has been said about him is what a fierce combatant he was in the ring.

I heard an interview yesterday with George Foreman who, of course, went up against him and was knocked out by him. Foreman talked about, as a Christian, many of you know that George Foreman left the boxing world and became very, very serious about his Christian faith and became a strongly devoted street preacher, and now has a very powerful ministry. He did that in addition to making little Burger Grillers and other interesting ventures but neat man, George Foreman, he was talking about Muhammad Ali and what it was like to be in the ring with him. He said, "The guy was unlike any boxer I ever faced. To call him a great boxer is almost an insult. He was in a league by his own. He was truly the greatest."

That wasn't just him bragging and certainly, he had a lot of braggadocio about him, a bit of narcissism there but probably also a bit of playing the media. He had a huge influence around the world because of the attention that he gained but Foreman said, "When you were in the ring with him, he wasn't known to have a particularly strong right hand punch. He was just incredibly fast and moving around" and Foreman said, "He would not go down." He would get himself into a corner sometimes and let them beat on him ala Rocky. Those of you who are Rocky fans and sometimes it would seem that he'd even almost pass out, but he was leaning against the ropes recovering his strength and he would come back. Foreman said there was a point in the match, I forget what they called it. It wasn't the Thrilla in Manila. It was the Rumble in the Jungle or something like that. It was in Zaire that they fighting. Foreman had given him everything he had and Foreman is just a whaler. This is heavyweight division and he just pummeled people. He'd given him everything he had and Ali whispered something in his ear in round 6. He said, "Is that all you got, Foreman? Is that all you got?" Foreman said that was so daunting because it was all I had. I'd given him

PROFESSIONAL CHRISTIAN COACHING TODAY

everything. I've unloaded on him and he was not going to go down. Of course then eventually he put Foreman down.

Now that is mindset. That is incredible strength, incredible physical athletic ability, sure, but most battles in life, and I would definitely say most entrepreneurial battles are won or lost in our minds. It is through the renewing of our mind constantly and the word, and as we walk with the Lord that we fight the battles of this life, that we become more and more of who he called us to be. We become less and He becomes everything. We die and He becomes all, but it is through the renewing of our minds, our minds are incredibly powerful. So when you're struggling, not if, in your business and it is in the face of various challenges, serious health challenges, serious life challenges, serious things like fires in California that are burning down people's houses or floods that have flooded you out of your house.

When you face those kinds of things, be sure you spend great amounts of time on your knees in front of the Lord not just pleading, not just crying, asking to receive His how. You already got His what and His why. Ask for the how again and then look because He will make it apparent. He will make ways in the desert, streams in the desert. He will go ahead of you and provide. It is not that He is not, it's that we are so often not really asking, seeking, knocking, I believe, and it's because our minds have told us, "It's hopeless. There's nothing I can do. I'm not able to do this. What was I thinking? Why did I even go into this?" We just stir all kinds of negative mental rehearse. Now the enemy is happy to jump on that. He'll ride us on it, but frankly, we don't have to look for him behind every bush and tree. We do a number on ourselves very easily, very frequently most of us.

[END OF CALL]

KIM: Wow and we'll pause the recording right there because we had a chance for interaction. Well, you were on that power lunch call but thinking about that mindset piece, that was so powerful. I love the way the way you phrased it, Chris.

PROFESSIONAL CHRISTIAN COACHING TODAY

“The battle is won or lost here,” and it’s true. I think Henry Ford had a quote along those lines. “If you think you can or if you think you can’t, either way, you’re right.” The Book of James tells us that a double minded man is unstable in all his ways. I have noticed even in my own mindset, Chris, that I spend so much time and energy when I let myself kind of argue with myself about things. Should I do it, should I not? Maybe I will, maybe I won’t. It saps all my energy for doing the thing where if I’d already revisited the fact that I have made this decision, I’m building this coaching business. God has called me to it. Whatever happens, this is the path. I save so much time and energy just moving forward from there. And so that mindset piece I think is really critical.

CHRIS: Kim, I love that when we were setting this recording up just a moment ago, you referenced that saying from Theodore that the show must go on. You know that I and my children are all very active in our local community Christian theater and we oftentimes will be sitting back there nursing sore throats and sucking on lozenges or spraying in stuff to the back of our throat, gargling or doing our warm-ups and all, or dealing with a twisted ankle from a fall the night before or something. We will say out loud to ourselves or out loud to each other the same thing that you and I both say sometimes when we’re here getting ready to record these podcasts. “Okay, show time. Okay, game face on. Here we go,” and it’s saying, “Yep, all that stuff is there. Yep, all that questioning and that second guessing could be there but you know what, here we go.” We just can’t afford to let our energies dissipate into a whole lot of hemming and hawing back and forth. It will only, as you said, suck our energy. We just got to go back to that mindset. The commitment has already been made. The call has already been given. We’re on this road and here are the challenges. There is no Plan B. It’s Plan A.2, Plan A.3, Plan A.25. We just keep moving forward. Lord, show us the way, show us the how.

So if that’s our mindset, I guess this brings us down to the very practical what do we do to step out that obedience? What do we do in order to be very practically

PROFESSIONAL CHRISTIAN COACHING TODAY

live out the launch and the growth of these businesses? Kim and I address many of these topics in the mastermind group that we facilitate. We talked about that here briefly on this podcast before. If you go to our website at ProfessionalChristianCoachingToday.com, you will see over on the far right bar that we have a square promo there about a mastermind group that Kim and I co-facilitate. This is out of our private practice. This is not directly connected to the podcast here but we're just helping other Christian coaches launch and grow their private practices and we have a second mastermind group we do with those who have already launched. They are looking to expand and diversify their income streams, take them to a far higher level than they are.

But in those mastermind groups, one of the things that we deal with quite a bit, we were just addressing in the mastermind group here in the last 2-3 weeks, Kim, and that was the creation of an ideal week. The idea here practically speaking is that when you have the vision that you believe the Lord has given you for your coaching business as much of it as you can see right now and you know why this is important for this next season of your life so you've invested. "Okay here we go." Now the how says, "Well, it has got to somehow fit into my busy schedule." None of us has all kinds of time just sitting around. We don't know what we do with it so, "Hey, I think I'll start a practice." We have to instead handle the budgeting of our time just like we handle a budget for our finances.

So we work on looking at the 24 hours that we're given in any single day and night and blocking that out over a week or in some cases, some of our mastermind members have even just blocked it out for an entire month and casting a very clear time budget for where are you working on your business. What days of the week, for what times, how long of a period of time. How can you ensure that the rest of the people in your life know that that time is blocked out and that you really can't have interruptions? You will not be returning phone calls or taking visitors during that time. Do you need long concentrated periods of time or is it all you can get small little pockets but they have to really be capitalize upon?

PROFESSIONAL CHRISTIAN COACHING TODAY

Whatever it is that can work, you need a clear plan we would suggest, in black and white, yes. Written out in a Word document or on an Excel spreadsheet or something that shows ideally, if I could leave an ideal which we can't but we can get close, ideally, this is where the launching and the growing of my practice fits and if you can see already in black and white it doesn't fit, it's not going to work, there's not enough time there, well then goodness gracious, don't continue forward. That will be like going into battle against an enemy knowing that there's no way you could win. Stop and reconfigure your time. Figure out what has to be cut out, where can you create more space? What can you let go of so that you have a realistic expectation of winning before you really launch into this thing in earnest.

Just again as Scripture would tell us, "Who if he is going to build a tower does not first stop and count the cost so that he doesn't begin and find himself unable to complete it." We don't want to make fools of ourselves. We don't want to burn ourselves out. So you start with a realistic time plan and then I think there are some other critical next steps. Kim, why don't you pick us up on that.

KIM: Well, there are several things. What I love about the ideal week and putting things in writing is that when the suffering comes, when the trials, unexpected, they are always unexpected, yet, if we have done the deeper thinking, it's on paper just as if it were a financial budget. Now, the numbers are there, the times are there and I could see what needs to be moved around. I don't have to make this creation, kind of create the time decisions at the beginning so it gives us something to work with. But then here's the follow up point to that, Chris, is when suffering and trials come, we need to, I think, be as gracious to ourselves as other people are to us and as God is to us. That needs to be grace infused.

When I had a broken ankle last year, I couldn't do the kinds of things physically that I can now when both legs work perfectly. And so I had to give myself grace and not spend a lot of time beating myself up, but then the other side of that grace

PROFESSIONAL CHRISTIAN COACHING TODAY

coin, I think, is I can't give into that dangerous thinking that says because I don't have the ideal amount of time, I won't take any time.

CHRIS: Mm-hmm.

KIM: It's easy for us to be I think all or nothing people and so small steps are better than no steps because when we halt entirely, that law of inertia kind of dampens us and it's just hard to get moving towards a coaching business again. I've seen this with clients of mine time and time again whereas if they continue at whatever level is possible during this season of trial, the momentum stays and it's much easier to kick it back up when God opens up those windows of time and energy again.

CHRIS: That's right and those small steps, every small step is moving you forward. It may not be as fast, it may not be as powerfully, you may not be seeing the reward for it yet that you'd like but it is moving you forward, and that is vastly different than sitting still or heaven forbid, giving up. G.K. Chesterton wrote a quote that I often rehearse in my own mind and I love it. He was such a master at playing on the power of words anyway but he said this one. It's just a doozy. He said, "If something is worth doing, it's worth doing poorly." We start hearing, "If you're going to do something, do it right or don't do it at all." He says, "No, if it's worth doing, it's worth doing poorly."

That doesn't mean you set out to do it poorly, of course not. You set out and you make your plan. You budget your time and you go ahead and plunge in, but if it's worth doing, the key message is you do it. Small steps, half steps, partially, you do it "poorly" but you are still doing it. You are not just saying, "Oh, I can't do it perfectly. I can't hit my ideal so forget it. I don't know why I even bothered trying." Not at all, we cannot allow ourselves to go there.

KIM: it reminds me of Jesus' point in the Gospel when he talks about the widow's mite. So the rich people were given out of their excess and she gave what she had. God blesses that when we give what we have. He's not saying, "Oh, you're

PROFESSIONAL CHRISTIAN COACHING TODAY

not giving as much time and energy as coach. Be over here as giving, Kim, so sorry, I'm not going to bring you any clients. I'm not going to grow your business." When we in faith give what we have, he's so faithful to bless abundantly above and beyond what we put into something like this.

CHRIS: He is and thank you, Lord, for that. Let's stick with other practical things that we do here. It's more than just our mindset and it's more than just planning out our week and it's more than just being gracious with ourselves and taking small steps. Having backup plans is a good idea. That's different than what I'm saying about having Plan B, which is where you switch altogether over some other alternative. "Well, I'll just go get another job somewhere." No, no but a backup plan, a way to supplement your income perhaps if you find that the income you'd hoped for from your business is not coming quite as quickly as you'd desired, goodness knows, when we moved out here to the farm 17 years ago and we're living in a mobile home trailer and this was not exactly the vision that I had long-term for my family, but the business was not growing as fast as I wanted. I had a backup plan saying, "Not that I'm going to stop growing the business but on Fridays, instead of focusing anything on coaching, I'm going to go out.

I took my son with me, he was 5 years old at that time, and we build a little snack food delivery route around here. I just purchased it wholesale, some high quality nuts and licorices and beef jerky, and went around and we did a thing called Daddy's Snacks. That little mom and pop shops around here and gas stations and cafes and such, where we put up these little racks and we would rotate through our stock and sell Daddy's Snacks on Fridays. It was brainless. I'm going to bring my little 5-year-old in. He's got a little fistful of snacks. Everybody was happy to put them up for the little guy. So we would go in and we'd rotate our stock and we talk about little entrepreneurial things that a 5-year-old could understand. We'll have our little burger and shake break. We were making the best of the situation but that's what I did on Fridays as a backup plan for income

PROFESSIONAL CHRISTIAN COACHING TODAY

to float the rest of what we needed to cover us financially until the business finally took off.

The same in many other regards – have backup plans. Out her in the country, we know that we're going to have power outages every winter. It's just going to happen. Ice is going to collect on the power lines. Power lines are going to go down and guess where the last place is that they come out and do repairs. Yeah, that would be in the dirt road in the middle of nowhere. So we have a huge industrial sized generator bolted into the concrete and that thing is computer operated. It hooks up directly into our house and instantly turns on and powers some of the basic stuff that we need including my internet connection and my computers so that our business can continue even for weeks at a time if necessary. That's something that is called a backup plan. Not if but when those crises come. Have backup ways for getting access to the internet. If your main signal goes down, can you tether through your cell signal and still follow up with your clients? Dial around numbers for your telebridge if people can't dial into your telebridge from other countries. Do you have that backup in place?

Whatever the backup plans are, large or small, it's wise to think them through before you're in the midst of the crisis if you can, but if you get in the thick of the crisis, still, don't dump Plan A. Just figure out, okay, so what is a backup plan? How can I modify Plan A and still keep basically moving forward on it?

KIM: I've done that same type of thing many times, Chris, where I like to publish a blog every week and when I make the time to work ahead with my blog, I put them what I call my blogging bank. It's kind of like a savings account. So for those weeks when crises hit and unexpected things come up, it doesn't impact my publishing schedule on my blog because I just withdraw from my blogging bank, knowing that I'll need to come back later and replenish it so it will be there. So it really is important to have backup plans.

PROFESSIONAL CHRISTIAN COACHING TODAY

Another thing that I wanted to mention as we think about practical suggestions is realizing that closed doors often are opportunities. So one of the questions I like to ask myself and my clients actually is, “What is this situation or this suffering? What does it make possible that wasn’t possible otherwise?” Going back to my most recent bout, I’ve two months of laryngitis. I’ll be honest, Chris, there were a couple of days there where I was having a pity party and I invited every friend I have, except I couldn’t talk so of course no one really heard me, because I was so disappointed. If you can’t work, you don’t make income. New clients need to be referred out. It’s a serious thing when you can’t talk and you’re a coach.

CHRIS: It is.

KIM: But then I quickly decided that worry and self pity really weren’t moving me forward or helping me in any way so I thought what does this make possible? It made possible a couple of things for me, one is I’ve been working on my business coaching certification and was a little behind on my course work because I didn’t have time and then all of a sudden, I have plenty of time for that.

CHRIS: Wow.

KIM: I had also been wanting to redo my website and do some minor rebranding but didn’t have time. But laryngitis all of a sudden made that possible where it wasn’t before so that I could plunge in and do those needed facelift things. I think even if you’re in bed desperately ill, what it makes possible is time to pray, time to draw closer to God, time to have your faith strengthened and just let God wash his love over you, and those are important things as well. Each of these trials and sufferings, I think, make something possible that maybe wasn’t possible before.

CHRIS: it absolutely does. You said you liked to ask yourself that question. I hate asking myself that question but I know it’s the right question to ask. One of my members of my mastermind group emailed after I went through a recent bout of, I had slipped a disc in my neck and it compounded a repetitive motion injury that I have across my back and down my arms from just doing so much typing and

PROFESSIONAL CHRISTIAN COACHING TODAY

mousing through the years. So I was entirely unable to. I couldn't even type a single email, couldn't use the mouse or anything. Kim, you know this but our listeners don't. I had to switch to dictating everything. Well I will tell you this right now. The voice recognition software that comes loaded into a Macbook Pro, let's just say, it's not Siri. It is not going to work. So all I had was my tidy little iPhone that I kept dictating to. Well, post the question that this friend shot to me, "Hey Chris, what does this make possible?"

I've been toying for a long time with an iPad and I just couldn't justify it. Why do I need an iPad? What's the point? Well, iPads work with Siri just like my iPhone, but I can see the screen a whole lot better so I got the fun of buying an iPad but more practically speaking, I actually have gotten much more proficient at dictation and even now, fortunately my slipped disc is healed but the repetitive motion injury is still very much present, I am dictating almost everything I do every single day. So I'm living on this iPad. I wouldn't have even purchased the crazy thing had I not gone through a trial such as that. So yeah, it is the right question ask even though sometimes you kind of feel like, "Oh, don't throw that one at me, what does this make possible." God is able to use all situations. Amen and amen.

One of the other things that we can do in the face of trials and challenges is to look at diversifying our income streams. Kim, you were mentioning that your private coaching clients, you can't talk, you can't do coaching, and likewise if you're teaching classes or groups. There's really not a whole lot that a coach can do to generate income aside from what you did with your branding, your marketing, and the writing that you do so much of. Creating product, I know you've written a couple of books and all so you can lean into those things that you can do on a computer but back for me when I went through the worst of my Lyme Disease, I've talked about it here on this podcast before, but in the years of that where it was literally every day touch and go and Rachel and I didn't know if we would live another day, well, we put all of our personal affairs in order. If I died

PROFESSIONAL CHRISTIAN COACHING TODAY

that night, we knew that least the insurance would cover paying off the house and the kids would be okay for covering college expenses and that kind of thing but it did not mean that we weren't going to go through a terrible time emotionally and moving on. Of course, absolutely, but in the face of realizing, "Okay, I'm not going yet and I have to do something to generate income since life insurance isn't going to pay while I'm just kind of handicapped here.

I looked at ways to diversify my case load because I could not adequately serve, say, 30 clients in one on one coaching. I had dabbled up to that time in some group coaching but never gotten serious about it. Again, I've talked about this in another podcast so I'll not belabor the point here, but I did launch a private group and then a second group, and eventually, I had four different groups going with a majority actually of the clients that I had at that point and even new clients come in. I would plug them into these groups that fit their needs and here I was now in much, much, much less time on the phone and draining what little bit of energy reserves I had serving those clients and yet not only was I still generating income, I was generating more income than I would have been had I stayed with those 30 clients in private coaching sessions. So looking at ways to diversify your income stream through speaking perhaps or writing as we just mentioned there, a book or some other kind of a product, something that you can sell particularly utilizing social media to get the word out on a large scale of an audio product you have or a video product, a video series, a workbook that you've always had in the back of your mind or it's based on talks that you may have given through the years or groups or classes, a teleclass, etc., etc. There are many things that coaches could do if they will again, sticking with Plan A. The Lord called me to this, where he calls, he's going to make a way. Lord how? Then let Him show you creative ways to generate income through other streams.

Now some of you may be thinking about what I said there about my active clients having transitioned them into groups. "Gee, doesn't that just raise a huge red flag that wow, Chris has got a sickness here. He might die and maybe I need to be

PROFESSIONAL CHRISTIAN COACHING TODAY

looking for another coach. He's just going to plug me into a group. Ooh, I don't want that." No, no, a thousand times no. You don't want to put up the red flag saying "I've got serious health problems here. I know there are very straightforward and honest ways that you can go about helping someone to think through transitioning to accommodate without necessarily having to lay all of your cards on the table with regard to some of your why perhaps. Kim, I know you've had to go through that so maybe you can say a little bit about that.

KIM: Right. I think there are a couple of considerations here as we think about the public face of our business. One is, like you said, the business considerations. For the same reason we wouldn't put overly personal comments on social media, we don't let all the thieves and our Facebook audience know we're going to be out of town for two weeks. We don't share things about our business that might potentially hurt our business. We're not being inauthentic, we're not hiding anything, we're being wise stewards of what God has given us and as we've talked about, we have faith that God is going to provide. He's going to provide for us. He's going to provide for our clients and so from a business point of view, there's no reason to worry people or to put red flags out there if we're having some sort of suffering that might make them think perhaps we're not going to continue or be able to serve them adequately.

But then there's also the client centered of this about not telling clients unnecessarily about our suffering and trials. We work with, as coaches, we get to work with our ideal clients and so they are generally just very lovely, empathetic, sympathetic, kind people and we form relationships with them, and they begin to care about us as much as we care about them. Chris, you actually taught me this principle years ago how difficult it is for some of them if we were to come, say, to a class as a teacher and say, "Oh, I'm suffering from this terrible pain" or "I'm going through drama at home with this child." They are so empathetic, they would be thinking about that instead of being in the receptive mode they should be in to receive the teaching. Or with our clients, they would turn the

PROFESSIONAL CHRISTIAN COACHING TODAY

conversation to me and health concerns perhaps. They are paying me to pay attention to their concerns. It's client-centric and so as coaches, I think it's our responsibility to keep things focused on them. There are certain things we can share and like with my laryngitis, there are certain things we have to share to communicate, but as a rule, we always put the other person first.

CHRIS: Absolutely. I really want to underscore that and that's a good place for us to start to kind of bring this plane into land for today, but because we are human, we are not without all of the weaknesses. We are going to face trials. We've kept saying throughout this whole call today on perseverance, not if but when these things come up. One of my greatest joys in looking back on the dark years, the years that I was so ill all the time is that I have had numerous clients from my groups as well as my private individual clients that I did maintain throughout who have said to me now in hindsight, "Chris, I heard you talking the other day about what you went through. I had no idea. I had no idea." See, on my end, I've told this audience before, I was taking off on ice pack for my head to get my head set on. I was taking the oxygen tube out from my nose to be able to talk and shut the air flow off for the time there. I was just easing myself down into my chair having struggled for the commute up two flights of stairs because I was so weak, some days using a walker just to transfer. That was my reality. My clients do not need to know that as long as my mind is still intact, and it was.

It's actually amazing what can happen when you apportion out your ideal week to say, "Okay, I wish I could serve all these clients but I can't" so I only do one client or two back to back at a time and then I take a nap or I do a medical treatment and then I come back and I do one or two again, teach a class, or whatever it is that I do. When you spread things out and then just judiciously use something like a half cup of coffee, put a little bit of energy in your voice, a little bit of lightness, a little bit of brightness, again, as long as your neurons are firing and your brain is intact, you can leave the rest of that stuff between you and the Lord. He knows and He will then do through you, hey, it's in our weakness that

PROFESSIONAL CHRISTIAN COACHING TODAY

His strength is proven. You will still be the sharpest tool that you can and do not get in your client's way by inviting them to commiserate with you over what you're having to struggle with. It doesn't need to be. In fact, it needs to not be there. It's a good word.

One final point for us and that is that in the midst of all of this of course Scripture tells us pity the one who falls down and has no one to pick him up. We were made for community, for relationship. In fact, in the garden, God looked at Adam and everything He had made was good except He said, "Oh, not good that man should be alone." We're made for relationship and so as a coach, though you are a solopreneur, you are out there in your little individual practicing, you're home and feeling oftentimes very much isolated and like you're facing your challenges all alone, our word of encouragement to you would be don't. Lean on others. Find others on whom you can lean. Connect with your peer coaching buddies. If you've been in classes where you were partnered up in dyads or triads or quads to practice, work with your mentor coach or your individual coach that you've hired. Be sure that others in your social support system, know what your challenges are and know ways that they could help you.

\ So many times through the years that I was so ill, every week, my colleague with whom I would teach classes, Judy Santos who had cancer that was at that time in remission, every week, she and I would connect with each other prior to teaching and I would check. "What kind of condition are you in today, Judy?" If she was having a particularly difficult day with reactions to the chemo, fatigue, or whatever, or if I was having a particular bad day with just not being mentally on or being very, very fatigued, or having a lot of bone pain or whatever, we would decide before we went to the class who is going to take the lead and who is going to kind of ride shotgun today. Some weeks it would be me, some weeks it would be her and we just flip back and forth. Whether it's you co-teaching classes or co-facilitating a group or simply having other people take on duties that you could farm out to them because you don't have to be chief cook and bottle washer, you

PROFESSIONAL CHRISTIAN COACHING TODAY

can't be perhaps right now in your practice. Think wisely about where you could lean on others and then be humble enough, be mature enough to say in the interest of moving forward, Lord, on Plan A, I believe this is what I am to do and so I will ask. I will tap. I will avail myself of the resources that are there.

I think, Kim, that is a good place to put in again our plug for our mastermind group and our encouragement for people to consider partnering up with a mastermind, whether ours or some other one. If you visit us on the web again at ProfessionalChristianCoachingToday.com, you'll see that over on the right hand side for our mastermind group, that is something that Kim and I do. Avail yourself of the value that comes in a brain trust, a mastermind group of other likeminded coaches who are launching and growing their practices. If that interests you, we encourage you on our website, go out there. If you click the button, there's just an application form there. We're very protective over that group. We screen the people to make sure they are appropriate for it, but oh, we'd love you as our listener. If you are a coach launching and growing your practice or if you're a coach who already has an established practice and you're looking at diversifying and expanding that practice to take it to a considerably larger playing field, then we have two different mastermind groups and would love to have you apply for those there on the site.

KIM: I have to say that those mastermind group days are some of my most favorite days of the week to be able to meet in community with other serious minded Christian coaches who feel the same call that I feel, it is such a privilege and then to be able to share their celebrations, surely it must encourage the other coaches on the call. We got to note, I don't if you know this, Chris, right before we got on the call today, I got my sixth coaching client from someone in our group and just a happy dance from everybody and encouraging to others, no doubt, who might not be having such a good week thinking, "This is possible. This can be done. I'm so excited." So we would love to have those who are interested certainly check out the group and think about joining us.

PROFESSIONAL CHRISTIAN COACHING TODAY

CHRIS: I'm glad you mentioned that that we had one of our members just pick up another client. Think about that, there is a new influx of income to that private practitioner's coaching practice and does that cover the cost of being in a mastermind group? Does that more than cover the cost? Yeah sure it does. This is an investment. This is not an expense. If you join a good mastermind group, again whether ours or some other one, it is not an expense. It is an investment in you ensuring that you're not out there just trying to do this on your own. You are leaning on others. You're partnering up with others and you are drawing from the brain trust and the best practices of those who are doing the same thing you're doing at the same time and growing it together. What a joy. What a wise investment.

Gang, until next week. You know the mantra, keep raising the standard of coaching and changing the world.

KIM: God's richest blessings to you.