



PROFESSIONAL CHRISTIAN COACHING TODAY

Chris McCluskey & Kim Avery

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

Episode 071

Coaching the Coach with Georgia Shaffer

CHRIS: Coaching the Coach, an interview with Georgia Shaffer. This is going to be a fun podcast. We are bringing you a prerecorded interview that I did with Georgia Shaffer, author of the book *Coaching the Coach*. The subtitle of that book is *Life Coaching Stories and Tips for Transforming Lives*. We did this interview back in 2013 when I was doing a previous podcast and we've decided to pull it out because the material is as rich and important and applicable today as it was back then.

Let us tell you a little bit about Georgia before we cue this up and about the book itself, what you're about to hear her unpack for us. Georgia Shaffer is a long time friend of mine, probably 20+ years that we have known each other principally through Christian counseling conferences that we were often speakers at together. We would have our booth spaces. We usually try to get our booths next to each other so we could spend some chitchat time and just a dear friend. She is a licensed psychologist in Pennsylvania. She is a very well known speaker and an author of several books including some title that you may immediately recognize. One of her most popular is *Taking Out Your Emotional Trash*. She has also written a series of books for women specifically on dating and marriage. Titles

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on that include How Not to Date a Loser and 12 Smart Choices for Finding the Right Guy.

She has also been very transparent about some of her own personal struggles. She was diagnosed with cancer, breast cancer, more than 25 years ago and her story about that appears as one of the chapters, one of the very powerful chapters in the book Chicken Soup for the Soul for Breast Cancer Survivors. That chapter ultimately then wound up also in a film called Letters to God. Georgia's personal story is just amazing. She was given a 2% chance of survival for 10 years after the recurrence of her initial diagnosis of breast cancer following her treatment then and here she is still more than 25 years later having stewarded, I believe, beautifully the life, the energy, the wisdom, the insights that God has given us.

She is an amazing counselor, speaker, author. She is also a life coach. She trained with us here at Professional Christian Coaching Institute, I'm happy to say, and this book really came out of the years of our relationship together when she put in a phone call to me and said, "I feel like God has laid it upon my heart to put together a compilation book among those who are coaches in the Christian world and just a series of tips, pointers, insights, skills, tools, and techniques that they are using, and so, here then is this book. Kim, you were part of this book. You're one of the contributors. Tell the listeners a little bit about this whole process of pulling together Coaching the Coach.

KIM: Yeah. It was a real privilege to be a contributor for the book, but I think even a greater privilege to read what others had written. While some of the coaches that are contributors wouldn't fit into the ICF definition of coaching, so there's consulting and counseling involved in what they do. All of the chapters contain great information and it was fun to discover that almost half of the book, actually 19 of the chapters were written by colleagues, students, and friends of mine from here at the Professional Christian Coaching Institute.

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As I read through the book, I realized that getting their perspective of coaching, their experiences when they shared them honestly and transparently really helped me build on what they had learned. They talked about their struggles, their mindset barriers, the mistakes they made and the consequences of those mistakes and then of course the learning that grew out of that, so such an opportunity for transformation by reading the stories of other coaches here in this book.

CHRIS: This is a pretty amazing book here. You mentioned 19 chapters. That sounds like, wow, that must be a ton. There are 45 chapters but each of them are very small, kind of bite size 3-4 pages in a chapter from all of these different coaches working in several different niche areas covering things like launching their practices and then facing their own internal insecurities about their abilities and their business acumen and the field itself. Is it a real field? Is it really going to fly? Marketing those things then and systematizing the running of their business and the delivery of their services, specializing in certain niche areas, and handling challenging difficult clients. It is a huge compilation book and yet very, very readable, instantly digestible, so to speak. We are going to pick up this interview here that I did with Georgia back in 2013. We're going to play just a segment where I had cued her up with a question about what are some of the standouts for you from this book and then following Georgia, I actually invited then two of our PCCI faculty members to that same interview, Cheryl Scanlan and Vick Corrington, and so they are actually also going to share some of the things that they shared in their chapters here. We'll go ahead and play that interview here without any further delay.

GEORGIA: Well, you mentioned some of them and divided into 14 sections. That [inaudible 05:21] is just one of the things that hit me was they have seen our insecurities. I remember thinking, "Oh, I'm not the only one that feels this way." That was so validating to me and so that's a section. Facing our insecurities and there are stories in that. Each story is about 3-4 pages with a coaching tip at the end and those first just starting out will probably want to start at the beginning of the book

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which is talking about launching your coaching journey or maybe you're just considering coaching whereas coaches who are further along in the process, you mentioned marketing. They might be struggling with creating visibility for their business. One of the stories in that section Susan Whitcomb wrote. She talked about how she'd love to coach but she hated to talk about her services. Her story was about just that attitude, how it cost her financially and emotionally, and the process that she moved to. Her tip at the end is she tells coaches what will happen if you don't.

Another section I get a lot of good feedback on is really seeing or ending a coaching relationship. Cheryl Scanlan wrote a story for that section about the reasons why we end the relationship, but her story was called Goodbye for Now. I just love that phrase because what she's communicating in that with her clients is we're saying goodbye for now but the door is open. If you want to return, you're welcome to. I use that phrase now. That was a great one for me. Another section I would say is self awareness. As coaches, we always need to be asking ourselves, what are we intentionally or unintentionally bringing into the coaching relationship.

One of the authors has three questions that we can ask ourselves on a routine basis: What's impacting me emotionally right now and how is it affecting my coaching? Am I making my closest relationships a priority? If not, why not? Am I growing purposely emotionally and spiritually? It has a lot of practical information. There are a lot of lessons learned the hard way. What I loved about the contributors is they were willing to be vulnerable rather than impress the readers. They were willing to share things like, "Hey, don't do this kind of thing." They don't always come out and say that but you learn from them.

CHRIS: That is a gift. That kind of transference that's very much your spirit, Georgia, and it's not surprising that it showed up here. I love that coaches in general do tend to be pretty real because they are dealing with helping other people to be real with themselves and honestly admit what is it that you feel like God is calling you to?

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What are you allowing to hold you back? Susan Whitcomb's chapter there you mentioned what will happen if you don't. The vulnerability, the willingness to just lay it on the table and say, "Yup, here's what it was like - the good, the bad, the ugly – because everybody is going to experience it.

GEORGIA: I know and the goal was defined coaches who are passionate about helping other coaches grow. People who are passionate to help people be more effective and at first, there was a concern, well, maybe I won't get many stories of it. There are five that had lunch that day, but as one great story came in after another, it was so amazing and humbling. It was apparent God's hand was in the book, that people were saying, "Hey, I want to help. I want to help others."

CHRIS: I didn't know which ones you might choose but as soon as you said Susan Whitcomb, of course that piques my interest partly because Susan serves on our faculty here at PCCI, but also because Susan is one of those true pillars of this profession. As many of you listeners know, she runs a huge coach training program called The Academies and Career Coach Academy is a part of that. She does a whole leadership certification program for coaches through The Academies and for her to have said in this book, "You know, I hate it. I didn't just not like it, I hated that piece of the marketing and have to talk about what your services are and all," really struggled with that and so what did she title her piece, What Will Happen if You Don't. Here's this woman now that we can look at the field and say, "Man, she's training hundreds and hundreds of coaches all around the world." What would have happened if she would have stayed in that "Oh, I just can't do the marketing piece. I love coaching but I don't feel called in that. I hate it. My hands grow cold. My stomach churns." What would have happen if she didn't? Talk about some other stories like that, maybe people that are in this book, Georgia, who you know have really powerfully already shaped this field and we have to say what would have happened if they wouldn't have addressed whatever their initial insecurities and fears were.

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GEORGIA: Well, one that really stood out to me was Kim Avery's What to Do When You Don't Know What to Do. Her story is in the section on Handling Challenging Clients. She talked about one day feeling like she just needed the answer for our client. We know in our training and our education, we do not need to know the answer. That's not the issue, but we all get trapped by it. We get caught and so she talked about her struggle and the process she went through and realizing that her foundation, her faith in God and His willingness to work through the coaching process could move her clients forward more than any solution she would ever come up with. I think we need to be reminded of that on a regular basis.

CHRIS: Amen to that. Well, that's kind of a good tee up to for one of the pieces, not surprisingly, with your book, Taking Out Your Emotional Trash, that you would have contributed a piece here to the book in the kind of self care section that you called it feeding your coaching soul, but your piece was called remove your trash regularly. Talk a little bit about what you're saying there to Christian coaches about that self care piece. What do you mean remove your trash regularly?

GEORGIA: We do need to pay attention to our lives. The apostle Timothy says pay close attention and it's so easy just to get caught up in the world life, so to speak, but are we [inaudible 11:57] ourselves on a regular basis? Things like is my heart becoming heavier this month compared to last month because sometimes we can't see a difference in a day or two, but if I compare this month to last month, am I heavier with discouragements, doubts, and insecurities? What are the worries or anxieties I continue to carry or is my heart becoming lighter and freer? Am I dealing with some of the unforgiveness issues? Am I holding some desires too closely, too tightly and not allowing an open hand to see what God is going to do with it? I know I can hold them a little too tightly. That one is just paying attention to our life, self awareness and how it impacts our businesses.

CHRIS: That is so huge. Even in the business world, they talk so much more now than I ever recall having heard in years past about the importance of self awareness and what they call EQ or Emotional Quotient, how self aware are you of what's going

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on with your emotions and for that matter then the emotions of others because we know that a lot of problems for businesses including possible poor decisions and bankruptcy, break down of a team, missing deadlines, bottom line issues and all can be just because of that, as you call it, emotional trash that never gets dumped, never gets taken out and never gets admitted or acknowledged, talked about openly and so you're really saying to Christian coaches don't make that mistake. It's going to be there for all of us. Work it through. Take it out regularly.

GEORGIA: Yeah. The issue is until you have trashed it, the issue is what are you doing with yours. Just like we routinely take out our physical trash, we need to be paying attention.

CHRIS: I like that phrase, the issue is not do you have trashed, it's what are you doing with your trash. It's there for all of us and not only then will it of course impair us personally, that self care. We say, "Well yeah, but I'm doing myself a way. I want to be poured like a drink offering in service to others. Lord, you'll be glorified through this," and we just burn ourselves out for Jesus, as the saying goes, but when we do that however well intentioned, we are so misdirected that not only then does it chew us up in a way that's not glorifying God, that doesn't draw others to, "Oh, I want to be like that." It repelled them directly impacts our ability to be effective coaches. We're miserable coaches if we just interrupt emotional shake and not dealing with the emotional stuff.

GEORGIA: Yeah and Jerome Daley has a story in the section on self care too about none of us are exempt from that stress and weariness of helping others and so are we taking a break? Are we trying to live beyond our limitations? Are we taking time to renew and recharge or are we trying to run on empty, so to speak? He has a little recipe there for us that we should refresh, reflect, and refocus on a routine basis.

CHRIS: I love it. Nice alliteration there. Another one of writers, a great, great writer himself. He has several different books and that's really nice use of alliteration there. Well, let's make a transition here. We've got two of those contributors on

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the call with us. As I said, Vicki Corrington serves on our faculty here at PCCI. She is a very well established coach for more than a decade in this field, definitely one of the pioneers. Vicki describes in her piece, Vicki let me just pull you out on this. You described a sense of being called into the profession, but it was more than that. It was not just being called to a new career transition. It's more like being called up, called to a higher plane of living. You call your article here God's Wakeup Call. Unpack that for us.

VICKI: Yeah. It truly was a wakeup call. It's more than 11 years of going to hell that I just hit the wall and there's nothing left of me right now. When I asked my husband who knows me very well what would help wake me up, bring me back to life, he and I both agreed that this whole profession of coaching was a key part of it because I had been spending so much time doing what was right and responsible that I forgot who I was and who God created me to be. I'm grateful that the article is that first chapter of Georgia's book, the Beginning Your Coaching Journey, because before I could even begin, I truly did have to wake up and it was waking up to who I am and also what's important for me to do. So two pieces of it and I had to own my own story and own my own purpose before I could even start to move forward.

CHRIS: Yeah so in brief, you used the metaphor of the alarm clock going off. We have to hit the alarm clock. Okay now I'm awake. Then we got to do something. We got to get out bed, we got to get the day going, hit the shower, etc. Just to say briefly, Vicki, when you got such a wakeup call about life, about how you were living, about being so burned out, so little of you left. What did you do?

VICKI: Well, pray without ceasing because it's a whole new meeting but it was the combination of Christ under coaching and the prayer that God really used. I think I just made a decision in my own mind. This is going to require an investment and I am willing to invest the time, the energy, the money, whatever it takes to really be fully alive. Fortunately, the return on that investment is what I believe are people fulfilled, me fulfilled but also the others I work with. God glorified

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and then even though I am not motivated by money, I didn't want to deal with money. It can paralyze me to have to focus on making money. What happened as I became myself and really just kind of claim those works that God prepared in advance for me was God built my business and my ministry. It's always interesting to me now. Back then I was thinking, "Oh, my strengths. We'll just put my strengths into work," and what I found is it's in those very areas of weakness or this side of me that I needed to learn the most that people are drawn to me. Now, if I can help somebody else wake up and rediscover who they are and what's important to them, then that's where I really feel all are coming together. Does that make sense?

CHRIS: It does and I'm really glad I asked the question that way because the question was simply what did you do. Sure, you hired a coach, but if I would summarize what you just said, it was not so much doing, "Well, I set some goals. I got serious about things and I calendared them. I started moving very intentionally toward X, Y, and Z." If I were to sum up what you just said, Vicki said, "I started to walk toward my weaknesses."

VICKI: I did feel the need to own them and embrace them. God's sense of humor is great because I've had inquiry calls or initial consultations at times where I'm thinking, "This is really going well." By the end, I ask the person, "What are you thinking? Are you ready to move forward with the coaching? I just remembered this one example where he said, "Oh yeah. I already decided that before I even called you. I looked at your website and I could see you've been around the block a few times and I was drawn to that." I had to laugh more than anything about those brilliant strengths.

CHRIS: Right, what a beautiful thing that in our weakness, His strength is proven. If we will be brave enough in Him to walk toward those very things that we want to avoid, not have to look at, back to Susan Whitcomb saying, "Oh I hated that marketing." Well, if she had never walked toward that, where would she be? Probably back where she was. If you had never answered that wakeup call and

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began to walk toward those things, God would not have those to put out there for the world to see on your website and for others to begin to go, “Oh, I bet you get me. I bet you could walk with me because it looks like you got to walk some of the same journey.” That’s power.

VICKI: Yeah and I will say the Myers-Briggs as a tool was a key thing for me to have distinctly Christian coaching and to offer distinctly Christian coaching, but use the secular tool of Myers-Briggs to help people see how God wired them. That was a dynamic combination for me in my life. There were times that I had to go back and read my Myers-Briggs report to remember what my strengths are, what my Achilles heels were. Now, I just came back from Switzerland and have been working with international leaders with Youth for the Mission. When I can bring that piece to them and then see them wake up in fresh new ways and just like get a fresh twinkle in their eye.

I worked with a group of 18 pastors this week on Skype and now they are having me come in person or with the individual teenager that’s trying to figure out what he wants to be when he grows up. Those kinds of things I see it’s the combination of the tools and really honing the skills, but God using my story, my purpose, and owning the works that He has prepared in advance for me to do. I’m repeating that because I didn’t have to force anything, but I did need to be willing to take the risk of stepping out to live that life.

CHRIS: That’s right. Just like in the Christian faith that others are drawn by the power of our testimony. Our testimony was I was a sinner lost and the Lord saved me. It’s those weaknesses and look what God can do. That’s what has such a strong drawing power. Cheryl, let me transition to you so we’ll have time here for questions, but I want you to do just as Vicki did there. You answered your own sense of calling into this field and then you talk in your article about feeling that God was challenging you with regard to some of your mindsets about the work and the life to which He was calling, right?

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CHERYL: Yes and I suspect this might happen for a lot of coaches. I was just working with one yesterday and can summarize the whole process by his words, “I feel like I’m finally a coach.” I reached this threshold, Chris, where I realize, “Okay, I really am a coach.” I actually remember sending it to my mentor coach who had been working with me for four years at that time. She says, “Well, you’ve been a coach all along, but I’m glad you finally feel like you’re a coach.” Just wondering what that is for each one of us, what threshold we have to cross before we really get that sense of, “Wow, I really am a coach.” For me, it was getting that PCC through ICF and a couple of special contracts that I had landed.

The combination of those two things was fairly significant but then I realize, I had a deer in headlights moment like, “Ah, what am I stepping into now? What does this mean? What if I screw up? What if people’s expectations for me change and become too high?” I’ve always had this philosophy of under promise and over deliver. If I “officialize” my business, what kind of pressure was I going to be putting on those relationships? It would no longer be fun for me because up to that point, coaching had been so much fun and so enjoyable for me and my clients. I didn’t want to lose that and so I had to work through that and realize that really, the only thing that needed to change was my understanding or my sense of what expectations were. Once I got through that shift for myself, things really opened up pretty quickly.

CHRIS: It’s so funny that many times, it’s not that we’re needing to pray for the Lord to remove other kinds of obstacles that are outside of ourselves. It’s actually, “Lord, remove the obstacles that are inside of me because I’m hampering more of what you’re probably trying to do in and through me than anything else that I think is out there in the world or of the enemy.

CHERYL: It’s so true. In Numbers 13:33, God had made a promise that He was going to give the land to the Israelites, and they come back and the 10 5 give a bad report of the land. The reason they give a bad report had nothing to do with the land. It had to do with the fact that they viewed themselves as grasshoppers not only to

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the enemy but to themselves. At that moment where they felt so small, they couldn't claim God's promises. Vicki was just talking about that, claiming what was already there, and they couldn't see God's character that He would not lie to them and that He had something for them and that they needed to step into that. I have those grasshopper moments where I feel very, very flawed. I still have that. That has not left me. It has been a pattern my whole life of when something is coming along that's bigger or more exciting or some of those things when you have a sense of your own frailty or whatever. I suddenly feel very small and vulnerable, but those are the times that I can turn back to Him and get a sense of how big my God is.

Just one little story that didn't make it into the book because it would have pulled too much away. This was the thought that I had. Julie Ross is a dear friend of mine. Julie P. Ross, he was a missionary to Peru, Pukara, Peru, and he was a fantastic pilot. He was coming back from one of his trips to Peru. He had called Julie early in the morning and said, "Julie, I don't know what's going on but the Lord woke me up early this morning and something big is going to happen, something big." So on his way back, long story short, his plane had a head on collision with another small plane right over Delray Beach and all passengers in both planes were killed instantly. Julie went over to that beach one day and she said, "Lord, those planes were so small and the sky was so big. I mean, how could that have happened to them?" But then she confessed, "But God, you are bigger. You are bigger than that sky," and so she was able to step into God's bigness when she felt so vulnerable and so small. As a result of that, his ministry through Julie continued to expand and really neat things went on. That story, of course, because of my own sense of vulnerability, really touched me. It's like, "God, I'm going to focus on how big you are when I'm feeling really small."

CHRIS: He uses the foolish things of the world – our weakness, our vulnerabilities. God help us if we're not made very aware of our smallness and yet He says, "Oh, let me have it. Give me those fishes and loaves and watch the thousands that I can

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feed with this.” That’s our God and that’s as true for Christian coaches as it is in anything else that we do in our Christian life. Oh, that’s a good story, Cheryl.

CHERYL: Thank you.

CHRIS: I love the title that you chose for your piece, Rightsizing our Pintsized Moments. That’s what you just talked about. God takes our little and does much. When I put out the promo, we’re going to take questions here in just a moment but when I put out the promo for today’s call, I had said at the very end of it something about, join us with three of the most influential instructors in the Christian coaching world today,” and I know that all three of these ladies went, “Oh my goodness, I can’t believe he said that about me.” You know, I meant every word of it because I’m telling you what, the three ladies you just heard from are being used by God in such powerful ways internationally that it blows their mind and mine, and anybody else who begins to realize what they just shared with us here.

Georgia’s impact is worldwide through her writings and her teaching and her speaking, and I know she feels oftentimes very, very handicapped, very small, very limited. Vicki Corrington just came back again from Switzerland where she was working with those missionary leaders and she’ll be back in Cape Town, South Africa working with missionary leaders, doing coaching and that kind of work. Cheryl Scanlan runs a large coach training program. I’ll give information about that at the end. As I said, she serves on our faculty here, being used in powerful ways, these are not little pioneers who just went out and set up their little house on the prairie kind of a time. These are people that are opening up the frontiers and they are all telling you, “All I was aware of was I had my pintsized little two fishes and five loaves or whatever. This is such as I had to bring and God has taken and multiplied it. That’s a good word, really.

KIM: Wow, that’s a powerful interview. It makes me wish we could talk to not only all the coaches who contributed to the book but really, all of the coaches who are listening to this podcast because each and everyone has a story of what God has

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taught them, how God is using them in their practice, but this is what we have and it was a great taste test of what the book holds. Georgia Shaffer, her emphasis on self awareness, I loved her question. Is my heart become heavier this month with discouragement, doubt, insecurities, or is it becoming lighter? What a great way to look at how my spiritual life is going.

Vicki's reminder about how God uses our weaknesses, the very things we tend to despise sometimes as a platform and a jumping off point to love and to serve other people through this field of coaching. Cheryl's story just brought tears to my eyes and I loved her phrase, "grasshopper moment," when I'm looking more at my strengths and my capabilities instead of the very, very big, big God that we have. Chris, it's a shame that you didn't get the chance to share, but I know you also have a chapter in that book called Growing Your Business by Doing Less, and that's always an attractive concept.

CHRIS: Well, that's right. I have a chapter in there, Growing Your Business by Doing less. It's all about the importance of saying no, right, so that we can say yes to the things that matter the most. There is just so much good information in here. Chapters by Henry Cloud, John Townsend, other PCCI faculty members, Anne Denmark, Renee Oscarson, Mary Yerkes, Mike Pfau, Pam Taylor, Mary Sorrentino, it's quite a list there of people that have helped shape this field. I couldn't recommend the book strongly enough.

If you're interested in getting a copy of it, you can find it on Georgia website. Look at on the web at GeorgiaShaffer.com and you can also order the book through Amazon.com or any other place that you order books from online. Also while you're out on the web, you can look at Vicki Corrington's website. That's simply at CoachVicki.com and Cheryl's website, CherylScanlan.com.

KIM: If you enjoyed listening to that interview with Georgia, Vicki, Cheryl, and Chris as much as I did and you wish you could participate in the discussion, we would love to invite you to our private Facebook group. In other words, it's a place for

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coaches to share their honest struggles, have people celebrate their wins with them and ask questions in a very safe and supportive environment. You can find that at [Facebook.com/groups/ProfessionalChristianCoaching](https://www.facebook.com/groups/ProfessionalChristianCoaching) or if that's too much to remember, just get on Facebook and put in Professional Christian Coaching and I think our private group will come up as a suggested place.

CHRIS: We'd love to have you there. We really do mean what we say so often in our tagline here about coaching being a means by which we believe God is changing the world and we're looking to get in alignment with that. Every single person listening to this podcast can be part of the tools that He's picking up to use to do exactly that. We really do encourage you to engage with us there on Facebook. What a great way to be able to bring the Christian coaching community together in one place and to cross pollinate through all that sharing. Until next time gang, you know the mantra. Keep raising the standard of coaching and changing the world.

KIM: God's richest blessings to you.