



PROFESSIONAL CHRISTIAN COACHING TODAY

Chris McCluskey & Kim Avery

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

Episode 074

Your Ideal Home Office

CHRIS: Oh, we have a fun one for you today, but it's like all the others. It's a valuable one, just a very, very fun topic for us today and that is creating your ideal home office. I think this is one of the things that captures our imagination, all of us as coaches transitioning into the field. When we first start dreaming of the idea of not only having your own business, your own practice as a coach, but hey, I get to work it from home. It kind of puts us into, I'll speak for myself anyway, it puts me into a kind of a childlike state of going back to building tree forts and imagining what the fort could be like or maybe for women, playing house and imagining how you'll lay out everything if you're making your houses out of raked up leaves in the yard or little stacking stones.

You say, "Now, this is the living room and this is the dining room," and whatever else, but certainly for all of us as we fixed up our rooms that we had as kids growing up in our parents' homes and then looked toward leaving home to head off to college maybe or your first apartment that you were going to get, doing the shopping for that and thinking about the selection of your colors, your window treatments, bed covers, or the knick knacks that you wanted to have on your shelving and all. Eventually, we all transition into buying our homes or setting up our townhomes or apartments, and turning that house into a home and reflecting

PROFESSIONAL CHRISTIAN COACHING TODAY

there our personality, our values, and all the way through to the nesting of that home to prepare a nursery for babies coming and all.

That's kind of the space that I think we find ourselves and when we realize, "I'm starting a coaching practice. I'm going to work from home. I could have a home office. Wow, what's possible?" That's our topic for today.

KIM: And I agree, Chris. This is a fun episode but also very important. Science is really showing us that the space in which we work, the ways in which we work have tremendous impact on the amount of work we do and the quality of what we produce. Today, we're going to cover with you four different areas, the minimum office considerations for you as a coach when you're setting up your private coaching practice. The science of environmental psychology and how it speaks to the design of where we work, some factors to consider in developing a personal vision for your ideal office, and throughout the episode and at the end, we really want to fill your mind with multiple ideas that are going to stoke your creative fires and get you excited about designing or maybe even redesigning your ideal coaching office.

Working from home is an amazing opportunity and I am thankful for it every single day. The bottom line is as coaches, really, we need a phone, a laptop, internet, chair, and a pen - that's it. It's a great place for many of us to start, but from there, things happen and if we're not intentional, I think our home office can become a scattered place, maybe even a messy or cluttered space and one that doesn't add to what we're doing but actually detracts from it. When I first began my coaching practice, Chris, the last office I've had was as a therapist. I worked for a large hospital here in town and we had outpatient offices, but I was allowed to design my office. I was given my office.

Office is euphemistic. Think very institutional furniture. Its carpet that probably used to be blue but was now kind of gray and stained, the couches that my clients

PROFESSIONAL CHRISTIAN COACHING TODAY

were supposed to rest and share their deepest secrets from was plastic lest what, I don't know, they wet their pants. I'm not sure.

CHRIS: Oh my goodness.

KIM: It had a metal filing cabinet which didn't lock and I did have the occasional kleptomaniac and then a desk and a chair, which squeaked every time I moved, and so for me, having my own home office was really a dream come true.

CHRIS: Oh wow, yeah. I mean, I've been in settings like that but what a contrast to what we're talking about here. Many of our listeners, I realize, whatever settings you're coming from, Kim and I both were psychotherapists before we went into coaching, but you may be coming from an environment in which maybe you're a teacher and so you're in a classroom.

You have your desk and your space right around you, but that might be the only area where you can really do a lot with kind of your own space in the room or maybe your bulletin boards and such. Many others of you are in office buildings where you have an office or you might do office sharing. You may be in cubicles, cubicle spaces. Gosh, that is the standard of the 21st century, isn't it? A lot of our listeners, maybe they are in a place where you have lots of leeway and you can bring in stuffed animals, plants, and all kind of stuff like we keep seeing pictures of it in business magazines, or it may be that again, you have to kind of share it. It's to look pretty uniform, again a fairly functional and somewhat sterile kind of an environment.

Whatever space you are coming from that you've been used to working in and you're now having the opportunity to set up and work out of an office in your home, I find that many times our new coaches just coming into classes are actually not giving it a lot of thought and maybe the bulk of the thought they gave is just, "Well, for right now, like you said, Kim, all I need is just a telephone and an internet connection so I'm going to work off of the kitchen table, off of a counter, or just a dropdown desk that's maybe out in the living room." So you're

PROFESSIONAL CHRISTIAN COACHING TODAY

at home. Yeah, that's cool, but it's anything but a dedicated office space. We really want to stretch and challenge your thinking if you haven't given a lot of attention to the idea of what your home office space could be and the advantages of that.

KIM: Right and I think it is not just a matter of personality and preference, although those things are important and we'll certainly come back to that. There's actually a real science to this. There's a whole field called environmental psychology and it really has a lot to say about the creation of a dedicated space and paying attention to putting that space so that it's most conducive to the life changing work of whatever it is you do, for us, it's coaching. Environmental psychology looks at such things as what will affect our performance, the quality, the quantity of our output, our creativity, the maintenance or the loss of energy and health, the facilitation of collaboration among teams and departments, and so much more.

Interestingly Chris, sometimes it's referred to as the study of cognitive ergonomics. In other words, environmental psychology also helps us identify things in our surroundings that can help us with our productivity and our quality of life and relationships. As coaches, we're all about those kinds of things and we do a lot of variety of tasks where we really could use all the help we can get in terms of our environmental support. Often, we're marketing, we're doing routine tasks obviously on the computer such as email, we're on the phone with clients or some people are in person. We need our creativity for writing and perhaps drafting speeches.

We're developing new services in response to different opportunities and of course, the ever dreaded completion of bookkeeping and tax filing, and those kinds of things. To get the focus and the flow and the creativity and productivity we want, we want to harness, I think, everything in our environment to support us in every way that it can. I'd love to share some of the things I have discovered over the years that have been helpful to me in terms of my cognitive ergonomics and its environment. The first I found is that I really need to have my tools close

PROFESSIONAL CHRISTIAN COACHING TODAY

at hand. It's amazing sometimes where I'll be sitting and I'll think, "Oh, I should do that," and the tool is across the room.

I actually have noticed, sometimes, I'll make a conscious decision to procrastinate and think, "Oh, I'll do that later." To walk over there and get that stapler just seems so burdensome for some reason in the moment and it allows me to put off the important things that need to be done. Wherever I am in my office, I like that workspace to have the tools that I most need while I'm doing those activities. I have found and actually science has found that a big computer screen is actually one of those return on investment tools. The bigger the computer screen or using two computer screens actually pays back what people spend on it when they invest.

I have two computers. I have a huge iMac on my desk where I can do all sorts of creative video editing and photos, and look at big spreadsheets and I have a laptop which shares similar information but I can move it over to my comfy chair or my standing desk, which brings us to the point of a desk. We need a desk that's comfortable and the right height. Perhaps an adjustable chair and really with the research that has been coming out about standing versus sitting, I invested last Christmas in a standing desk because they told me that sitting is as harmful to my health sometimes as high blood pressure, which is crazy and can actually be tracked to some cardiovascular disease. I have a choice now between whether I sit or stand, and I'm really enjoying having that option.

We obviously need a comfortable headset for our phone so we're not doing that funny pull up your shoulder try to hold the phone between your ear and your shoulder motion, which will send you to the chiropractor quickly. There's a whole science around lighting. If at all possible, natural light is the best light for our eyes, but if that's not possible, use lamps in key task areas. If people haven't discovered this already, fluorescent lighting is absolutely the worst. You probably discovered this, Chris, as a migraine sufferer. I'll tell you what,

PROFESSIONAL CHRISTIAN COACHING TODAY

nothing's worst on my headaches than fluorescent light except maybe a fluorescent light that's blinking because the light bulb is about to go out.

CHRIS: Right, yeah.

KIM: Now, of course, some new coaches and a lot of people don't have a dedicated room and you can work around that as well, but again, keep these key environmental triggers – the desk, the adjustable chair, the space at a comfortable place - in mind as you go about creating your ideal home office. I think it's sounds obvious, Chris, but the most important thing when you're considering your new home office is to have a door to be shut off from household noise and potential interruption. I've worked with clients who have been setting up their home office and they choose the dining room, which is a beautiful room, often very underutilized for other purposes, but then when the dog barks, the UPS man comes to the door, or other family members are home, all of a sudden, it becomes a high interruption area.

As a matter of fact, one of my clients recently had two French doors hung at the entrance of her dining room and put curtains over the glass part so that it could serve a dual purpose – as a dining room during holidays or of course, the office during the week, but it is important to have a dedicated space. I think it helps coaches feel official. As a matter of fact, I love the excitement when a new coach finally puts together their first work space, whatever that looks like, and hangs their coaching certification on the wall. It's almost like walking down the aisle again at a graduation ceremony. There's just a real sense of accomplishment - and there should be. It's a very big deal.

Having our own home office also helps us treat it like a business, right? This is not a hobby that I'm indulging in where I take out my stuff when I want to work on it and I put it away or shove it under the bed when I don't. This is a business. I want to cue my mind and my body when I enter this room, I'm here for a reason and it's an important reason. It cues our family members, I think, to honor our

PROFESSIONAL CHRISTIAN COACHING TODAY

boundaries and our time. Having a door, having a dedicated space allows me to have the ability to put a Post-It note up there that says, “Do not interrupt” during key times. I think it helps them see what I do as more official even though I’m working from home.

I think as we talk about the wonderful things we want to set up in our office to help us do what we do more efficiently, it makes our work, our paperwork, our record keeping, all of those things much more seamless, elegant, and effective.

CHRIS: It absolutely does. I’m aware in reflecting back as I was preparing for today’s talk on this, Kim, in looking back at my old therapy office and thinking about all of the work that I put into that, all of the money, and all that the team put together in making a gorgeous office there because we knew we were going to be in a geographical location. People were going to come in and literally enter our space and all, and they would be spending hours of their lives with us there as we would be spending hours and hours away from our homes – which are usually decorated like we’d like – instead in this space. So I really poured into that.

When we moved here to the farm, once I closed down that therapy practice, packed up, and moved to the family farm here in the foothills of the Ozark Mountains out in Missouri, I was in a very different mental space. I told myself, “Hey, nobody is going to see where I’m working now. It doesn’t matter to me that for us to get established on the farm, we’re going to move into a single wide mobile home trailer as a family. Of course, I’ve shared that story here. You interviewed me on it back in one of our earlier episodes. Our listeners know that we just came out to the farm because it was in a derelict state. It had been horribly neglected for 25 years or so.

But it was land of my forefathers and it was wide open space, which we were really interested in. Hundreds of acres of land and wooded areas and beautiful pastures and all, so great, let’s go to the country. I don’t think, Kim, I gave much thought at all to my office space then because I was in the make do, just get there

PROFESSIONAL CHRISTIAN COACHING TODAY

and get established kind of mode, and I told myself, “My clients won’t know where I am anyway. All I got to do is give them a new phone number, give them a new email access, and I can work out of anywhere.” If some of our listeners have been in kind of that same mode that I was referring to earlier where you really haven’t given a lot of thought to the space that you’ll work out about at home, maybe you have just been thinking, “Well, I work out of a briefcase or a backpack or whatever you carry your laptop in.”

Panera, Starbucks, or whatever, in a restaurant or coffee shop might be your “office” if you need to get out and be somewhere. I’m going to say that when we settled here on the farm, I’m going to paint you a very different picture of what my office was like then and how I learned very painfully very quickly that this does need a lot more attention even if I’m the only person who ever sees the space. Certainly, I could not have an office in the trailer that we were living in as a family while we tried to get the business established and then eventually break ground on the home that we now live in obviously.

We can’t be in a single wide trailer. We just had our fourth child. Too much noise, no privacy, I don’t care if you got the door to close or not, those are paper thin walls and lots of running around. We home schooled the kids so I needed to be somewhere other than in the trailer itself. The only other building that was functional on the farm at that time was an old farmhouse that my granddad had built 60 years or so previous. It would have been plain fine except that it had been used actually and allowed to have animals come in and out of it for quite a long time. Kind of think farmhouse turned semi-barn. I didn’t care. I was in make do mode. I suppose I was again in that childish state of like, “Oh, it’s like a tree house or something. It should be an adventure. We’ll do this.”

I actually took one room of the farmhouse. When you first walk in the front door to the left, there was a large used to be the family room. I took that. The window had been broken out. That’s alright. I boarded up the window. It didn’t have any kind of a central heating system. That’s okay. It’s January. I put a space heater

PROFESSIONAL CHRISTIAN COACHING TODAY

in there to heat that one little space. The floor of course was a mess and so I cleaned it out and sanitized everything real well and then just threw down a huge section of carpeting. Okay, so now it has got kind of sort of carpet on the floor at least, brought in all of my beautiful cherry wood furniture, filing cabinet, credenza, and shelves. It's going to be fine. I got a bare bulb up there on the ceiling above my desk but that's okay.

I plugged in all of my computer equipment to the old wiring that granddad has put in so many years ago and hey, I'm business, right? The phone is there. I've got a fax machine. I didn't have internet initially because we didn't have phone lines that could handle that, but otherwise, I was set up and in business. Well, yes and no. I literally froze so badly. I think there was no insulation in any of the walls and so in January, we were having ice storms and all, I generally wore my army coat with my big heavy gloves and a wool cap on while I was in my office. Now, my clients couldn't see that, but I would take my wool cap off and put my headset on, then I'd put my wool cap back over on top of that. Pull the glove off, dial the phone, put the glove back on and I would sit there and take notes with my gloved hands trying to keep my teeth from chattering sometimes while I'm thinking, "Yeah, maybe this isn't quite working so well."

By the way, this farmhouse turned barn has rats and mice in the walls. I hadn't thought about that and as spring started to come on, we were the immediate residence of all kinds of wasps and dirt dabbers and bugs of every kind. I'm thinking, "Okay, this is really not working. Now, the boarded up window is depressing me. The bare bulb is getting to me. The mold on the walls and ceiling is just not healthy. I could laugh at it now but suffice to say, it was about a four-month toughing it out and I had to say, "Okay, something has got to give here. It's not going to be me. I got to build this business. I got to serve this clientele."

But we had actually by that point gotten the internet run through here so I was back up and operational, and yet we had a tornado rip through about a mile north of us. It sent a surge down the electrical lines and all that computer equipment

PROFESSIONAL CHRISTIAN COACHING TODAY

that I had plugged into all that wiring that dear old granddad had put in but hadn't grounded, guess what happens when electrical surge comes through a nongrounded system? It doesn't matter if you're using a surge protector. It burns out the surge protector and burns out everything else that you've got on it. Of course that didn't work for me then because I had put in adapter to make two-pronged plugs into three-pronged plugs.

Nothing was covered. I lost all of my phone, fax, copier, scanner, every piece of equipment I had was shot and so painful lesson that surely none of our listeners will have to go through something quite that brutal, but I share it with you to say we really do have to think through our space. Even though your situation won't be nearly so nightmarish surely as that, it does say you didn't think it through the practical effects, the practical impact of you not having a clear enough sense of what it's going to take to really do your best work. I went out and, long story short, found a prefabricated hunter's cabin, 16 ft wide by 28 ft long. It's a nice large space, whatever that is, 400 ft² and some odd, almost 500 ft².

It was built on skids, brought it out, hooked it up to electric in a little knoll, just kind of a stone's throw from the little trailer we were in, run the new lines to that and now, I'm in business. I've got four windows. I can open them up. It's much more functional. I've got good bright lighting. No kind of mold problems. No animal or critter problems there. It's quiet. It's private. I can heat it in the winter time. I can air condition it in the summer time. I've got a view out of my windows there. I've got ventilation when I'm feeling stuffy. I can open the windows. I even built a little deck around the side of it so I spend a lot of my time outside of the office just in some big Adirondack chairs that I put out on that deck there.

Cleanliness, all of these things began to make for a much more conducive office and therefore, a much more positive experience for me working from home and I believe I was a much better coach for my clients because I didn't have all these distractions and I didn't have all that drain. The office space worked for me, with

PROFESSIONAL CHRISTIAN COACHING TODAY

me. It aided me. It made me my potential best, very, very different from the first one.

KIM: I love that story and I've got this mental picture of you with your army coat, your gloves, and your cap on with your teeth chattering coaching your clients and it makes me feel better no matter what I might be enduring on any given day. Thank you for sharing that. I think beyond just the form and the electricity and the function of our office, I think there's aesthetics to consider that are really important. The color of a room really impacts us. Red, they say, brings energy and sometimes that's too much energy for a room and it's stressful for people when they are in it. They say blue is the color of productivity and maybe that's why we see so many blue offices out there.

Green is the color of growth, peace, and harmony, and I think I can feel that. As a matter of fact, I actually chose to paint my office a sage green and it really feels welcoming but calm to me at the same time. Yellow, they say, wow, you've got to get just the right shade for it to be happy because otherwise, it tends to depress people and bring them down. Color is a personal preference and you certainly want one that appeals to you, but you also want to consider the science behind color and what it does to our minds, our brains, and our bodies.

I think for us as coaches, sounds are important, a pleasant sound but something that's not distracting to our client on the other end of the phone. For me, I live in Florida where almost everybody has a pool. Outside my office, I can hear those pleasant bubbling water sounds continually going on. They are so soothing, yet my clients aren't distracted by hearing that noise. I like to put a bird feeder outside of my office and watch the birds throughout the day and I can hear them, but it's on the other side of the window, not in my office, so again, not distracting to my clients. Those kinds of things make my stay in my office much more enjoyable to me. It's a place I actually love to come to.

PROFESSIONAL CHRISTIAN COACHING TODAY

Of course art is a personal preference, but also so important. It feeds not just our minds I think but our souls. Around my office, I have artwork that I've chosen and some calligraphy Bible verses that have great meaning to me, and it's fun how my eyes will light on them at just the right time. If it's a challenging moment or a difficult moment or I need to be reminded of something peaceful, I know where in my office to look to feed my soul on those feelings. Textures are important for an environment. Right now, Chris, as we're recording this, I have my very soft comfy blanket that I throw over my lap all the time even on the hottest days because I'm a very tactile person and it just comforts me and I love to feel it and my fingers have something soft and comforting to touch.

I think texture adds a lot to an office. I have a tile floor in my office and so that sound reverberation would not be good for podcasting or for clients, and so I put an area rug on top of that. I have different textures in the flowers and the lampshades and the built in bookcases and the counter tops. I think all of that creates a warmth and a welcoming environment that's important to me. My favorite thing about my office and I'm thankful that we have this opportunity to have a dedicated office in this house is really the window over my desk. Now, I'll be honest, Chris. I've had the opportunity to experiment with ideal offices because out of the 10 years I've been coaching, we've moved three times.

CHRIS: Oh wow.

KIM: Yes. So I get to keep trying again and taking what I've learned from a previous office and integrating the good things and think, no, that wasn't such a good idea. In my first office, I realized that I need to be connected to be nature because I am a solopreneur, because my children are grown and they are not home during the day, because my husband works outside of the home majority of the time, it can get lonely. I can feel isolated, but somehow when I look out on God's great nature outside my window, it feeds me in a way where I don't feel alone. I feel connected. I learned that in my first home office. My second one, we were downsizing, moving to a smaller house. Everything about the house was perfect

PROFESSIONAL CHRISTIAN COACHING TODAY

but I told my husband, “I just can’t do it unless the contractor can knock a hole in the exterior wall.”

CHRIS: Oh.

KIM: Yes, I know. Crazy, right?

CHRIS: No, it’s great. Good for you. You knew what you needed.

KIM: I needed a picture window over my desk for me to be able to work in that back of the house. It was a dark house in the back of the house all day every day. My sweet husband said, “Sure, I’m sure there’s a way to make that happen,” and actually, it wasn’t nearly as expensive or hard as in my noncontracting mind it seemed like it would be, and it turned out great. I’m very thankful for that. I think windows, for some of us, are really important if we have that option. Just a couple of last things that seemed really small, aroma. Chris, do you ever just walk into a room and you notice the scent? It smells good. I love that feeling.

CHRIS: You know what, I’m not sure that a lot of guys really do pay attention to that unless it’s their wife’s perfume or something that they particularly like, but I do pay attention to that. My kids, believe it or not, oftentimes comment, “Dad, I love coming up to your office because as soon as I start up the stairwell, it smells so good.” What’s the deal there, right? I’m not walking around spraying perfume all the time. I have a simple little oil diffuser. It’s kind of a ceramic thing and it sits up on top of a light bulb of one of the floor lamps that I have here. I just put a couple drops of a scented oil in it. I use tobacco flower and it’s not a particularly feminine smell, it just smells pleasant, but it’s in my office all the time. Yeah, I guess my office smells nice. I don’t know that that helps me one way or the other in terms of concentration or something, but I do pay attention to aromas.

KIM: Actually, science shows that different scents, so it depends what scent you have in there, provoke different results. Some like pine increase alertness. Cinnamon increases focus. Lavender helps you relax. Peppermint will lift your mood.

PROFESSIONAL CHRISTIAN COACHING TODAY

Now, I always like, for whatever reason, vanilla scented things and I don't know if they do anything except make me hungry for sugar cookies, but it's a scent that I enjoy and so again, it makes it a pleasing place. Two other quick things I'll mention and then I would love to hear what you've got in your office that's important to you, Chris, but one, our family pictures. I have two young granddaughters and they make me laugh.

I almost always have a new, current silly picture that I've actually printed out. I don't let it be held captive by my iPhone and I hang on the wall or put on my desk so I can remember some of the reasons why I do what I do. The beauties of entrepreneurship and working from home means Nina can play almost whenever Nina wants to play as long as I plan in advance. The last thing that's really been a blessing to me is several years ago, I got a huge blackboard. It's narrow. I'm not good with measurements but it's tall, almost 4 ft tall that is in the corner of my office and it's one of those shiny blackboards you write on it with bright fluorescent markers.

CHRIS: Oh.

KIM: Yeah. So whenever I'm brainstorming, I get out my pretty markers and I mind map or I put up my ideas. Another thing I do is I put up my two or three critical tasks that I want to accomplish that week so that they don't get buried in my planner somewhere, but I remember who I am and what I'm supposed to be about. My blackboard is such a popular item. I know several people in one of the mastermind groups I lead, each week as we share, "Okay, this is what I plan to get accomplished by Monday," and then we share wins on Friday, have taken pictures of their own whiteboards or blackboards that they have invested in, just small portable ones, but to keep in front of them what's most important. Actually, it has been a great focusing tool as well as allowing me the opportunity to play with pretty colored markers.

PROFESSIONAL CHRISTIAN COACHING TODAY

CHRIS: I can totally imagine that, that black shiny board with all your colored markers on. I'm picturing you not only writing stuff but drawing little flowers and stuff. I don't know if you do that or not.

KIM: You know it.

CHRIS: That sounds like Kim. Well, okay, so hopefully, we are really stretching and stirring as you're listening to this and thinking now about what things could be possible and not just for fun, but for function and for optimum performance, if you will, for increasing the quality and quantity of what you are able to produce when you're in your office.

Let me just toss in a couple of other things. First, a general word I think with regard to all of this, Kim nor I are frivolous spenders. We don't just go out and shell out money that we don't need to spend on things nor are either one of us particularly prone to being tight fisted and not spending if something looks like it could have some kind of a value beyond just utilitarian. We value the things that do call to the soul and feed the soul, and so that's what we're talking about here. If you're listening and you're recognizing, "Wow, we are in a really tight budget. I'm not sure how much I can do here. I know that one of the things we would encourage to seriously think about is just using thrift shops, estate sales, garage sales.

I'm the king of going out and seeing what can be found for a dime on a dollar at Salvation Army or Goodwill or whatever. When you're looking at what you can do with the space you currently have, whether that is reclaiming a bedroom from maybe one of your kids going off to college or getting married or something, or if it's reclaiming a walk in attic space, maybe stick building out a 2x4 frame in part of the garage where when you walk out the side door of the garage, you got a little area that you can now run air conditioning and heating vent out into so you have an office in the garage space.

PROFESSIONAL CHRISTIAN COACHING TODAY

Whatever it is that you're looking at fixing up, just know that you can watch the pennies and you can still do a lot of things that you wouldn't necessarily do because they were practical or functional, but because they do call you up to this higher level of creativity as a coach. Again, even though if your clients may never see the space, one of the things that for me is very important, Kim, you mentioned it being in nature or at least being able to see nature if you're in the office instead of an outdoor office, at least being able to see it out the window, I love living things. Of course I'm surrounded by the farm here, the cattle out in the fields. We have pigmy goats that the kids raise up on the hillside here that I can see out of my window, cats, dogs, and chubby ducks, and chickens and the whole deal.

It's a living farm, but I also like to have critters in the house and not the buggy kind. I like fish. I like a little Siamese fighting fish in a bowl on my desk with a plant coming out of it or when I built out our home here that we now live in, very large beautiful dream home for Rachel and I, the top floor is entirely dedicated to my office and on the bottom floor, Rachel has her entire office space built out, separate from our bedroom or any other room. It's only for her and this is only for me. I built a 55-gallon fish tank into the wall up here. I hear that bubbling, gurgling sound that you're talking about with your swimming pool. A pleasant sound and I love watching the fish and just enjoying having that living thing.

Maybe some of you love plants. I have a lot of plastic plants in my office, but if you're into living plants, then put those around you or allow your kitty cat or your dog to come in and out of the office freely. Living things are very, very good for us in terms of, again, just feeding our soul and being creative. Thinking about spaces that you have within the office, once you have this hopefully dedicated area you're working out of, if you can make some little spaces that are other than just your desk, in my office now, of course, it's a larger space so I have the room to do this, but I have two different comfortable wingback chairs. They are the

PROFESSIONAL CHRISTIAN COACHING TODAY

kind that can recline, kind of like a lazy boy but they also sit upright, more of like a classic wingback.

There are two different places that I can go. One has a swing arm swivel desk on it where I can put my laptop. The other one I just do my reading and I can set my laptop on my lap. I've got a large sofa that actually will let out into a bed if we've got guests staying here. I've got different floor lamps in certain places. I've got overhead candle lighting but I also have some lighting which I can just turn on if I want to do some different kind of reading or creating that under the full lights. I'm at my desk now that has my podcasting equipment on it and the mixing board and all of that. That's separate from the desk that I use for my computer, which is separate still from a third desk that is my writing desk.

Again, I haven't spent a lot of money on furniture. Almost everything in the office is used, but it was beautiful when I got it and I take care of it, and those spaces call to me to come and to create whatever they were created for. "Come here and write. Come here and design. Come here and do the podcast. Come here and catch up on your emails," or this is the space that I wrote our book, those kinds of things. Think about your spaces. window seats, comfortable throw pillows, you mentioned area rugs. Kim, you talked about art and I have art of course in various places on the wall, some from the kids and some that I've just bought because I love the art.

Symbols can be another fun thing and important thing sometimes to have in your office. I think about our friend, Dan Miller, when we're at his place for our mastermind groups there. You know that he's big on eagles. The symbol for his 48 Days to the Work You Love is the eagle and that adventurous spirit, and so he has eagles, statues of eagles, paintings of eagles, photos of eagles taking off or landing, or doing whatever. In my office here, I have a symbol that I've used since moving to the farm. It seems a goofy one and it actually is. It makes me smile. It has got some whimsy to it. It has got some humor, but it also challenges me and it is a flying pig.

PROFESSIONAL CHRISTIAN COACHING TODAY

People are all familiar with the flying pigs. A little different than an eagle, right, Kim, but a flying pig suits my personality well because it does make me smile out on the little barn that we have out here, the red and white barn, the weather vane is a flying pig flying over the farm there. I have a painting above my desk of a flying pig. I have little flying pig statues, little rot iron that serves as a door stop and such. The reason I chose that symbol is because it's one of those things we look at and makes us laugh, and people say, "Of course that's impossible. Pigs can't fly," and yet we all love flying pigs. Why? Well, because who says pigs can't fly. Maybe they can fly. Maybe we can at least pretend and maybe it can challenge us to do things that we tell ourselves are impossible but maybe they are not, and certainly, if God has called us to it, they are not impossible.

That has become a symbol for me. If you have something that you recognize that speaks to you, you don't have to be a collector but just go ahead and put that somewhere where like Kim was talking about, within your field of vision and it speaks to you, calls to you when you're in creative space. That's probably a good word for us to kind of wrap up this thought on is that the ideal home office for you as a coach ultimately needs to fulfill that challenge calling to you. Does it not only facilitate your work, functionally operate for you, give you privacy in all that you need, but is it actually a space that you look forward to being in. My wife, Rachel, will say that our offices are some of her favorite rooms in the house.

We designed the whole house. We love each room of the house, but our offices are not places we dread to go to, even on a day when you're like saying, "Well, I got to go do work," still, if it's a space that calls to you once you step into it, turn those lights on, feed the fish, talk to the plants, put that scented oil in the diffuser, or whatever your thing is, turn on your soft music that you listen to, the things that feed your soul and look at those pictures that remind you why you're doing it, then you find yourself settling into a creative space and some of your best work comes out as the Holy Spirit communes with your spirit and you get into the flow. You get into that space of deep work and truly turning out some amazing work.

PROFESSIONAL CHRISTIAN COACHING TODAY

KIM: I love that there's so much room for any budget, any personality, any preference, any need. Whether it's the corner of a room, whether it's your laundry room or a closet that you're turning into an office, or if you live in a mansion, there is a way, I think, to create that office as functional, fun, and feeds your work and creativity. Of course like all of us, those of you who are listening, we probably can't have everything we want all at once. I believe that's called heaven, but here on this earth as we think about our home offices, we want to challenge you and encourage you to begin as we often do as coaches with the end in mind. Brainstorm with words, with pictures, with vision boards from magazines your ideal office.

What would it be like to feed your soul, have a place that calls to you and it serves your multitude of purposes? Once you envision it, you have that in mind, you can start to, whether it's garage sales, Christmas gifts, or saving your pennies move towards that ideal space. In all honestly, we would love to see your office, what you have so far, what you're dreaming about. I think I can challenge Chris. Maybe he and I would be willing to snap a few photos of what we've done with what we have so far and share those with you as well. We're going to encourage you to go to [Facebook.com/groups/ProfessionalChristianCoaching](https://www.facebook.com/groups/ProfessionalChristianCoaching).

You may already be a member or you may need to click add to group, but we would love to have you as a part of our Facebook community and that's a great place when you listen to this for you to come and share your photos so we can all inspire one another.

CHRIS: Yeah, yeah. You got to do that. That's a fun call out. We're inviting you to post your pictures. "Check out my digs. Check out the office space that I'm in right now." If we get some funny ones up there that are as pitiful looking as that first office I was in here on the farm or if we get some really cool ones, really creative ideas, offices that are making use of, like I said, kind of office space or some kind of a created space. Kim, I've had students who have talked with me about having established a walk in closet in their master bedroom as their office space. They

PROFESSIONAL CHRISTIAN COACHING TODAY

took all of their clothing out of it, of course, and put that into different places, bought a wardrobe for their bedroom and all, but that was the only room they had, but they could close the door.

It doesn't have a window, but they were able to do wallpaper and make it creative and it was a place they looked forward to being able to go into and do their coaching. We have actually, Kim, you and I have a person in our mastermind group right now, the High Impact Mastermind group that you and I are facilitating who is doing kind of the Mark Twain thing here. They say Mark Twain did a lot of his writing in a shed out back of his home. They had to go and ring the bell to let him know it was time to come in for dinner or something. That's exactly what this mastermind participant is doing. He has put a shed out in the back of his house, run electricity to it, air conditioning in the window, and that's where his office space is going to be.

Whatever your creative office space is or is becoming, or even just your ideas, maybe Pinterest style kind of ideas that you have for your office, share them with us on Facebook and we would love to be able to see what expresses you uniquely and allows you to do the work that you feel like God has called you to do. We really encourage you to go ahead and share that with us on Facebook. We know that in community, we'll get all kinds of ideas from each other and it will make everything that we're all doing that much better. Let's have fun with it and post those out there.

Gang, until next time, you know the mantra. Just keep raising the standard of coaching and changing the world.

KIM: God's richest blessings to you.