



Coach Approach Ministries Podcast

Episode 143: PCC Marker Insights

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- Brian Miller: This is Brian Miller, Strategic Director for Coach Approach Ministries, CAM for short. And I'm joined here today, I am excited, you might be able to hear it in my voice, by co-founder of Coach Approach Ministries, Jane Creswell.
- Brian Miller: I've done three previous podcasts, and Jane, they are popular podcasts. The learning, number 86, *Learn Group Coaching from a Pioneer*, is a heavily listened to podcast. If people haven't listened to that they should, because if you want to know about group coaching it is a 30-minute master class by Jane Creswell.
- Brian Miller: Number 17, a really early one. Well, I'll do number 16 first, *Introducing Coaching into a Fortune 500 Company*. Jane was the first network, the first coach in the IBM computer network.
- Brian Miller: And then number 17, I did a two-parter with her. It was just too good to contain into one podcast. *A Missionary to the Corporate World*, which is still something that's so in her heart. She spends most of her time these days working with corporations to create a coaching culture.
- Brian Miller: But her covert mission, and we're going to tell the secret here, is to bring Christ into those corporations. And that's been her ... she's been a missionary. If I remember, you can listen to number 17, she wanted to be a missionary and instead went into corporate. But not instead. She just became a missionary to the corporate world.
- Brian Miller: Jane, thanks for joining the podcast.
- Jane Creswell: Oh, it's my pleasure to be here, Brian. I enjoy talking to you. The time flies when we're talking about whatever.
- Brian Miller: I hope so. And we may have to shorten the accolades because that's all the time we have, is for me to say how great you were and I'm out of time today. Our 30

minutes are up. Not really. But there are so many good things that you've been a part of.

Brian Miller: We were just talking earlier that Coach Approach still just does a big part of our foundation is the hourglass model, which you created. Which I still ... that just really was impactful for me. We do strengths versus skills, which is something you invented.

Brian Miller: I'm sure there are many, many other things. But today, Jane, we're going to talk about PCC markers. And you just went through a big certification process with the International Coach Federation.

Jane Creswell: I did, I did. I actually was really hesitant to go through this training and certification process. It was ... I got something like 34 CCEUs out of it. Almost all that I need for the whole three years, out of this one program.

Jane Creswell: And I didn't know if I really had that time to commit. But a colleague of mine who had gone through it back in the spring said oh Jane, you have to.

Jane Creswell: Certain people in your life, when they say you gotta do this, you gotta listen. And so I signed up and went through it.

Jane Creswell: And boy am I glad I did. I learned a lot through the process. It actually kind of ... the things that I learned in the process really kind of surprised me. I thought, you know, I got this.

Brian Miller: You're a Master Certified Coach.

Jane Creswell: Well.

Brian Miller: PCC markers, that's-

Jane Creswell: Just because you can pass that test ... actually back in 2003, when I think ... sometimes I have gone I think maybe the bar's higher now and I got to jump over the bar when it was shorter.

Jane Creswell: So I thought hmm, I don't know if I have this or not. But I had been an assessor before, years ago. I'd been an assessor and assessed people at ACC, PCC, and MCC level, so I thought, you know, am I going to learn anything new? Boy, was I surprised.

Jane Creswell: I learned a lot of new things. And so I'm happy to share about that, mainly because I get people who have been in like CAM classes years ago and who say well, I'm ready to go for my PCC now but I'm a little scared to do it because it's ... some people have said that they haven't been able to pass it since the usage of the PCC markers.

- Jane Creswell: And I think I understand a little bit more why. And so I'm happy to share with the audience, the CAM podcast audience, a little bit of what I've learned, in hopes that we'll have more PCCs who are out there representing Christ as coaches.
- Brian Miller: Oh, absolutely. We want PCCs. I think that's where at Coach Approach we would like people to be at. We're happy to help you get your ACC, we do it every day. But the PCC is the professional certification. It's a great place to be.
- Brian Miller: But it has significantly, I don't know if harder, but the bar has certainly been raised. I don't remember people failing PCC applications, I don't know how long ago, five years ago, ten years ago. Probably five years ago.
- Brian Miller: But today, you know somebody that's not passed the first time. I know several people.
- Jane Creswell: That's right. I think the PCC markers have been in place for I want to say four years. Our instructors shared with us their history, and they had been involved with not only doing the training and certification for PCC markers, but they had been involved in inventing them.
- Jane Creswell: And I want to say it was something like four years ago that that was put into place. So that'd be about right.
- Brian Miller: I love it. I love the eleven competencies. I just the more I look at those and look at other things outside of coaching, I wish competencies were listed as clearly in other fields. In preaching, in leadership, you know.
- Brian Miller: I'm actually working, my doctorate work, I'm trying to apply some coaching competencies to leadership because they really aren't defined.
- Brian Miller: And then the PCC markers, you know, as they might say, God bless them. They really kind of nuance the competencies. And say here's how you know. And I absolutely love that.
- Brian Miller: So what are some of the things you were surprised by?
- Jane Creswell: Okay, well here's the biggest one. And I kind of feel like I need to apologize to all the people I taught a CAM class to, because I said this backwards. So if anybody's remembering training that I gave, and I would say this and then I went through the PCC markers and then found out that that's not the way it is anymore. And I'm like oh, could I take back all those words from before?
- Jane Creswell: So I'm hoping kind of this is that, being on this podcast.

Jane Creswell: So the biggest thing is I used to tell people you can evaluate the effectiveness of your coaching by listening to the response of your client. You know? That you'll ask a question, listen to how they respond.

Jane Creswell: And if they can, you know, they might have to pause a minute to think and for that we would celebrate and say oh yeah, you landed on a great question that caused them to really have to think about things. But I would point people, coaches, to do what you're going to do, ask a question, make a statement, have some direct communication, whatever. And then listen for the response with the client and that's how you'll know how well you did.

Brian Miller: That makes sense.

Jane Creswell: And that-

Brian Miller: So this isn't right.

Jane Creswell: It's backwards. It is backwards. The way that we assess people now, and I can say we because I'm certified. But the way that we assess people going for PCC now is actually to listen to what the client offered. And that's the ICF language now.

Jane Creswell: Listen to what the client offered, and what does the coach do with what the client offered. And that's the way that a coach should evaluate their effectiveness.

Jane Creswell: And there's a couple of things that were happening erroneously or just not as effectively, weren't effective at evaluating a coach as well when you do it the other way around. When you listen to what did the coach say, which makes the assumption that what the coach said was right.

Brian Miller: Right, right.

Jane Creswell: And then how the client responds to that. The client could actually be not coachable. And you asked this brilliant, concise, powerful question, and if the client didn't respond well to it we would go oh, maybe I didn't ask a good question. Well, it might mean because the client was not coachable.

Jane Creswell: So the real way ... and it can go the other way too. It could be that the coach asks a really too long of a question, stacked questions maybe.

Brian Miller: Right, and you may get a good response from the client.

Jane Creswell: Yeah. Something from left field or whatever. And you could get a really coachable client who's actually been filling in the gaps of what the coach didn't say well. And answered it brilliantly.

- Jane Creswell: And then the coach walks away going I'm a good coach, because see? I evaluated how my client responded. And no, you just lucked up and got a really coachable person. So it could go either way.
- Jane Creswell: It could be the person's not coachable at all, or they're very coachable. Either case, it's not a predictable and consistent way to evaluate the effectiveness of coaching to see what the response is.
- Jane Creswell: But if you start with what did the client offer, what did the client say, and then from what the client said what are all of the responses that the coach could make. The coach might ask a question, the coach might offer direct communication, the coach might just be silent and let there continue to be more from the client.
- Jane Creswell: I mean ... And what words did the coach use. Did the coach use the client's words, did the coach fully understand the meaning of what the client intended? That's actually the way to evaluate the coach.
- Brian Miller: That makes a lot of sense.
- Jane Creswell: You know? It was like someone had knocked me over, and I lost my balance, even landed on the floor. When I heard it for the first time and the very first PCC marker class, and I went that makes such total sense. And it's so opposite of the way that I used to teach it.
- Brian Miller: Yeah.
- Jane Creswell: I would teach people to listen to how the client responds and that's how you'll know. And it's just not.
- Jane Creswell: And so that's the first and biggest thing that I learned in this training. And so now, when I listen to people's recordings and I only listen to the recordings if I have a transcript in front of me.
- Brian Miller: Which is required.
- Jane Creswell: It is required, but I now understand why. It's because I have to go ... the PCC marker process of assessing is often referred to as looking for evidence.
- Jane Creswell: And so the process is "What evidence of the markers are you seeing?" And so then it is I'm looking at the words in the transcript of what the client said, and then the words in the transcript, what is the evidence of the demonstration of each of the markers from the coach.
- Jane Creswell: And it's not a straightforward thing, because we all know this, you don't do the ICF competencies in a coaching conversation. They're not necessarily in an order.

- Brian Miller: No. Right. No.
- Jane Creswell: They're all intermingled and they're all happening at different times. And one statement by the coach, question or direct communication, either one, could count for multiple markers.
- Brian Miller: Oh for sure. It could be a direct statement, it could be creating awareness.
- Jane Creswell: Right, right.
- Brian Miller: It could be managing progress.
- Jane Creswell: It could be a demonstration of partnering, which is coaching presence. And so one really well placed response to what the client offers could get you, you know, some evidence for three, four, five markers.
- Jane Creswell: And so it's not straightforward, it's not sequential, and it's not a one-to-one type of thing that you're looking for. And so just because you have demonstrated a marker once in a coaching conversation, that's another thing that I learned.
- Jane Creswell: We actually expect demonstration of a lot of the markers multiple times. Enough times that the person who's listening to the recording and looking at the transcript would actually know. Yeah, the coach that I'm evaluating right now, they really know how to demonstrate this marker because I've seen it demonstrated five or six times in this coaching.
- Brian Miller: You're probably going to want to demonstrate multiple markers. [inaudible 00:15:27] something that I know this isn't accurate, but it makes me think I want to talk more if I'm the coach, so that I have more opportunities. Which I know is not right.
- Jane Creswell: No.
- Brian Miller: And I just interviewed a couple weeks ago LC Etheridge, who just got her MCC. And one thing she said is you ask fewer questions. You talk less at the MCC level.
- Jane Creswell: Yeah. Well, one of the PCC markers is talks less than the client. And so that, to get that marker, there has to be multiple times in the conversation where you can notice that the coach had opportunity to say more and didn't take it. And so it's an interesting thing.
- Jane Creswell: So probably the ... so this notion of what does the client offer and how does the coach respond, that was probably the biggest thing. The notion of you need to have ... show evidence of the markers multiple times for certain markers, for the marker to be marked.

Brian Miller: Like which ones?

Jane Creswell: Huh?

Brian Miller: Which ones?

Jane Creswell: Oh. Almost all of them.

Brian Miller: Okay.

Jane Creswell: Almost all of them. And so questions are going to get a whole lot more markers than maybe direct communication. But you want to have direct communication too. It needs to not feel like an interrogation.

Jane Creswell: And so for a coaching conversation to be more fluid and natural, there's a combination of questions and statements.

Brian Miller: I feel like when we train, and I don't know if it's a mistake the way we train, but when we start training coaches, they first start asking questions. So they'll hear the response of the client and they will formulate a question.

Jane Creswell: Right.

Brian Miller: And then it almost feels like later we say you know, you can make a direct statement. And they're like what? I mean I'm not supposed to, I'm supposed to ... no, no, no. We said right at the beginning, and I remember it's in class number four, that it's real early in the session of the first class I mean to say, that you can make direct statements.

Brian Miller: So is there a look for a plethora of ways of having conversation?

Jane Creswell: There is. And there's ... but there's also acknowledgement that every coaching session is unique. And so there's not a mathematical formula.

Brian Miller: Gotcha.

Jane Creswell: For well you got to have ten of these and seven of those, and whatever, demonstrating the evidence, because that would just be too mechanical and not really responding to whatever the client is offering. It's just not going to be predictable in that way.

Jane Creswell: But probably the next thing I want to point out, that was ... has a ... it's always been there. But it's new in its emphasis in the PCC marker process. And that is this notion of partnering.

Brian Miller: Oh, I love partnering. The number one thing I say that I've learned new from coaching is I mean I've known about the word partner. But partnering is a whole

new ... there's a lot of depth to that. And I could do a whole podcast. I've done it, but I would do another one with you.

Brian Miller: So I will stop talking. Tell us about partnering.

Jane Creswell: Well, so the interesting thing about partnering is what is the evidence that you have partnered. You know? How would an assessor who's listening, never met ... most likely never met the coach or the client, is hearing from them just via the recording and a transcript, for the first time.

Jane Creswell: But how do you listen to that and read the transcript of that and see evidence of partnering.

Brian Miller: How do you?

Jane Creswell: I feel like this is the place that I learn the most in the PCC marker training, was in not only how to listen for evidence of partnering, but also how to teach partnering.

Jane Creswell: And so part of it is in the listening to ... and this is where the ... you cannot hear partnering exclusively by the transcript. So you can notice that a coach asks a powerful question from the transcript.

Brian Miller: Yes. Yeah.

Jane Creswell: What the client said, you see what the-

Brian Miller: It's open-ended, it creates a lot of awareness. It's not a test question, we quote you all the time Jane.

Jane Creswell: All that.

Brian Miller: Test question, discovery question.

Jane Creswell: Yeah. All of that.

Jane Creswell: So but for partnering, you have to hear the inflection. So for partnering, you hear whether the client is getting to this vulnerable state where instead of ... well, let me share the contrast.

Jane Creswell: You know when you have coached people and you say, "What do you want to talk about today?" and they just kind of throw you a bone. It's like okay, "Well this is my time for my coaching appointment with my coach, I have no idea what I want to talk about but I know they're going to ask me what I want to talk about so I've got to offer something."

- Jane Creswell: But as soon as you hear it, as a coach, you go “That's not real. This is not really something that you want coaching around. You're not being vulnerable, you're not being ... it doesn't matter. You're just going through the motions” and we can hear that.
- Brian Miller: The topic should be something that is probably one of the most important things to you. And if it doesn't feel like that, it's not partnering.
- Jane Creswell: That's right. And you can hear this idea of dilemma in a person's voice. You hear if it really matters to the client or not. You know?
- Jane Creswell: And a lot of times in coaching conversations that doesn't come out at the first of the conversation, when you say “what do you want to coach around?” Then they might know well here's the broad topic, and so don't confuse that with them just throwing out something.
- Jane Creswell: We have it narrowed down. And so I'll put it in terms of the hourglass model, since that's the way I think and teach and all that.
- Jane Creswell: At the very top of the hourglass where the sand is at its widest in the hourglass model, we've just started the coaching conversation. You're not going to hear that vulnerability and how much the topic matters and all that kind of stuff. Maybe you are, but I think it takes some [crosstalk 00:23:13].
- Brian Miller: Unlikely, unlikely. I say lately I ask what is the topic, they tell me what the topic is, and I tell, when we train coaches, don't bite on that. That's not the topic. That is the tip of the iceberg and you've got to ask ... I love the hourglass because you've got to ask these discovery questions to find out what's under the surface.
- Jane Creswell: Exactly. The way that I say it is all you get from the answer to that first question is which hourglass. You know? But there's a whole lot of sand left to go through.
- Jane Creswell: So you've got ... I'm not saying that the client is not correct on what they've identified, it's just not thorough.
- Brian Miller: Not even close.
- Jane Creswell: We haven't done enough discovery yet. And so but somewhere in that still in the top part of the hourglass, before we've narrowed down to THE topic, is the discovery process that happens. And you start to hear this level of vulnerability and how important this topic is and how lost the person feels, or how stuck they are because they're... almost embarrassment or just frustration. That I haven't been able to grasp the whole thing.
- Jane Creswell: And I find, and I think you and a lot of the listeners could agree to this, is that when you really get on to it, there aren't always words to describe what this

level of frustration. So if you ... some of the techniques that we might use is well, "Put a label on that. How would you describe that?"

Jane Creswell: Well, that's a part of the discovery process but it's not already in existence yet. And so sometimes there just are no words for how tough of a situation this actually is. And you can hear that and then when that level of vulnerability, frustration, stuckness, all of that that we are describing here, is what's offered. Use that language again.

Jane Creswell: When that's what the client is offering, then the appropriate response to that is "I heard it, I heard the meaning. I'm trying to offer labels to what I hear, your frustration. I can tell you're really stuck." All these kinds of things.

Jane Creswell: That's a little bit of the partnering. But matching our pace, our tone of voice, our level of discovery. You can actually hear when you get to that point and that need for partnering with a client, you can hear the coach not having words.

Brian Miller: Well, I think there's a level of discomfort. Well, so I'm asking I guess, that for me to know that I'm partnering is I have a comfort level with their discomfort.

Jane Creswell: Yes.

Brian Miller: So there's a point where I see coaches, it's like I don't even know what to call this. And the coach is like I don't want to be here because I'm nervous now and I may not be able to get you anywhere and I don't want to look like a failure.

Brian Miller: But a partner coach would say "oh man, I'm here with you."

Jane Creswell: I am ... exactly. "I am here with you." And "I don't know either", you know.

Brian Miller: Exactly.

Jane Creswell: [crosstalk 00:27:00] and it's not that you have to say those words. There is nothing prescriptive about any of these PCC markers. So don't walk away from this conversation going oh, I'm supposed to say "I don't know either". Or "I'm supposed to say I'm here with you."

Jane Creswell: That's ... there's no prescriptive words or mathematical equations. But it is you are communicating "I'm here with you." You are... the message is coming across, "I am not going to leave you in this moment."

Jane Creswell: And that gets communicated in response to, you know, this level of stuckness. And it goes throughout the whole rest of the coaching conversation. "I'm still with you, I'm still with you, I'm still with you."

Jane Creswell: And so you're able to hear. And you know, a lot of times I would ... I think oversimplify coaching presence to say I'm emptying my mind of anything else

that I was thinking about and I'm totally with you. This newness in the PCC markers is not only that, that's the starting place, but not only that "I'm going to partner with you" and "through the thickest, toughest challenges that you have, I'm still going to be here."

Jane Creswell: It actually a lot of times, for those of us who are believers, I know this has been such an inspiration for me that I feel like this model of ... that the Father sent his Son for us because of this partnering. That there was this we are stuck and we cannot figure out God, we cannot figure out how to have a relationship with God, we can't figure out what does that look like on a day to day basis.

Jane Creswell: And in our stuckness, God's response was "I'm going to send Jesus."

Brian Miller: I'm offering partnership.

Jane Creswell: I'm offering partnership.

Brian Miller: It really does.

Jane Creswell: And it's this ... but this partnership that God offers us, that we can try to imitate, not going to come close but we keep trying, is this perfect combination of grace and truth that we can be with our clients.

Jane Creswell: And so for I think ... I personally think that coaches who are believers have an advantage. Because we can think of this partnering as that combo of grace and truth. [crosstalk 00:29:49]

Brian Miller: Believers who are comfortable with that paradox even, of grace and truth.

Jane Creswell: Yes. But we know what it looks like because we have Jesus's example.

Brian Miller: We can see it, right.

Jane Creswell: Of what that looks like. And so that's why I think we have an advantage. But that's what this partnering part of coaching presence in the PCC marker points me to.

Jane Creswell: You're not going to see any language about Jesus in the PCC marker.

Brian Miller: Right. No, but the people I've talked to [crosstalk 00:30:27] that are with the ICF, many of them are very spiritual in one way or another. And I find ... and I think to myself oh, I need to be a little careful of that.

Brian Miller: But if I've talked to them, I find no, it's good, it's a good spirituality in there. I can ... it's not just Christian necessarily, but there's a real openness to that.

Brian Miller: I was talking to one of the founders of actually the competencies. And I said, you know, I find it real easy to have ... to be a Christian within this. And he said thank you. You know? So I thought that's definitely a part of what they do.

Brian Miller: Jane, our 30 minutes are up. I cannot believe it. I should've not said as many nice things about you at the beginning so we had more time. But this has been so insightful.

Brian Miller: I have just enjoyed this conversation. Thank you for bringing it to us.

Jane Creswell: Oh, you're welcome. Well, that is the way I learn the best, is I think about how am I going to teach it to somebody else. And so having other people to share what I've recently learned with just helps refine my learning and solidify it more.

Jane Creswell: And so I appreciate the opportunity.

Brian Miller: Oh, it's good stuff. It's good stuff. Will you come back sometime? I'm putting you on the spot, the answer's yes.

Jane Creswell: Absolutely. Absolutely. I love to talk, Brian, you know that.

Brian Miller: If people want to get in touch with you, is there a good way to do it?

Jane Creswell: Yeah. My email is Jane@getpositive.today. Actually I have several emails, but that's one. And I'm happy to answer any questions or stay connected. I love those when people say "I was in your class years ago, can we catch up?" Those are really just flat out fun. So.

Brian Miller: Very good. Well thank you very much.

Jane Creswell: Thank you.