

TRANSCRIPT – THE WORDWISE COACHING PODCAST

SERIES 2 EPISODE 2: The Hybrid Coaching Model: A Game-Changer for Organisational Development WITH DR ANDREA KILPATRICK

Rachel (00:00:06) – Hello and welcome to the Wordwise Coaching podcast. I'm Rachel Goodwin, an executive coach, and for this series, I've chosen some of the common areas I focus on with clients and have invited fellow coaches and experts to explore them with me. In my work with clients, I aim to help them improve their performance in the workplace. It's really rewarding to see the difference coaching can make, and I'm now excited about reaching a wider audience, sharing experience and advice, and hearing your thoughts. So please do visit Rachelgoodwin.uk where you'll find suggested reading around today's podcast, the top tip summary and all the other episodes.

Today I'm joined by Doctor Andrea Kilpatrick, who you may remember from season one when she shared insights from her doctorate in confidence and leaders. Andrea is a highly experienced executive coach and has recently been involved in setting up an internal coaching program in a financial services organization. This is a different way of offering internal coaching, and I'm really intrigued to hear more about this hybrid model, which seems to offer a lot.

Andrea (00:01:21) – It's been welcomed at all levels. It's been supported from the very top.

Rachel (00:01:28) – So you didn't have to sort of go out and market yourself. Knock on doors.

Andrea (00:01:32) – No. And actually, the variety has really taken me by surprise. I feel like my ethical antennae are working really hard.

Rachel (00:01:45) – And we learn so much from every client we work with. And that is where the knowledge of the organization would be invaluable.

Hi, Andrea.

Andrea (00:02:07) – Hi, Rachel.

Rachel (00:02:08) - I'm really, really excited about hearing more about this. So first of all, could you tell us a bit about the benefits of this coaching model?

Andrea (00:02:16) - Yes, I think the biggest benefit is that I have been brought in as an external coach. So I'm not employed by the organization. And I work for this financial services organization for two days a week. But I'm an external coach who is being brought in to the organization for two full days. So I'm getting to know the organization really well, and I'm coaching a lot of people more than I would in my private practice within one organization.

Andrea (00:02:44) - So I think the biggest benefit is that I'm kind of external. But benefits of getting to know the organization really well as if I'm an internal person, but I'm not so embedded, and I can keep my objectivity and my sort of naive eyes, which I think are really helpful when you're coaching somebody. But equally, I've got to know enough about the organization to know the systems. Some of the issues, some of the cultural systems.

Rachel (00:03:07) - And so am I right in thinking you're also continuing working with other organizations?

Andrea (00:03:13) - Yeah. So for the rest of the week, I keep my own private coaching practice and that's, that's really busy. So I coach senior leaders, particularly in transition at points of transition. But the two are very separate. So that carries on as before. That's really busy then two days a week I dedicate entirely to this organization.

Rachel (00:03:29) - Really interesting. And what would you say are the benefits for the organization for them sort of offering this?

Andrea (00:03:38) - Well, I mean, this was set up, so I'm not going to name the organization, but this was set up because they had had some well-being scores that were not high enough, and they were concerned that they weren't offering enough for people.

Andrea (00:03:51) - So these are, you know, super smart, ambitious, bright people who work incredibly hard. And they I think the feedback they were getting was that they weren't well looked after enough. They needed other

support. So they brought in lots of things. But one key thing was that they decided they they did use some coaches anyway externally for some people, but they realized if they had an internal offering, they could offer it to far more people and give people that sense of, if somebody is here, I can go and talk to them. Now we've set it up and I'll talk about that in a minute as more of a structured program than a drop in center. But just that feeling of we have, so there are two of us who've been brought in, and it may change in the future to to more people. We can talk about why that might be necessary. But, you know, there are two coaches, and between us, we're coaching a good number of people in the organization. So it was primarily a wellbeing resource.

Rachel (00:04:40) - And also, I mean, it demonstrates that it is prioritizing because it's all very well doing those surveys. If you don't do anything in response to them, it's almost worse than doing not doing them at all.

Andrea (00:04:50) - Acknowledging there's a problem and sitting on it and doing nothing. No, and I really applaud them for doing that. And they took it super seriously. They, in fact, they brought in a headhunting firm to find the two of us. So we were headhunted into this role. So it was a very determined effort to find good coaches.

Rachel (00:05:06) - And has it been welcomed?

Andrea (00:05:09) - Yeah, it has. I mean, good question. Because, you know, these days most people know about coaching, but a lot of people, including really senior people had never had coaching. So probably if I look back, so we started we started it as a pilot in September and we ran that for six months. And then in the summer we reviewed it and realized it was working really well. So we've now embedded it and made it more of a for now, a permanent offering.

Andrea (00:05:32) - And I probably, if I look back, the early people who came to coaching were the more junior people in the main and then quite quickly, more senior people who were perhaps a bit more reluctant, including some also who'd had coaching in the past and or had been working with an external coach and had their own relationships so that, you know, they didn't need to or didn't want to jump straight in. But more senior people started coming on board. And now, you know, really very

senior people are asking for the coaching. So it's been welcomed at all levels. It's been supported from the very top, which is crucial. So one of the most senior individuals or a number of the most senior individual was one of the people behind this. So they realized there was a need. They talked about it. They made sure it filters through the organization in all their team communications and away days before we started, they talked about us coming in so that that's crucial, that sponsorship from the organization.

Rachel (00:06:23) - Yeah, absolutely.

Rachel (00:06:24) - So you didn't have to sort of go out and market yourself and knock on doors.

Andrea (00:06:28) - No, no, not at all. And in a way that's an important point. We it's a we're we're external but internal. But equally our role when we're there and I typically do one day in the office face to face and one day virtually. And a lot of these people work abroad or travel during the week. So the virtual works very well for them. But also it is important that we can meet when we can face to face. So when we're there, we are there as external consultants not joining in in the company. Well, we'll have lunch and we'll see people around, but we're not part of the furniture. And I think that's quite important. We can talk more about that.

Rachel (00:07:06) - And I mean, it is in many ways quite different to to the sort of form of coaching, of just having the individual clients from different organisations and maybe having a few from one organisation. And so what have you enjoyed about that different way of working?

Andrea (00:07:23) - Oh, I mean, actually I've loved it and I was a little bit reticent.

Andrea (00:07:26) - I'd be very honest to start with, I perhaps had some assumptions around it maybe being the same kind of level of individual, same kind of issues that I might be coaching and helping people with coaching on. And actually the variety has really taken me by surprise. And anyone can access coaching. So it's not a hierarchical thing, which is really important and really good. It's not just the, you know, the, the top leaders, for example. Yeah. And my specialism is that I really love coaching on like I researched in my doctorate is senior leadership and transition. And there are plenty of people who've come in from the outside who are very senior,

who really struggle to make that transition into this organization that's so fast paced. A lot is expected of them. So to have a coach to help them understand and help them settle. So the transition piece is there for me. But other things, the variety is incredible. You know, I've coached two women who've been on maternity leave. I coached them just before they went away.

Andrea (00:08:14) - I'm just coaching them as they come back. Others who are just struggling with other things,, work life balance or a particular transition that's come up and others who just want to talk about leadership, how they see themselves, they've never thought about themselves as leaders. They want to think about how they influence or have more impact or more authority sorts of things that you and I are quite familiar with, but I probably wasn't expecting quite so much variety, so I really enjoyed that more than anything. But equally, I also loved the consistency and the stability of having two days a week in an organisation and really getting to know that organisation, like you say, in a way that you just don't when you've got your own private practice. So even if you and I coach maybe a handful of people in one organisation and we might have done over years and years, you get to know an organisation. But unless you're spending two days a week there, understanding, feeling the culture, even because I based there for a whole day a week hearing about the initiatives that are going on, seeing some cultural things and themes really playing out in the coaching, which which we can talk about as well, but really helpful for us to, to be aware of, you know, that that's great.

Andrea (00:09:17) - So and I like the variety of with the consistency against my own practice. Yeah. Yeah. It's also really well set up. You know we've we've set it up well, the organisation has set it up well. But from an admin and a process point of view it now works. And versus my own practice as you know where you might be seeing somebody in different locations. You spend a lot of time traveling you know. So there's a kind of a an ease to it, I think actually, and a lower level of stress compared to some of my own practice work.

Rachel (00:09:46) - Because you can spend an awful lot of time on the kind of initial contracting with organisations. And if you're doing that with each separate organisation, it's not terribly efficient. So that efficiency piece hadn't really struck me. And also it made me think sometimes when I'm

doing sort of chemistry checks with clients, they will say, have you coached in this organisation? And it does make a difference, to be fair. I mean, a fresh pair of eyes is great, but to have some knowledge of the culture and the priorities and the context I think is very reassuring for clients.

Rachel (00:10:26) – They don't have to explain everything.

Andrea (00:10:28) – I think that's really important. And actually, you know, we took a lot of time to start with to have lots of meetings to understand terminology, things that were going on, to understand the business really well. You never really understand it until you've coached several people. but I know the levels, I know the promotion points in the year, I know the stresses around that. I know a lot of the individuals and and some of the other stresses that they that they have to deal with. And I think just to be able to say to someone, yes, I know about that or, oh yeah, I hear that that's stressful or difficult. Now there's another side to that, of course, is that, you know, I've, we've had to work really, really hard to ensure confidentiality the whole time. Yeah. And the other difficult thing, one of the most difficult things is how we work out who we're coaching and making sure that, as you and I would do in our private practice, we don't coach people who work too closely together.

Andrea (00:11:19) – And that is a practical difficulty when there are two coaches, which is why I said, you know, at some point maybe there would be a third or maybe more coaching a big number of people, because at some point you will be coaching someone who you heard about positively or negatively or who you know a little bit more about, and you either have to completely turn that off or sometimes be overt with the person who coaching say, I do know I have heard such and such. Obviously not. I've heard that person's dreadful and I'm going to tell you that. But you have to strike that balance. And I feel like my ethical antennae are working really hard, much harder than in any other work I've done.

Rachel (00:11:54) – Now I can see that that would be really, really significant. But as you say, as it evolves, there is the the sort of relatively easy option of bringing somebody, you know, other people in so that that becomes less of a conflict. But also I think it's fantastic because, you know, you must have a sense that you can work alongside this organisation and the culture is accepting of this offering.

Rachel (00:12:20) – Yes. And that, I think, is very important for the organisation too kind of as an offering.

Andrea (00:12:27) – You're right. And in, you know, and I know when we coach elsewhere in an organisation that's new to us or maybe new to coaching, and there's still plenty out there, we may be the first person to offer coaching for whatever reason, and actually getting people to understand the process, to accept it, bringing in the coaching sponsor, the line manager or whoever that is as part of a three way at the beginning and the end as we would both do, you know, that can be really hard to to embed, to sell, to get people to accept it. The process here now, I can't think how many months, eight months on, nine months on most people in the organisation know somebody who's been coached or and or will have been a coaching sponsor for somebody and they just have a sense of how the process works. And that is is so helpful.

Rachel (00:13:17) – Where would you like to just explain what's the difference between this and what we would think of as more conventional internal coaching?

Andrea (00:13:24) – It's a really good question. So, I wouldn't want to give, you know, the definition and there are several. But internal coaching is typically somebody who's employed by an organization. And there are plenty of organizations that have a lot of internal coaches. They can either be, but I think rarely still, full time coaches, and that is their job typically, I think, and you probably know more about this as well. But I think typically they are people who work in learning and development or a part of an HR function who have a day job that is not coaching, but they are trained as excellent coaches, so they will have part of their role as a coach. But they're not doing this all day long and and they are employed by the organization. So the difference is that we are external coaches, we are coaches, we go in and we just coach and we have other meetings around it and process meetings and admin meetings and thematic meetings where we feedback once a month the high level themes at a confidential level without talking about individuals, for example.

Andrea (00:14:20) – So there are other meetings, but other than that we are coaching all the time and I think that is the difference. But the other difference is we're not employed. We are consultants, you know, we may be

there in six months, may not be 12 months, may not be. But we try and keep that objectivity, which is the most important thing.

Rachel (00:14:35) – And also as opposed to the point that I do think is very interesting about the model that you've set up, is that blend of understanding the organization that you're, you know, working in, but also bringing all of the huge amounts of learning from other organizations.

Andrea (00:14:52) – Yeah, you're right. And I hear myself say a lot. Oh, actually, you know, last week I was coaching X individual and this came up or this comes up a lot in law firms where I'm coaching, when someone makes that transition to head of practice. And if it's around leadership and they've never thought of themselves as a leader, whatever it might be, and it's really you can see that the person I'm coaching is sort of listening and thinking, okay, so it's not just in this financial services organization or it's not just me and I build on, you know, I do that a lot and deliberately because I know that's really helpful where I can just share coaching stories if I can or but particularly to normalize some of the things that they're going through.

Rachel (00:15:26) – I do that a lot as well. And it it took me kind of a while to really grasp the fact that we do have that range of experience, and we learn so much from every client we work with because they're all different. But there are so many common themes. And I think that normalizing I can think of so often when I've done it and you can always see the client relax is kind of oh, okay. So this isn't unusual. Yeah. So I do think that is a huge benefit.

Andrea (00:15:55) – Yeah I agree. And in fact I've had clients before and I know that this was part of the the research I did showed for my doctorate that normalizing for senior leaders, what people were going through was a huge part of helping to rebuild confidence. But I've had clients in the past say, oh, do you know when you actually mentioned that? It made me realize it wasn't just me or I wasn't alone, or I really listened when you said that I agree with you. It's funny is that I was always reticent to say that. And the way I kind of thought my other work is just my other work, and obviously you can't mention anything to give away confidentiality. So in a way, maybe that maybe it was a confidentiality piece that made me reticent. But I've realized there's such a power and we've been coaching for such a long time. Why would you not share stories, whether it's just to normalize or

just to share experience when it's relevant, to help them understand themselves even more? Why would you not?

Rachel (00:16:43) – And even you can sort of say you can almost give a scale, can't you? You know, I've, I've worked with people under pressure, but I would say you really are at the extreme end of that. And that's hugely, hugely helpful. It's interesting I was thinking about this this morning. A lot of the people I've spoken to about the episodes that we did around your research and leaders and confidence. The response so often is I found it really reassuring.

Andrea (00:17:08) – Oh, really?

Rachel (00:17:09) – Yeah.

Rachel (00:17:09) – That sort of, you know, I felt alone and and I assumed that it was just me. But but I think that has been the overwhelming kind of takeaway for quite a lot of people from that episode.

Andrea (00:17:21) – Yeah, that's really good to hear. And then it's a reminder to all of us that it is helpful then to share the experience, because we coach senior people who, you know, think they're unique in what they're doing, not from a big headed point of view, but just this is my struggle and whatever it is, not just transition related, but my struggle. And then when you've got a coach, if you trust them and you trust that they're experts, and if you hear them say you're at the extreme end of this or maybe wouldn't use the word extreme, but, you know, in comparison to those I've coached before, I really think this is something that's really difficult. And I can see that, you know, and other people go through it too. But wow, what you're going through is really tough, whatever it might be.

Andrea (00:17:55) – But it's a good encouragement to all of us to do that.

Rachel (00:18:02) – I suppose what it would be really interesting to hear about would be, you know, what the structure is, how did you build it? And because it's obviously been a very comprehensive process. Yeah.

Andrea (00:18:13) – It has. Look, I tell you, what's made it really helpful is just the open mindedness of the particular senior individuals. I talked about sponsorship from the top, but the day to day involvement from people,

senior people in the organisation who we interact with and who we set this up with, they were very much we're bringing in coaches. You're the experts. What kind of structure do you think it could look like? And I'll talk through that. But you know anything we suggest we talk it really, really carefully through with them. But there's a lovely sense of you're the coaches, so what works and what doesn't work and why might it work and why might it not. So that's been crucial. So we've set up a process of six coaching sessions, which, you know, compared to perhaps some of our other clients isn't a lot.

Andrea (00:18:54) - Well, I know what you would typically do as well, but for me, I would often offer 12 hours of coaching or a coaching programme of 12 hours or however it's broken down. So this is a bit shorter. But of course it's a bigger number of people. And and for some we might extend as well of course. But typically it's six hour long coaching sessions once a month, mixture of hybrid and in-person and and virtual before they even come to coaching though, and this is important process piece, we created a document that asks them to reflect on why would you want coaching? Why now? What would you want to work on, you know, and why? So lots of questions to get them to fill that in and reflect on it. And for some people that filtered out, a few people who didn't really understand or thought that we would be helping them with something that coaching wasn't so appropriate with. And then the HR colleagues and there are a couple in the HR team would look at those and have a conversation with them.

Andrea (00:19:45) - So like a sort of screening process to make sure that they were ready for coaching, that they were thinking about the relevant things and then they would, so the HR colleagues would look at the two of us coaches and work out who they thought the best coach would be from a fit point of view, and then set up an introductory meeting with one of us. So it's a little bit unusual because there are two of us, isn't it? You call it chemistry meeting or introductory meeting. It's not, in effect, a real chemistry meeting. I mean, it is because we could both we, one of the coaches and the person coming to it could walk away and say, this isn't the right fit or this isn't right for me. But of course, I'm well aware that they are in the organisation. HR colleagues have said I think Andrea might be the coach for you, so it's quite difficult for them to do that. Yeah, it probably feels quite difficult for me too. Yeah. And we're learning that it shouldn't be because we should if we had doubts at that very early stage, like with the

chemistry meeting, we should also be able to say, I don't think this is quite right now, but that's been a bit harder.

Andrea (00:20:40) – And then we kick off with the coaching sessions. We've also brought in as part of the process, a three way early on in the coaching with what we've called a coaching sponsor. It's not always line manager, but,, the person we say that knows them and their work the best. And then we will continue the coaching sessions and then towards the end, not always, but sometimes review because six sessions isn't that much. It's not like a longer programme where the individual has got to what changes they've made, how they think they've progressed, how the other person would see some of those changes in the organisation. And then we have a very comprehensive review process at the end in the final session. So a document that they need to reflect on in terms of what they've changed, how they've committed to and made progress against the coaching goals. So it's kind of implicit. But we always set out very clear coaching goals that we're working on as well. And then and then review it in the final session.

Andrea (00:21:32) – And then that's either it or increasingly there's a suggestion of, well, let's either pick up again in the future if we need to, or maybe have an ad hoc, which is an advantage you can have being in the organisation ad hoc quarterly coaching session, which a lot of individuals we haven't started doing X, we're not quite there timing wise, but I've got a few planned for the next quarter and I think that will be really, really helpful for some individuals.

Rachel (00:21:57) – I think that is a fantastic offering actually, because often it's can be hard finishing a coaching programme, and especially if you know that there are certain, you know, milestones coming up or issues that are going to recur, maybe. And to just know that that can be on the table is fantastic.

Andrea (00:22:18) – It is. The caveat is, and I felt it the last few weeks I've been reflecting on this because I'm in the organisation. It's not a contract that finishes like with an external client. Yeah. And obviously then we can still extend sometimes if we think there's a real need.

Andrea (00:22:33) – Obviously we wouldn't extend for the hell of it and the organisation couldn't pay. This does feel different because potentially

coaching could be on tap. It feels harder and I'm thinking this through, but it feels harder for me to say, right, this is your sixth session. This is the end. We've reviewed it. Goodbye. I've noticed that it's tendency for me to say, you know, or then say, is that it? You're here. So could we have a session maybe, or for me to say, but, you know, you need to make a case to HR for more sessions or a. But but I'm around. Yeah. So I sort of heard myself saying that. So I think the continuation piece is harder, or the ending piece is much harder when you're in the organization.

Rachel (00:23:12) – You know, sometimes I just think it's good for people to know that that is a possibility.

Andrea (00:23:17) – I know.

Rachel (00:23:18) – You know, to carry it with them, even if they and then when they do lean in, there would be a very genuine reason for it.

Andrea (00:23:26) – Probably, yes. And to be fair, I do make that clear. I don't give that sense of, oh, I'm here. So you could just come whenever you want or you could just drop in. And I agree, I think it feels it feels lovely for me to be able to say, if you think it would be helpful, you know, I will be and I can't promise I will be there forever. But, you know, this is continuing this offering, whether it's me, whether it's someone else, but we've got this relationship and, you know, it might be quite feasible for you to have another session or more sessions in due course.

Rachel (00:23:52) – That is fantastic. And then you did mention about sort of reviewing themes and that sort of thing. How does that work?

Andrea (00:24:00) – Firstly, we have to be really clear. So we haven't talked a ton about confidentiality, but I've had to work really hard. We've both had to work really hard to reiterate confidentiality at every step with the person with coaching.

Andrea (00:24:11) – And so when I first start working with them, I do say this is entirely confidential. This is your coaching. Nothing comes out of these outside of these four walls. All I have where your name might come up is a weekly process meeting where we talk about who's in the diary and who's not. So this fantastic executive assistant who's supporting us, who organizes all the appointments, which is a godsend.

Rachel (00:24:33) – That's fantastic.

Andrea (00:24:34) – Well it's amazing. And also they move a lot so we wouldn't be able to just it would just be too much work, I think. Yeah. So we have a weekly process meeting where if I were coaching you, Rachel, you know, your name might come up because we just check that you're in the diary or if you've moved or whatever. So I want people to know that. And then then I also tell people that we have a monthly thematic meeting with the senior sponsors in the organisation, where we are contracted to work confidentially. We can't mention any individuals, but where there are themes that come up because of course they do.

Andrea (00:25:03) – And things we notice, particularly while we still have our our new quote unquote eyes to the organisation, is so helpful. My worry is at what point we become less new and we don't see things. But for example, there's a whole promotion period or review period at the sort of half yearly points. A lot has come up around that that we've been really aware of. That's huge anxiety, huge stress, huge need to prove yourself. Just things that we're seeing, common themes we're seeing amongst a number of clients. So it's helpful to feed those back. And I think I think they really value that because they're in the organisation. They've been in the organisation for so many years. It's really difficult to see some of the kind of the thematic difficulties, challenges and the good things, but it really helpful when we've been coaching a number of people to say, wow, I've spent lots of sessions coaching people around, having difficult conversations or being assertive or finding it very difficult to express themselves freely or being able to speak up in meetings, whatever it might be, so that I think is really, really helpful to offer back in.

Rachel (00:26:06) – And then would you offer something, a sort of a more general piece of almost training, maybe around that.

Andrea (00:26:13) – Maybe that's the next piece. So for example, we've talked about some leadership specific training. It's almost the bit that we just haven't got to we can't get to yet. And and you could argue actually, well, you should for sure argue that we couldn't then be involved at that level probably if we were coaching. But I think it could be really appropriate for us to at least help them shape something or share our ideas if they

were working with somebody else. So there's a piece there that's not fully explored yet.

Rachel (00:26:39) - I mean, because that is incredibly useful data. And also it's the sort of thing, you know, when you were talking about if it's appraisal period and that sort of thing, often, you know, you can hear people talk about it and you think if there was just one extra step in that process. Yes. Or if that was phrased slightly differently, the impact would be dramatic and to be able to share that.

Andrea (00:27:00) - So an example of that small piece. And again this is something that came out of my doctorate research. So maybe it's more in my mind than than reality. But the research is there. But they are like so many organisations, perhaps not good enough at giving feedback, ad hoc feedback, affirming feedback. They're quite poor at sharing that. So actually I was coaching a very senior leader in the organisation who I was just astounded. In fact, it's come up quite a lot, just hasn't had, other than the twice a year review period, hasn't really had anyone saying, you're doing all right, well, you're doing really well, you're doing a really good job. And I had a monthly thematic meeting and one of the senior sponsors talked about that person said, I've heard such good things. And I just looked at her and I said, have you ever told her that? Yeah. And she apparently went away and did it, and it made an enormous difference. So it wasn't me sharing. I wasn't saying, oh, you know, I'm coaching that person and they really struggle with that and they really need it.

Andrea (00:27:53) - It was just a very light touch. Have you actually said that to that person. And so and then we've talked more generally about how feedback is taken and even how. The review process. You know, if there are any, any things that could be slightly tweaked in the review process to reduce some of the anxiety?

Rachel (00:28:08) - Because I just think often in these organizations, people are incredibly busy. And it isn't that the the intention is not to do the best they can in terms of people leadership, but just having things flagged up occasionally will make it more part of the culture. So there is the opportunity to have really make a difference on that level.

Andrea (00:28:30) – I really hope so. It feels a little bit soon to to know that, but I can see the the seeds of what we're doing at a bigger level, and we're thinking about the systemic piece all the time in the work we're doing. And my, my biggest aim would be to support individuals and to make more impact at a, at a bigger level as well.

Rachel (00:28:47) – But I think, you know, often I hear now about, you know, that there is the sort of the fight for talent and attracting people and people wanting to know about what development they're going to get. So I think in that respect, it's a very good sign.

Andrea (00:29:01) – Well, so what I don't know is when new people are coming in now and being recruited, I would hope they are. But whether they're talking about this and saying, you know, we have a stable, supportive coaching offering with highly experienced external coaches who are part of us, but they're external and that would be something you could use and have if you wanted to. I actually think, and again, this is me being the senior leader transition drum. But I actually think for senior people coming into the organisation, it should be a standard offering there because I've seen a lot of people who just struggle. They often come from quite different roles into what they're doing and they for so many reasons, they find it very, very difficult.

Rachel (00:29:38) – And that is where the knowledge of the organisation would be invaluable in terms of supporting through that transition. I mean, everything that you the way you talk about it, it does sound like it's been very well integrated, because I think the danger with something like this could be an organization would think. And this can happen with coaching more generally of that's the problem. We'll give it to them and they can sort it out.

Andrea (00:30:09) – So but it's a really good point. There has been perhaps a piece around that. So we've had to be quite firm and push back occasionally and say, this feels like it's a passing the buck and something that actually should have been dealt with a while ago. It's just human nature, I suppose, and busy people, but it can be very easy to kind of not address something or not really realize how much you need to address something. And then the coaches are there and even it would happen probably with external coaches that happens to you and I and other roles.

But certainly there have been a few instances where we scratch our heads and think this this shouldn't be something that we're now trying to help them sort out.

Andrea (00:30:41) - So yeah, I think that's that's a common issue wherever.

Rachel (00:30:43) - And it's one of the areas that you really have to address when you're starting out with a coaching assignment that is this the right thing? Yes. Or is this just something that's been passed over?

Andrea (00:30:56) - But that said, I mean, I can think of plenty of examples here where we've been able to say to someone, look, let me help you to structure a conversation with that person. So you go back and have the conversation that you really should have had, or go back to HR and have that conversation and get something done about this. So actually, that feels perfectly right and appropriate and really helpful. But there are some sort of sometimes wider things that coaching just shouldn't be able to help with.

Rachel (00:31:27) - And so what would you say are we've maybe touched on some of this. What would you say are some of the challenges?

Andrea (00:31:33) - Yeah. Look, it's a good question. We've touched on a few. One of the challenges that's reared its head is you know, how many people can you work with? What's what's the capacity? Yeah. So I tend to be you know, I want to put my hand up and say, fine, I'll do this, and I can do that, and I can do too much. And yeah, that person sounds really interesting. They're on the waiting list oh it's okay, I'm quite full, but I'll work with them. I want to support them. And I've realised that it's not even just a numbers game. It's a head space issue. So I've got to the point. I know now what my capacity is, and I got to the point where I just, I thought, I've got alongside my own private practice. I cannot carry any more in my head, even if I'm only seeing these people once a month. And it works out across the two days, I'm not completely back to back. Across the two days I am often when I'm in the office typically, and they're really heavily charged days.

Andrea (00:32:24) - And you could argue that's not great for coaching. You need more space. So for example, I would a busy day might be I see four clients and have other meetings around it and maybe an introductory

shorter session, that sort of thing in a day. Yeah, but my virtual day may not be as full, so it's not like the two days are completely back to back. But nonetheless, if it's a number of individuals, say 18 that I'm coaching at one time, that's probably the limit. Someone else maybe could have more. Somebody else will only be able to have fewer than that. So but it's the head space and the time to prepare and really hold that person and think about the best work I can do. That's been a sort of unexpected challenge. Yeah, I think I've said I worry about the being able to remain objective and external, and of course I still will from a sort of contractual point of view. But I just sometimes think, am I going to get too drawn into this organisation? Would I be able to see things as keenly as I could in the early days? There's a little piece that's a challenge around being in the organisation being seen.

Andrea (00:33:22) – So, for example, you and I won't have this with our individual work, but when we're working with a client in an organisation and we go into the reception, we typically meet the client in either in the organisation or probably for both of us, more outside in our own meeting room outside of their organisation. So we don't have that issue of bumping into someone or this organisation is fantastic at offering lunch and coffee and things. So there are communal spaces where I will go to grab my lunch, for example, and I might see two people that I coach. And so I always have that moment of do I say hello? Do I acknowledge that I'm working with them or do I not? And of course, it's not human nature not to. But equally I don't want them if they're standing with colleagues for their colleagues to know that I'm coaching them now because a lot of people have coaching. I don't really think it's a problem, but there's definitely something around maintaining my, my boundaries, confidentiality on behalf of the client.

Rachel (00:34:11) – And this is easier because what I was thinking about, you know, often I think we try and see clients offsite. So we have a meeting room that they come to. And I do think that there is a difference because I know for threeway meetings, I go into the organisation and there is a difference because they have switched off. They've probably had to travel for a bit and there aren't. I mean, if you have a private room, there isn't so much distraction, but sometimes there are. There is a sense that they're not fully present, maybe at the beginning. So have you found that a bit of a challenge at all?

Andrea (00:34:45) - I have a little bit, but we're on a floor that's quite removed from their own floor, which is really helpful. So you have to travel, you know, to that floor. I agree with you though. My in my other work, I pretty much always meet people in a meeting room that's external, that's, you know, maybe a ten minute walk away.

Andrea (00:35:01) - And I like the fact that they've got that time to reflect. Funnily enough, I was expecting that to be more of an issue, and I thought people would arrive flustered with the head, not in the space at all. And in the main I haven't found that much. And actually the other thing I've been really pleasantly surprised by, given that these are super busy people as well, and that they're right there, is that people come and honour the session. We've worked quite hard to set that up in terms of, you know, creating a contract where we really reiterate how important it is to come and that they would lose a session, etc., like we would do with external clients, but it would be much easier for someone busy in the organisation just to send a minute, an email a minute before to say, oh, I can't come today because I've actually had very little of that. There's something around as well as working with confidentiality at the beginning when we're coaching them, reiterating that we're not part of the system and we have no role in appraisals, development, no power, no capacity to influence their promotions, etc. and that's that's been really important to to draw out, I think, for people and I think they knew, but some people might come to this thinking maybe my coach could put in some good words, or maybe my coaches are in those meetings where they discuss this and we're going to get promoted. So that's been really important to distinguish. Yeah, I know.

Rachel (00:36:11) - That separation is obviously really important. It's interesting, you know, the whole capacity point because, you know, when you sort of say about back to back and, and I know myself, I have several clients in a day. It's very, very exhausting. You can be very energized in the sessions, but it's at the end of the day you think, oh, that was pretty full on, especially if you're traveling as well. But there is something that I hadn't considered about that. You've got somebody who's making all the appointments for you, and there is a familiarity with the environment, and that does make a difference. To balance that out, I suppose it does.

Andrea (00:36:53) - There's something I feel that I kind of turn on a or maybe I'm matching their culture when I go there, but a kind of a part of

me that's like, right, brace yourself. Here we go. This is a really long, hard day. Yeah, it always is every week.

Andrea (00:37:06) – And there's just what I do. And I manage myself fine in that I don't have big spaces for reflection. I try and make my notes after I've seen someone while it's fresh. I try and take time to reflect beforehand before they come in and sort of get myself ready. But it is true. The impact is, you know, on the train, on the way home because I commute like you to London, I'm exhausted and the next day is my virtual day. And actually, I think sometimes I'm partly recovering for the first hour or so., but fine. And that's good reflective time. It does feel different. The pace feels very, very different to my own work. But sometimes I'll be in London seeing, like you, a couple of clients in different places. And actually, that's the stress in itself of setting myself up somewhere, basing myself somewhere, moving somewhere else, going into an office, somewhere else. So I do the ease of this from that point of view, I really appreciate.

Rachel (00:37:52) – But it also sounds like two days is the right, anymore and these challenges could be greater. Could it be? Yeah.

Andrea (00:38:01) – So I haven't tested it. It could be that the organization say and we've sort of thought about this, you know, this is such a success. People are really putting their hands up. We've got a big wait list. Could we ask you to do more or obviously bring in another coach, which is probably the better answer. But, you know, could both of you as coaches be doing more? I couldn't because my other the rest of my practice is too busy. But one of the other reasons is I don't want to lose that. I don't want to become too embedded. And I think anymore you risk that the more people you take on.

Rachel (00:38:30) – Yeah. No, I think that's a really interesting point, and probably one for the organization to be aware of as well, that you want to keep the balance between the two styles of working and that, and there's huge benefit for everybody in that.

Rachel (00:38:47) – So do you think this is going to be something that we're going to see more of?

Andrea (00:38:51) – You know I don't know. And I think this has existed. So the other coach I'm working with had done something similar in a very

different sector in another firm. So I think perhaps it does exist. And it'd be really interesting to hear people are listening if they're doing something similar, but I don't think it exists a lot. I think it's typically you're an internal coach or an external coach. So for example, before doing this podcast, I got hold of Catherine St John-Brooks' internal coaching Bible, and she's written a lot about internal coaching, but that is very much based around the traditional model of someone who's employed and either fully coaching or part coaching. And this is a new model in terms of being part internal, part external. I think it's great, you know, that the benefits we've talked about to the organization, the benefits to us as coaches in terms of stability and being able to offer something that's, you know, half and half, I think is great.

Andrea (00:39:42) – And I think it would be wonderful to try all this in different sectors, different organizations, this sector, it works particularly well in I wonder in others. And also we haven't talked about this, but obviously financial services organizations typically would have bigger pockets to pay. This is an expensive, you know, two coaches two days a week and using the resources and the meeting rooms and having the admin support. Yeah, it's a big spend and not for profits or other organizations probably just couldn't justify that. So so there's a piece that's that's relevant there. And the other piece we haven't talked about is our support through supervision.

Rachel (00:40:14) – So how have you approached that?

Andrea (00:40:16) – We realized that it was really helpful to have supervision. Obviously I have my own supervision. The other coach has her own supervision, but I felt really strongly that it was important that we had supervision together. So whether you call it group supervision or just supervision with the two of us, but it felt really important we had that space every six weeks, eight weeks or so to be able to reflect on either individual clients and or how we were working together and or the bigger thematic things that were impacting us, so that we could distinguish between systemic things or our own issues when we were struggling with things, with clients.

Andrea (00:40:50) – So we set that up. I put an advert on LinkedIn through my coaching supervision network, and had a number of conversations with

different supervisors, both of us, and we chose one who we've been working with, who's great, who we've seen several times since we started, and it's been supported by the organization. So they pay for it financially. They know it's important and we've just found it invaluable. So I still have my own supervision with my own supervisor and peer supervision. But this this is very different.

Rachel (00:41:16) – Yeah. No, that does sound incredibly important to have that external check in. Yes. Yeah. And and one that you share with your the coach so that there is, there's that sort of eye across the bigger piece. Yes. There was one thing that struck me when you were talking earlier about the fact that there is sort of a throughput of people and you're going to build up a significant population of people who've had coaching. And I was just thinking about a women's program that I run and have been running for quite a long time in an organization what's amazing now is there's hundreds of people now that have been through that, and they've formed an alumni group. It wouldn't be the same in this situation. But that does develop a language. I think that could be so powerful. Really? Yeah.

Andrea (00:42:04) – Yeah. I agree with you. Whether it's yeah, the language, the themes, the areas really helpful. The question, I suppose to when you were saying that I was thinking actually for this organization and I don't want to give specifics and give a sense of size, but at some point, you know, will there be maybe same with the women's program for you? Will there be a saturation? Will we have reached other than new people coming in? You know, a bulk of the number of people who would ever want coaching. So at what point is it stop or Peter out.

Rachel (00:42:30) – But but I think that is actually a very that's another benefit in a way of this process because you're not employed and you are continually reviewing it. And it could be that, you know, things change or whatever or a lot of people have been through, and there's new mechanisms now for that sort of development, and then it's fine because it'll end. Yeah, yeah. Or it's reduced. There is huge flexibility with it, isn't there.

Andrea (00:42:57) – Yeah. And because this is a pilot, it was opened up to a main part of the organization. My sense is there are still international pieces and a big chunk of the organization that for whatever reason, wasn't

part of it initially. So I feel like it may shift at some point and include other parts of the organization.

Rachel (00:43:15) – Well, I do think hearing more about it. I just think it's really, really interesting. And it does seem to me the way you talk about it, the impact it's had, the benefits on both sides. It feels like a very obvious way of going about offering coaching support. I do fully acknowledge what you say about the fact that it's not necessarily the cheapest way of approaching it, but is very comprehensive.

Andrea (00:43:39) – I think so, and I think, you know, I wouldn't want to say, great, everyone should roll this out for all those reasons but I think it needs to be done carefully. It needs to have the right people and the right level of experience, and constantly the right care around capacity, confidentiality, boundaries. You know, all of those things, though, that's absolutely paramount.

Rachel (00:43:58) – And also, the really crucial point that you made at the beginning about this sponsorship from the top, because unless it comes with real sincerity and commitment and it's not we're trying to do this as cheaply as possible as a bit of a sticking plaster for a while, and it doesn't feel like that at all in this situation.

Andrea (00:44:16) – It doesn't. And then the final piece really is, as you were saying, I was thinking, actually, the other piece is that they've been very open, so open to us and our suggestions, but also it's been set up as this is coaching for you to use how you would like. It's got to be appropriate, as in it's got to be around you to be the better self at work. But they were very generous and very open at the beginning, saying, you know, if someone's struggling with becoming a new father, obviously maternity things that will impact them through home, that will impact their performance at work, that is relevant.

Andrea (00:44:46) – We want the best people doing the best work, so if you can support them and they come to you and say, or even I'm supporting an elderly parent at home and that sort of thing, and I'm struggling then, then that's what you need to work with people on. So they've never, ever said, you must go and see Andrea and get some help and support on you

being the best leader possible or managing your workload better, whatever it might be. It is not. They've not been prescriptive.

Rachel (00:45:08) - No, that is fantastic. Are people ever referred or is it all self-referral?

Andrea (00:45:13) - Good point, I missed that. Yes. So in the beginning of the process is a mixture. Most people are putting their hands up, which is obviously great because then you've got people who genuinely know that they would like to explore coaching for themselves. Some people at the beginning of the programme had been maybe on a waitlist for external coaching and hadn't quite got there, or were sort of being put forward by others in the organisation because there was something that they that was holding them back at work, but with their knowledge they were being put forward.

Andrea (00:45:39) - As we go through sort of the biannual review seasons, I think there are a couple of people through that that have discussions around, have you thought about coaching? Have you ever had coaching before? Do you think now might be the right time for you to have coaching? So sometimes this is a sort of a gentle tap on the shoulder, but I've certainly not coached anybody who has been sent to coaching and who's who's unwilling.

Rachel (00:45:59) - Well, that's huge in itself. I mean, because, you know, that can happen.

Andrea (00:46:03) - It can happen and it doesn't. It very rarely works, doesn't it? No.

Rachel (00:46:07) - No, not not often.

We've covered a lot today, so let's take a look at some of the learning and tips we can take from this conversation.

- It seems like this coaching offering has significant benefits for the clients, their organization and the coach.
- The organization can demonstrate a consistent, high quality coaching offering for their employees to support their well-being and performance.

- The organization and coaching clients benefit from the experience and broad perspective the coaches bring from their private practice, but also know that the coach understands their organization well.
- This isn't a permanent arrangement, so it can be adapted and scaled up or down according to need.
- The clients can be assured of the independence of the coaching and of confidentiality.
- The scale of the coaching and its consistency, alongside the alignment between the organization and the coaches, enhances the overall impact of the coaching.
- The coaches and the organization can co-create the structure of this offering, and the coach has a consistent source of work and time to fully understand the organization.
- Coach admin is reduced as the organization takes some of that on and the work takes place on site.
- Coaches can work together and share experience and support one another. They can have shared supervision.
- However, all of this is only possible if there is real commitment to this offering from senior stakeholders and clear communication by them to the organization. It takes time and skill to establish this offering from both the coach and the organization, and significant financial investment on the organization's part.

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Well, look, I really do think this is so interesting, and I will be continually checking in with you to, to hear how it's going because I think it's fascinating.

Andrea (00:48:29) - Thank you. We'll keep talking. Thank you so much for asking me to talk.