Module 10 Audio Transcript Coaching Session Part 1

Coach 0:00
So Sarah, as we do our work today, is there anything you want or need from me in particular before we begin?

Client 0:09
No, I don't think so. I have a topic I was thinking of, but if you want to start there.

Coach 0:15
Okay, so what is the topic for our call today? Okay, so I'm hoping to talk through a problem that is starting to feel existential for me, and is coming up a lot lately.

Client 0:28
I think it's especially coming up because at my job I have a performance review in a couple weeks, where I know I'm going to be asked how I want to grow in my role and how I can be supported, but the thing is, I know that I'm really good at my job. I really do believe that I'm a strong team member. I'm told by my team that I have potential to be a future senior leader, and I do believe them,

Client 0:52
but I feel stuck because I don't even know if being a senior leader is what I want or if it's just the path that I've put myself on, I don't even know if that truly excites me. So I feel stuck when I'm thinking about what I want to do, even over the next year.

Coach 1:10
I heard you say existential. I heard you say you've got a performance review coming up, and you feel stuck. I mean, you said that you know you believe you're good at your job, you're given that feedback, and that you feel stuck because you're unsure if being a senior leader is what I want. Is that right?

Client 1:29
Yeah, definitely. Is

Coach 1:31
there anything else I need to know before we begin working on the topic you've just shared?

Client 1:36
I mean, I think the only other thing that's important to note is, like, I'm 27 I still have so much years ahead of me and a career ahead of me, so I don't even know if I'm too forward thinking, but I'm pretty young.

Coach 1:52
So, you're wondering if you're too forward thinking?

Client 1:56
Yeah, maybe.

Coach 1:58
Okay. Why is that important to address a resolve.

Client 2:04
I don't know if I'm getting too hung up on the idea of something I want or don't want that's very far away, or if I need to just be more focused on taking one step at a time, I guess.

Coach 2:21
And so if you were to have resolution on this topic, right, the existential topic of being being stuck and having a performance review coming, what's the outcome you'd want to achieve in this coaching session?

Client 2:35
I think I'd love to have more clarity on what I truly want for myself and therefore be able to voice what I want, even just within the next year in my performance review,

Coach 2:52
so just as you shared, you know the topic and why it's important. What are you becoming aware of?

Client 3:00
I think I think I am becoming aware of the fact that it's a lot to try to figure out my whole future right now, and that feels daunting and kind of impossible, so I feel like I'm becoming aware that I need to take it in smaller chunks.

Coach 3:26
You need to take it in smaller chunks, and what smaller chunk would you take?

Client 3:36
I guess, for me, rather than thinking 20 years into the future, what do I want in one or two years? I guess is more reasonable, just so that I can actually motivate myself to have a goal to work towards that I actually believe in.

Coach 4:01
Would you be open to an observation?

Client 4:05
Please,

Coach 4:06
you ended your last sentence in a question.

Client 4:11
Did I?

Coach 4:13
And I'm wondering, what's the question you're trying to answer here,

Client 4:22
I The question I'm trying to answer is, what do I want for myself, not for others,

Coach 4:38
and when you say, what do you want for yourself, are you still referencing your professional career?

Client 4:45
I think so. Yeah, because I feel like in my career I've had the type of career where I've been thrown into these amazing opportunities and I get put on this ride and I've. Been able to get promoted pretty consistently, and rise, rise, rise, but I feel like I never stopped to say, what am I actually chasing here?

Coach 5:12
Okay, and so we started with this topic of, you know, the performance review, and feeling stuck, and I've heard you make a pivot to the question around what do you want for yourself professionally.

Client 5:26
Yeah, I think that's true.

Coach 5:31
Okay, and go ahead.

Client 5:33
I think the performance review felt like a, like it triggered this thought of like, oh my gosh, where am I going, and what is everything, but I feel like it is that bigger question of what do I want for my career.

Coach 5:47
You mentioned you voiced, feel like you're on this ride, going, going, going, and so what else, besides the performance review, has caused you to kind of look up and say, oh, here I am, you know what about this moment?

Client 6:00
Yeah, it's a good question. I think probably my last role change was definitely that moment for me, where I guess in the last year I got promoted up. I was managing a network of contractors, and it was kind of that thing that I had been telling my boss that I wanted to do, and then it was given to me, and I said, "Okay, wow, I'm here. And then I looked at my coworkers, and they were all 1015, years older than me, and I was like, "How did I get here? They all worked so hard to get here, and I'm just here. So, I think that was definitely a sudden realization for me.

Coach 6:49
What was the realization?

Client 6:54
The realization was that I am on a rocket ship to something, and I think there was a realization that I am capable, but I think that there was also this moment of I have no idea what's next, like I had this goal and I reached it, and I think I'm still feeling that way a year later,

Coach 7:20
so I want to come back to the concept of, you know, what do you want for yourself? You've mentioned, you know, you've been on a rocket ship, you know that you're capable, you know, you feel like, you know, at 27 you've achieved what other people

that are 15 years your senior have achieved, and you have no idea what is next. And so I want to come back to what is causing this moment of reflection?

Client 7:47
I think I think it's two things. I think one is the fact that I know I'm going to be asked in a couple weeks what you want to do next. I think it's also the fact that I've now been in my current role for a year now, and usually based on the rate at which my career has progressed, things shoot off within a year of each other, so it's like every year is a big change or a big step for me, so maybe that's also part of what's triggering it, is the timing.

Coach 8:26
Okay? Would you be willing to just work with me through a kind of a thought process here for a minute?

Client 8:36
Sure.

Coach 8:37
Let's say the performance review wasn't on the table, and you know you didn't necessarily measure your success in time. If I were to ask you right now, where are you in your career, what would you tell me?

Client 8:54
I think I would say I'm pretty far along in my career, I'm making the salary I always wanted to make. I have authority and decision-making ability, and I feel really proud of that. I'm very proud of my career. I would say I'm far along in my career.

Coach 9:19
Okay, so you have a good salary and decision making authority.

Client 9:27
Yes, and I, I like my team, I like the people I work with.

Speaker 1 9:33
I feel like I

Client 9:33

have everything, I feel like I have everything I need to be satisfied with my job. So it's almost like, what am I climbing to if I'm happy here?

Coach 9:46
So, what isn't resonating with you right now?

Client 9:53
I feel like I'm the type of person who always needs the next thing to jump to, and I feel. Unsettled, not having it.

Coach 10:02
Okay, you're saying jump towards something in which you just described to me what's important to you is a good salary decision making authority and a team with which you function in a way that makes you feel uplifted and supported, correct? So, what's missing do I

Client 10:23
mean, I think that there are there's milestones that I could see that would be missing, like there's next steps I could see that I don't know if I want, like having a direct report, for example, like if I was managing someone and doing a good job, and I was a good manager, that would probably be fulfilling, and it's not an experience that I've had.

Coach 10:49
What else

Client 10:55
can you repeat? The question,

Coach 10:59
sure, we had talked about what you said was important to you, you know. You, I had mentioned salary, decision making, authority, having good teammates around you. And then I asked, what's not present right now? And you said having a direct report isn't present right now. What else isn't present right now that's important to you right now in this moment?

Speaker 1 11:22
Oh.

Client 11:26
I think that there's still, I guess, going back on the decision making authority, I think there's still an element of that that I don't have, like I don't know if I fully feel empowered all the time to make decisions. I don't think that for a lot of things I am the point person for a decision. Still, I have to go through other people to make sure that it's the right decision. I think also I don't even know if it's something that's missing, but I just feel like the work environment that I'm in is so stressful, and I really don't want more of that. I want less of that. I want more calm in my life and network,

Coach 12:23
and what else?

Client 12:32
I mean, I guess you always want, theoretically, more money, always want that glory of the next highest title, but it's not a priority. I feel like that's everything.

Coach 12:46
Okay, so if we were going to rank these four things - direct report, more empowerment for decision making, less stress, and more money - how would you rank those?

Client 13:01
Probably. probably empowerment first, followed by less stress, followed by more money, followed by direct report. If I'm following my heart and not what I think I should do.

Coach 13:24
Okay, so more empowerment, less stress, more money, and a direct report in that order.

Client 13:32
Yeah,

Coach 13:34
so when we started this, you talked about feeling stuck and you're not sure what you want or don't want, and you really wanted clarity for yourself, and I'm wondering, what are you becoming aware of? Just as you share this,

Client 13:52
I think even in making the list, I think I'm aware of smaller things or smaller tweaks that could make me feel unstuck, like I think when I think of what I need in my career, I think about these specific things to ask for, right, like more money, a different title, next responsibility, but I'm wondering if there are small things that are making me stuck, like not feeling empowered enough, that if I communicated that effectively with my manager, or if I overcame that, that that that is some sort of milestone to cross.

Coach 14:36
Okay, and how does this answer the question that you'd posed in the beginning around being forward thinking and the need to forward think around what's next, and kind of not knowing.

Client 14:51
I think I mean, I think there's always going to be some not knowing, and I think that that's inevitable. And I think I don't know if it, I don't know if it solves that big question of do I want to be a leader one day, but I think it does provide clarity that I probably, given how low I write direct report, I probably don't want to be a leader right now, that there is some freedom in that clarity I

Coach 15:23
Yeah, that's interesting. Can I share an observation?

Client 15:27
Yeah,

Coach 15:28
as you were talking, I looked down, I was like, oh, she drank direct report fourth, so does she really want leadership right now? So, when you said it, it just made me smile, and I heard you laugh.

Client 15:40
Yeah, because I think when I think about what the logical next step for my career is, if I'm thinking on that year pattern, it's okay. What do I ask for next? What don't I have? A direct report, that's something I should ask for, but then if I ask for that, I'm getting more stress, which also I said I want less of, so I feel like it's not what I truly want, that's what I would do if I was just following this ride that I think I'm on. If that makes any sense,

Coach 16:09
makes complete sense. So, rather than following the ride, it sounds like you're you are now at a point where you're you have clarity to direct the ride.

Client 16:17
Yeah, I guess so. And I think that's why I need empowerment, like before I even want something like a direct report, I need to feel empowered to lead someone,

Coach 16:30
and so when you go into the conversation around being more empowered and having less stress, what specifically would you like to address or resolve with your manager, I

Client 16:43
I think you know it's a conversation that I've had with my manager before that is probably worth revisiting, which is this idea of letting my manager step away. I feel more empowered when my manager, like, pushes the bird off the cliff and lets me fly, and isn't, you know, pinging me with a task before I've had a chance to read it, and sometimes I feel nervous going to my manager and saying, "Hey, you don't need to ping me about this, I'm on it, but I feel like if I created that pattern of "Hey, let me go, and seeing it actually get done, I would feel more free, and I think that's the feedback conversation I could have with him.

Coach 17:32
Would you be open to some feedback,

Client 17:35
please?

Coach 17:36
You said, you know, let my manager know that he needs to step away, and what I'm hearing, and what you're saying is an opportunity to communicate differently about what you want, so it's less about his action and more about what you want to bring to the table,

Client 17:51

that that is an astute observation, and is true. I think you're right. I need to, I need to frame it more as what I can do, and I think it is that I want to make a decision. I want to not question it once I've made it, and let whatever is be

Coach 18:22
and did it feel to say that

Client 18:25
it felt empowering? I think I'm often held back by fear of making the wrong decision, or for lack of a better word, getting in trouble because I made the wrong decision, and I just want to know that I'm backed, even if I make the wrong decision, because we made a decision and we moved forward,

Coach 18:42
okay. So I heard you say in this next conversation you want to make a decision, you want to own it, and what else?

Client 18:54
I want to make a decision, I want to own it, and I want to move forward,

Coach 19:02
okay. so we agreed this would be a 25 minute session, and we're coming up with about five minutes left, and I just want to check in with you. What are you learning about yourself during this call?

Client 19:19
I think I'm, I think I'm learning more about what I need and what I want to get unstuck. I think I'm learning that the quote unquote logical next step of getting a direct report and moving up the chain of leadership is not what I truly want, which, if we didn't have this conversation, I'd probably just go and ask for it. So, I think there's value in that, and I think there's, in a future session, more to think about in terms of how the lack of stress connects to all of that, but I feel like the empowerment thread is a good one, because if I'm more empowered. Howard, if I make a decision, if I move forward and not questioning it, I'm less stressed, right? So they kind of go hand in hand.

Coach 20:11
Okay. And what action are you going to take away from this call? Like, what are you committing to do?

Client 20:19
I am committing to two things off the top of my head, sharing this with my manager in our performance review as something I want and will continue to work on, empowering myself, making decisions. I'll ask for his support in that, but I will own it. And then I think the other thing is I need to do it. I need to make decisions and move forward. I need to commit to actually doing that and not questioning myself.

Coach 20:50
And what kind of accountability do you want in this process, if any?

Client 20:57
I think I mean, I want accountability. I think I can ask my manager for accountability to let me know if I'm waffling and I'm not making a decision. A different level of accountability, too, is because I still know that sometimes my decision might be the wrong decision, and that's still a conversation that I want to have. So, I want to be able to have space, maybe with my manager to reflect on decisions after they're made, so I want to create time for that.

Coach 21:29
Who else, besides your manager, do you want accountability from?

Client 21:34
I think my team - we're a very small team, there's four or five of us. I have a close partner that I work with in managing these contractors, and I think I need to ask all of them for that accountability, like if you see me not making a decision and deferring to you when I don't need to, tell me,

Coach 21:52
okay? And Sarah, why will this action make a difference for you, or what will it give you if you were able to make this shift?

Client 22:04
I think it would give me a sense of peace and satisfaction. I think it would significantly reduce my stress, which is all I really want at the end of the day, and I think it would also just give me some sort of tangible next step to work towards that is present, which gives me comfort, because I'm a very goal-oriented person.

Coach 22:32

Okay, and how does this answer the initial comment about, you know, an existential situation where you're feeling stuck.

Client 22:48
I think I think it supports the approach that the only way out of something is with baby steps. I think it helps me. It's not even anything you said, but just in the conversation, like it helps me to think, okay, I don't need to figure out right now if I want to be a leader in 20 years, I don't want to be a leader right now, and that's all I need to know, and I can acknowledge that, that might change, but I don't have to think about what I might want in the future, because I'm not a fortune teller.

Coach 23:27
Sounds like you just made a good first decision.

Client 23:32
Yes. Stop, stop harping on the future, focus on what's in front of me, that's where I'm going to find satisfaction.

Coach 23:39
Okay, what else do you need from me today before we close our session?

Client 23:51
I don't think I need anything. I mean, I'm always open to reflections and feedback of anything I've said that feels contradictory.

Coach 24:02
Now we've been working together long enough. I would jump in and give you feedback on that. However, I want to tell you, you, you ended with, you know, you understand, you want to make a decision, own it, and move forward. And I just heard you say, I need to make a decision around the fact I don't want to be a leader right now, and it's okay to change my mind later, and you are. You said I'm gonna own that going into the conversation. Okay.

Speaker 1 24:32
Yeah.

Coach 24:35
Well, thank you for your time.

Client 24:37
Thank you.