



# PROFESSIONAL CHRISTIAN COACHING TODAY

Chris McCluskey & Kim Avery

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

## Episode 001

### A Vision Worth Sharing

**Chris:** Hello and welcome to Professional Christian Coaching Today. I'm Chris McCluskey.

**Kim:** And I'm Kim Avery.

**Chris:** Join us in raising the standard of coaching and changing the world. Well welcome indeed. It's great to be back in podcasting mode and I am incredibly excited to be joined by one of my favorite people in the Christian coaching community, my new co-host here, Kim Avery.

**Kim:** Hey Chris. It's great to be here and thank you for inviting me. I have pulled up my literal cup of coffee to our virtual conversation and I hope everybody who is listening has done the same. I hope we have a great time learning, talking, sharing, and even praying about coaching together.

**Chris:** Indeed. I was thinking back on the previous podcast. Some of you have been our listeners on Professional Christian Coaching live and so you're familiar with our format here, but I actually went back and listened to the very first episode of that in getting ready for doing this inaugural launching of the new podcast simply called Professional Christian Coaching. I was struck by how much of the original vision that was cast in that original call back in the fall of

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2012. Here we are now in the middle of 2015 and I could re-record 90% of what was said on that podcast and it would play out today. Rachel and I as Kim knows are right in the middle of a very, very busy month here, July 2015. Our oldest daughter, Alyssa, is getting married actually this coming weekend and as she has been getting married, we've seen all the little things that she get used to with wedding preparation and that little phrase, "something old, something new, something borrowed, something blue" has come around on some of the texts that people have been sending and such, posting on Facebook.

I don't know what the borrowed or blue would be but I'll tell you what, a lot of the old and a lot of new now added in is really what we're looking at here, Kim. We are bringing forward the best of Professional Christian Coaching Live. We're getting out of the way the poor sound quality and the difficulties that were inherent with a live call in via Telebridge and echo and static, and all the rest of that. We've got a post production team in here that is second to none with Steve Writer. I'm so glad to have Steve on board and so the new is just take all that good stuff and give it a good polishing and let's launch out in the same direction further down the road, huh?

**Kim:** Well and if I can just say, congratulations to you and Rachel on Alyssa's wedding. I know she's a beautiful young woman and she's marrying a wonderful Christian gentleman. Also, if I could just point out, I know July is an important month for other reasons too. While we're celebrating, it is an anniversary month for Professional Christian Coaching Institute and again, maybe congratulations are in order, Chris. I don't know how many people have a vision and 5, 10, 15 years later actually see that come to life. I'm excited to be celebrating that as well.

**Chris:** Wow, okay, good point. Yeah, I'm not sure how often that happens but Kim is spot on. Professional Christian Coaching, this podcast here is a publication of Professional Christian Coaching Institute and that institute actually had its genesis, as Kim said 15 years ago. Back in the year 2000, I had been privately coaching in just my private practice for about a year and a half may be. It started in 1998. So about a year and a half that I had been coaching and I had had so many people coming and saying, "I love what you're doing. I'd love to be able to do this.

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Is anybody training in it from a Christian perspective?" Well there were about three or four schools out there training. Interestingly now, there are several thousand but there were three or four schools training at that time, none of them were Christian and I just saw immediately the need, the obvious need and I had a pretty good sense already of how this field was likely to grow. It has seen explosive growth since then. So all I did was to go to the school that I was already training with, talked with them about loving their curriculum, love the alignment with what were the early standards of the International Coach Federation.

In the year 2000, I negotiated a contract with that school to teach their material from a Christian perspective. So the Professional Christian Coaching program was launched, not an institute yet, not really even a slate of classes, just a course that grew into two that grew into several then and eventually over a period of 10 years, that professional Christian Coaching program grew into a full slate of classes for IC Internal Coach Federation Certification all from a distinctly Christian perspective and then that school closed. We found ourselves in the year 2010 seeing that there was a huge need for what we were now providing. Distinctly Christian professional grade coaching and so in the summer, the month of July 2010, five years ago now, I launched Professional Christian Coaching Institute and here we are now five years later so I don't know if this is our fifth year anniversary or our 15<sup>th</sup> year anniversary, but it is definitely an anniversary even as we pick back up with the podcast that we started back in 2012, lots of celebration this month.

**Kim:** Yeah and as you were saying, the vision has remained the same but it has grown and unfolded more and more people, and that's one of the reasons I'm so excited about this podcast because we want to take the vision of Christian Coaching and the impact it can have in the world beyond professional Christian Coaching Institute. We really want to invite Christian coaching to come along the ride with us and so we are going to, as you know, Chris, be meeting weekly. I'm excited. I hope everybody will come meet with us and we're going to talk about all things Christian coaching. Whether people are trained, whether they are lay coaches, internal, external coaches, even if they are just interested in using these skills, these amazing skills in

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their conversations with their teenagers, their spouses, and their co-workers, we want to create a community where people can learn and be inspired and grow. Welcome to the ride everyone.

**Chris:** Indeed. A lot of what we're going to be covering here will have to do with the basic skills, tools, techniques of doing professional grade coaching from a Christian perspective. Now that doesn't mean that the persons who will be listening and the persons who we will be interviewing are always holding themselves out to the market place as a distinctly Christian coach, but it does mean that whether they are coaching Christian clientele or non-Christian clientele, just a secular business environment or wherever it might be, it does mean that we as Christians are not just coaches who happen to be a Christian. We are Christians first and foremost in our identity of self. Our Scriptures teach us that very clearly. The old has passed away. All things are made new.

Our identity, our self is centered in Christ and so we bring Christ literally inhabiting our being. We bring Him into everything that we do. So we are not just coaches who happen to be Christians. We are Christians who are doing coaching and particularly if we're holding ourselves as professional coaches, that's really where our slogan, our mantra for the school comes from. We believe it's incumbent upon us, imperative that we raise the standard of professionalism for those who bear the name of Christ. We need to be practicing at the highest levels of professionals and being above reproach, not just kind of making things up as we go along or flying by the seat of our bridges or peppering a Scripture verse here and there and trusting the Holy Spirit to do the rest. We need to be well trained, well equipped, fit for the work of the master, as he then does what only he can through us as his agents and tools.

**Kim:** Absolutely. So professionalism, competencies, the ICF competencies, practicing ethically and excellently, but also there's that whole component where I think three-quarters or more of the coaches who do get professionally trained end up as entrepreneurs, as you often say, Chris, almost accidental entrepreneurs. I was certainly one of those accidental and unintended, and maybe even reluctant entrepreneurs when I first graduated with my coach training certificate.

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We definitely want to offer people a chance to learn about those kinds of subjects, how to launch and grow their business, marketing, which is not a dirty word, it's actually a fun activity and I'm on a mission to make sure everybody learns that at networking, social media which is ever changing and we do want to keep on top of that, public speaking, and so much more from that business side of coaching as well.

**Chris:** Yup and again, that's why people would want to tune into this podcast because we will be covering all of those things in pretty considerable detail. Sometimes it will be Kim and I taking up those topics and bantering back and forth as you're hearing here but many times, we'll also be bringing in practitioners who specialize in certain key niche areas. We will bring in instructors from the institute who actually teach courses on specific things. So when it comes for example to something like new technology development, I mean technology is constantly growing. Nobody can keep up with it, but we all know that with most coaching anyway, it's practiced via distance.

You're reliant on the internet and on your computer, your laptop, your cell phone. Your website has to be dynamic and be able to adapt to any number of different devices. There's always new information that's needed. We will be bringing in coaches, again professional grade Christians who coach who can also speak to the utilization of technologies like that to keep you on the cutting edge as the field starts going. Same way with other kinds of specialties, group coaching that is one of the most powerful ways to expand the streams of income to a person's private practice.

While we're going to bring in some of the people who teach on group coaching at the institute and have them share best practices. How do you set up a group? What are some of the facilitation skills you use? How do you market a group? How do you draw in a bunch of people who are willing to commit at the same time on the same week, week after week, for a long period of time to address topics with a whole bunch of people they may never meet this side of heaven, all this virtual kind of group stuff. We'll be bringing in people who can speak exactly to that.

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**Kim:** And don't forget all those other niches that have really come from the roots of the tree and grown out in many different branches, I guess, is what I'm thinking of in terms of leadership coaching and how important that is for our leaders out there in the market place who are Christians to do what they do with excellence, be able to use those skills when they are managing a team, when they are managing growth, all of those types of things. There are missions. I know church planters often get coached now as well as pastors, as well as missionaries overseas. What are some unique applications of coaching in a way people can deliver that effectively? Of course there are career coaches and then I'm really excited about the growth of spiritual formation coaching because it goes back to what you're saying earlier, Chris. This isn't just what we do. This is about who we are and if we can consistently become more self-aware, more in tuned with the Holy Spirit, have our relationship with God be all that can be. The who that we're bringing to the coaching relationship is a better who and so the results are going to be a better result.

**Chris:** I like that, the who that we're bringing is going to be a better who. It sounds like a Dr. Seuss reference there, but it's absolutely true. All of our doing flows from our being and so again, if we are a Christian institute, if we are Christian practitioners, we as individuals and we as a school need to be looking at the constant maturation process that we're called to as Christians and how does that then play out in skill development, in utilization of self, conscious utilization of self. How are we using ourselves in this designed relationship called coaching? It's not a purchased friendship. It's not a counseling relationship. It's not a therapist. It's not a pastor. It's not a consultant. It's not a mentor. Lots of very good and important ways of using self in designed relationship for certain outcomes coaching is a distinct profession. We play distinct roles in relationship with our clientele who often are paying us very, very good money for this service. We want to be able to deliver that service with excellence and that requires not just skill but a constantly maturing attention to our being.

**Kim:** Yeah, absolutely. This might be a good time to invite those who are listening to give their input on what types of subjects are going to be interesting to them. What types of guests or

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who particularly they would like to hear and learn from? We are all I think as coaches I've discovered lifelong learners and that's an exciting place to be. We do want to make this a two-way conversation as much as possible with the technology we have available.

**Chris:** Well, we absolutely do and as we bring this initial podcast to a close, we do want to encourage you those of you who are listening if you're familiar from before or if this is the first time, we want you to connect with us one of the easiest ways to do that is actually out on Facebook. The whole world is on Facebook. If you're not, you need to be. You can find us on Facebook at just [Facebook.com/ProfessionalChristianCoachingToday](https://www.facebook.com/ProfessionalChristianCoachingToday). You can also find us on the web at [ProfessionalChristianCoachingToday.com](http://ProfessionalChristianCoachingToday.com). I think, Kim, one of the most obvious ways as we're making this inaugural launch of the podcast that people could really help us out is by providing some feedback, some comments and some ratings for us out on iTunes, right?

**Kim:** Absolutely. iTunes is really the search engine that drives podcast listeners and if you believe in Christian coaching, we really would appreciate your honest review and a rating.

**Chris:** Well, I think that would be it for today. We know that there's a lot of exciting stuff to look forward to and until next week. Keep raising the standard and changing the world.

**Kim:** God's richest blessing to you.