



PROFESSIONAL CHRISTIAN COACHING TODAY

Chris McCluskey & Kim Avery

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

Episode 005

Master-Full Coaching with Charles Hooper, PCC

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 in changing the world.

Well, it's good to be with all of you. Exciting for Kim and I to be setting off on another episode here and we have a special treat for you today. One of the most popular pieces that we did on the previous podcast, Professional Christian Coaching Live, was a recurring series that we called Master-full Coaching. We're bringing it back exactly as we had done it before. Master-full Coaching, first of that word, master-full here we're not meaning to be braggadocios and to say, "So, you want to check out how coaching is to be done? We're going to show you how it's done." Instead we are hyphenating the word and making it master-full, meaning that we recognize as professional grade Christian coaches anytime we are in that intentional relationship of coaching with a client, we are, just like when we are counseling, we're inviting in the Holy Spirit to be that counselor or in this case that coach to fill that time to infuse it with the things that only He can bring by His Spirit.

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There is a responsibility always on our parts, of course, to be sharpened tools, ready and available for the Master to do the work that only He does and so we emphasize that professional piece. What we do in these Master-full coaching sessions is to bring for you a prerecorded coaching session. Often it is by one of the instructors that we have on faculty here at Professional Christian Coaching Institute but we're going to play for you in some cases a snippet. Today we're actually playing an entire session from beginning to end with the idea that we're going to set it up so you know what to be listening for. You're going to hear it in its entirety as if you were a mouse in the corner, a fly on the wall, and getting to really hear a live coaching session unfolding and then Kim and I are going to debrief it afterwards to help kind of capture more of the nuggets of everything that hopefully you heard and if you didn't, maybe you'll hear them now or hear them with fresh ears. Hear them with a deeper understanding of what coaching can be in real practice. Kim, set up for us the recording we're about to hear.

Kim: All right. I'm very excited about it. I was able to kind of be listening in on this recording. It happened during one of our Essentials Training Classes. Charles Hooper who is the leadership coach was co-teaching with me and he was coaching one of our students. Her name is Rebecca and of course she has given us her full permission to use this for the podcast today. Thank you, Rebecca. We appreciate that.

As you listen to Charles coach, a couple of things to be listening for are 1) the importance of the client setting the agenda. It's all about what the client wants and it's really a three-step process you'll hear Charles go through as he does this. He's going to ask her basically what's going to be helpful to work on today but he needs to go more narrow than that because that's just so broad. He could lead with any question after that and not be sure what she wants. So he narrows in much tighter and he says this, "At the end of our conversation, what would you like to take away?" I want you to listen with me and see, does she walk away with what she said she wanted to because the power of coaching is in each conversation, the client comes in saying, "I want this" and they walk away with it. They see the value immediately. He confirms that and that's the third step of our three-step process.

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As Charles goes through this session, it's almost hard to notice because he is so invisible and that's the point. Coaching is almost less of a dialogue and more of a facilitated monologue. Charles recedes into the background. He's very actively listening. He's very with her. He's dancing in the moment but it's not about him, his opinions, his advice, even what he's curious about on her behalf. It's all about the client and so he'll occasionally ask a question, reflect, summarize for Rebecca what's going on but in the silence, in being invisible, you're going to see incredible forward movement made, so be sure to pay attention to that.

Chris: That's a good word, Kim, and I know as I listen to this, anytime that I listen to somebody else coaching, I think all of our listeners will recognize there's a tendency for us to insert ourselves into the role of the coach. "What would I do if I was sitting in that role right now?" Many times we recognize if we're honest with ourselves, our natural tendencies are to want to jump in to be there to help out with an answer, some kind of advice, a tip, a pointer, "Have you read this? What about meditating on that Scripture? When I went through that, this was what helped me." You'll hear consistently throughout as Kim said, Charles is almost invisible. He resists the very natural well intended temptation to do that and instead, stays with her in the question. You'll hear Charles often times giving nothing more than a "Hm, mm-hhmm" or a little bit of a laughter and let's her know "I'm still here. I'm listening."

By the way, this recording was done via Telebridge so they could not see each other. This is typical phone conversation so she can't tell if he's totally silent that he's even still on the line so he lets her know "I'm here, I'm pacing with you. I'm tracking. Keep going, I'm trusting this process," a beautiful examples of that kind of invisibility. One final thing I think for us to listen for as you go into this, Rebecca is a real person volunteering a real situation to be coached. Indeed, thank you, Rebecca, for being so willing to allow us to use this on the recording, but she is relatively low energy. She's kind of flat. There's a sluggishness. You can hear in her low energy the frustration that she is expressing when she verbally says where she's feeling stuck right now. There's a future point coming and when she gets there, it will be like this, but it isn't that way right

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now. Charles not only hears her, he mirrors her energy. He's not trying to be a cheerleader and hype her up and get her all psyched. He meets her where she is and he trudges along. I would say there's a point about the middle of this call where he even slugs along with her because that's where she is.

Listen for the critical point. It could be one of the lowest energy points in the call, about midway through, Charles is going to pose a question and there's dead silence, just absolute nothing except for the lots going on inside the client and Charles knows that and trusts that. Notice that he stays with the silence. Silence is a great prompter and then listen very carefully to what begins to tumble out, at first just a little trickle and then it was like bam! We hit the motherload, here it comes and seven, eight, nine different very specific things are articulated by the client that came from inside of her. They are very specific. Charles grabs them, mirrors them back to her, and the whole rest of the session pivots from that critical point, a beautiful illustration of some of the power of the coaching relationship. Kim, let's cue this up and listen for those things and then we'll do our debrief at the end.

Kim: All right, here we go.

Charles and Rebecca Phone Conversation:

Charles: What progress did you make on your action steps that we talked about last time?

Rebecca: Oh, uhm, [silence] I guess I have identified at this point that I'm living into, uhm, kind of a way of life or a mindset or a thinking that just has not been life giving for me.

Charles: Mmm....

Rebecca: So I don't know what it is. I don't know if I can really verbalize it to you. Uhm, I think I've been able to see at least this pattern day in and day out of living very dissatisfied and not with a whole lot of excitement or joy.

Charles: Mmm....

Rebecca: And I'm looking to change that, but I guess identifying it is probably the first step.

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Charles: Yeah. Okay. A pattern, a mindset, you want change so that you have joy in life... okay. What would be most helpful for us to work on today, Rebecca?

Rebecca: I guess I think maybe finding some language around what that mindset might be and probably maybe even more importantly what I wanted it to be that... uhm... and hoping that through that process, I might be able, something might shift in that kind of rhythm that's dragging me down might not do that any longer.

Charles: Okay. All right. So at the end of our conversation, what would you love to take away?

Rebecca: [Silence] Uhm, probably like a very concise, I don't know, sentence or word or words to kind of hold in my mind from hopefully hearing out that, yeah, something that I can kind of hold from here on out that might shift my emotions these days.

Charles: Okay. So finding a language, maybe a concise sentence or a word or two that you could just hold in your mind that really represents this shift in your mindset.

Rebecca: Yeah.

Charles: Okay. All right. Rebecca, would you like to pray or would you like me to pray to get us started?

Rebecca: You could pray.

Charles: Okay. Father, you've heard Rebecca's heart and she wants clarity. She wants understanding around her mindset. She wants to go from where she is to a new place – a place of joy, a place of life. God, it just seems like her energy is low and we would even ask that you would work in her over these next few minutes so that there is a shift in mindset. We are trusting you to do that. Give us wisdom as we talk together and we pray all this in Jesus' name, amen.

Well Rebecca, what are some of the factors that had influenced this situation for you in regards to your mindset?

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Rebecca: [silence] Oh, I think one of the big factors is that I'm just ready to move on from my current situation, my current job and I can see where I want to go but I am just waiting for the right moment to do that, and waiting is a hard place to be in for anybody, but I've also recognized that my personality type as such, kind of my Myers-Briggs personality I've done a lot of work around that is such that waiting is quite difficult for my personality type as well as doing routine tasks, and I have felt like I've been in routine for so long, hence the need to change and shift. It's taking me a long time to get there, but now that I've recognized it, it has almost felt like the mundane or the routine has becoming more burdensome to endure.

Charles: Yeah.

Rebecca: That kind of felt like a big factor, uhm, and I guess it's seeing where I want to go and not feeling like I can get there. It's hard to, I guess that's kind of along the same lines of waiting but there's kind of a, uhm, I don't know, I don't want to just wait... I don't want to look and say, "Oh, when I get there then my life will be better."

Charles: Mmm...

Rebecca: God hasn't called me to live there. He has called me to live here and now, and it doesn't really matter what my situation is or where I'm at. I'm being called to live in the moment and to not worry about the future or to not assume that the future will somehow be better than what is today, and so trying to hold that in my mind, I guess, right now as well. I have a 10-month-old daughter so I'm still a new mom and she's just a delight. I don't get to spend a lot of time with her hence why I'm trying to make this change so it's like I imagine here in daycare is where she's at, at this point and I just imagine here and just long to be with her. That brings my heart down, you know, when I think about that.

Charles: Mmm... yeah... you've got a couple of different things going on there. You want to move on but you're waiting for the right moment and one of your real strong values is coming out. You want to spend time with your new daughter and.... Okay.

Rebecca: Yeah.

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Charles: And you've also mentioned just wanting to be content regardless of what you're doing career wise that you can't start living when your circumstances change. So what would this shift look like, this mindset shift? What would you like it to look like?

Rebecca: Well, I guess I think about some kind of an exercise that I've done in the past or at least I think I've done in the past, and Lisa came to mind so I've had it at some point which is I know how important kind of visualizing yourself is in a certain place and right now, I visualize when I get up in the morning, going to a place that sucks life as opposed to gives life and so I know that if I'm able to... uhm... I'm hoping that through literally just choosing in the morning to say a prayer or visualize some new thoughts or whatever it might be, a sentence or some words that if I simply commit to repeating those throughout the day, that simply through that practice of kind of a shift of mindset or positivity, you know, maybe another way of saying it that things will change.

Charles: Okay. All right. Say more about the mindset that you'd like to have in the future.

Rebecca: Uhm, well let's see. I could think of things that I don't want which might help me think about things that I want. For example, I don't want to be as annoyed with my clients.

Charles: Okay.

Rebecca: I feel like right now I'm in a pattern that as I get emails that I find particularly annoying, I tend to say to myself, "Well at least I won't have to deal with this when I change ops" or I'm always kind of in this future mindset about that.

Charles: Mm-hmm...

Rebecca: And it's like by saying that, I'm somehow getting through the emotion of being annoyed but I'd like to take that out of my language. I'd like to stay present with my current clients and continue to give them excellent customer service. That's something that I would like to see shift.

Charles: Rebecca may I make a request of you?

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Rebecca: Sure.

Charles: You mentioned that maybe it's easier to think about the negative as a way to get positive but part of what you want to do is just make a shift in your mindset. Maybe you can think of the negative but what if, I want to request that you would go ahead and say it in the positive as you're thinking about the mindset you want to have. Would you do that?

Rebecca: Yes, yes for sure.

Charles: Okay so try to get a few of those going.

Rebecca: Uhm, so I guess in that particular example, the positive would be to have excellent customer service.

Charles: Okay. All right. And you know what that would mean and so what are some other things as you visualize this mindset, this positive mindset?

Rebecca: [silence] Hmmm.... [silence].... Uhm..... [silence]..... I'm not sure yet. Uhm, I guess I have a sense of what it feels, you know, what I want it to feel like but I don't have a sense yet of what it really looks like in a tangible way.

Charles: Yeah. Okay. Well go with some of the feelings.

Rebecca: Uhm, I want to feel, I want to feel like I'm contributing to something good, that my work is contributing to, you know, the greater good.

Charles: Mm-hmm.

Rebecca: I want to feel like I'm a good mom and I want to feel like I am giving, giving my all into not just my work but in kind of all areas of commitment.

Charles: Mhmm...

Kim: And giving my full self, not my half self but my full self.

Chris: Mmm.

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Kim: Uhm, I'd like to be quick to thank God and praise Him for where I'm at.

Charles: Hmm..

Rebecca: I'd like to smile more [laughter]

Charles: Mm-hmm...

Rebecca: [Silence] Uhm, I'd like to feel, I'd like to feel kind of a movement forward, like feel propelled forward as opposed to stagnant, to try to give an example.

Charles: Mmhmm...

Rebecca: I'd like to let go, let go of control, like to just.... release, I guess, release tension almost. That's a very physical feeling to me and my body feels very tense inside. I want to be able to relax and let go.

Charles: Mm-hmmm. Okay. So hear yourself, "I want to have excellence in customer service. I want to feel like I'm contributing something good. I want to feel like I'm a good mom. I want to feel like I'm giving my all, not just at work but in all areas. I want to be quick to thank God and praise Him. I want to smile more. I want to feel movement forward. I want to let go of control and release the tension, to relax." [silence] So how do you sense your mindset is shifting when you say those things?

Rebecca: Well, [silence] it feels like just a shift to the positive almost. It's kind of hard to generalize what I have been doing. I've been shifting to the negative and so naming those things to sound like a life giving positive kind of a day.

Charles: Mmm.

Rebecca: Uhm, I did, even as you spoke, I had to fight against that shot that I'll get there in the future, which I think has become habitual thought that things will shift in the future, that they are not going to shift now and maybe that's part of this is probably going to be a recognition of what the kind of lies that the enemy has been whispering to me.

Charles: Mm-hmm.

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Rebecca: And that's probably I want that things will get better, things can't get better now but will get better in the future.

Charles: Mmm, so what's the truth that will combat that lie?

Rebecca: That God wants me to flourish today that He wants me to live life to the fullest today.

Charles: Mmmm...

Rebecca: And He's not a God that would make me wait to receive that gift. He loves me enough today to want to see that for me today.

Charles: Mmm... wow. [silence] Rebecca you wanted a concise set to kind of hold in your mind. You gave three excellent reasons there.

Rebecca: Yes, I did.

Charles: What do you want to do with that?

Rebecca: I want to write them out, probably write them out on a couple of note cards so that I can keep one with me at all times. Take them in my car, take them to work.

Charles: Hmmm....

Rebecca: I want to say it before, I want to repeat them before I get out of bed in the morning each day.

Charles: Mmm...

Rebecca: And yeah, maybe say them before I go to sleep each night.

Charles: Yeah. I can't tell if you kind of teared up or choked up a little bit but it almost sounds in your voice that you're more relaxed. You kind of let some things go there.

Rebecca: That's really, yes I am. I definitely have tears and I'm trying to keep it together a little bit, but in a good way.

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Charles: All right. That's all right. You don't have to keep it together. So it sounded so good the first time, say it again. Just play with it. You don't have to get it down to the wordsmithing yet but just say it again so you can hear yourself say that again.

Rebecca: [silence] God loves me enough that He wants me to flourish today, that our God is a God that loves me enough that He doesn't want me to wait to have joy, more excitement in my daily life. He wants me to experience it now.

Charles: Mmm... Yeah. [silence] Rebecca, what support would you need from anyone to see this month to really start to become normal?

Rebecca: I think I definitely need to invite a few people in to maybe join me and praying that over me every day. I mean, they may or may not reach out on a regular basis to remind me of it but at least kind of commit to maybe join me and praying that over me each day including my husband.

Charles: Okay.

Rebecca: I might ask him to join me in the mornings as we get up for the day to maybe pray with her over me.

Charles: Mmm... okay. So you had mentioned a couple of ideas of action steps so what do you want to commit to do maybe between now and the next time we talk?

Rebecca: Uhm, well, let's just say now in the end of the day.

Charles: Okay, okay.

Rebecca: I'm going to write down kind of wordsmith it a little bit today to come up with one or two prayers that or statements that I want to want to be the ones that I will repeat regularly so I want to come up with what those are and then I want to invite my husband and probably I have two girlfriends I'm thinking of in particular that I will probably reach out and see if they will join me in praying and saying those words over me.

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Charles: Mmm, okay. All right by the end of the day. Great. Well Rebecca, it does sound like a mindset shifted and it sounds like it's going to continue so it will be interesting to see how that happens more and more. As we wrap up here, what awareness do you have now that you didn't have before?

Rebecca: Oh man, I don't think I realized, I think the recognition of Satan's kind of whispers of lies that he had been saying to me over and over again. I'm not sure I was aware of that. It's probably the biggest one and then kind of the awareness that I walk out straight foot in that.

Charles: Yeah.

Rebecca: Which is huge, I could tell it's going to be huge.

Charles: Yeah, it did.

[end of session]

Kim: Wow. That was a really powerful, powerful session and even before we get into it, if I can just thank you one more time, Rebecca, for just being willing to, it was a class of 30 students listening to her on the phone as well as us listening on the podcast. Rebecca, for you to be willing to just be open and vulnerable about your walk with the Lord and where you are, we really, really appreciate that. You could hear, Chris, her emotions coming up throughout the call. This is a tender, tender place and these are real issues, and Charles handled it so beautifully. He didn't get overly therapeutic about her emotions or delved deeply into them but he did acknowledge that they are there and that they are important.

Whether it was the gentle chuckle he shared with her a couple of different times or just that willingness to sit with her in silence while she just soaked in some of the awareness God was giving her. So it was an exciting call and before I ask for some of your observations, I just want to point out to our listeners before we lose track of that, I asked them to listen for the agenda that Charles said at the beginning, "What is it you kind of want to walk away with as a result of our conversation?" She really wanted a shift in her mindset and that's exactly what Charles says as he's wrapping it up. He says, "Wow, it

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sounds like a mindset shifted already” just in the call, not even a plan for the future and it will continue. Again, in less than 30 minutes, a client that he has never really met before comes in, has an agenda, has that powerful awareness, and walks away with what she wanted. I love listening to powerful coaching.

Chris: That was quite an exceptional example of that kind of thing because yeah, when she laid out very clearly at the very beginning, in fact her sentence I thought was even worded interestingly. She said, “I’m living into a pattern or a mindset or a way of thinking that isn’t working.” Okay, wow, that sounds big.

Kim: Yeah.

Chris: what in the world are we going to do with that? This isn’t a class. I was hoping you’d talk about, “I want to lose 10 lbs” or “I want to organize my desk” or something. No, this is big and look at what happened. Inside of the client by the coach’s very intentional use of himself coming alongside helping her to draw out first of all what is that mindset that you’re living into that as you say isn’t working well and then what might be different or at least the beginnings of articulating one? Amazing.

Kim: Yeah, it was really good and one of the things I saw Charles doing consciously I believe throughout the session was there’s an ICF coaching competency called designing actions. It’s #9 and one of the sub-competency talks about helping a client do it now. Not just after the session. Go out and do something different but actually rehearse or try on or do a new behavior, and Charles did that several times. He started with that amazing direct communication where he said, “May I make a request of you?” That was such a powerful interjection, Chris, when he just said, “Okay she wants to shift to the positive, let’s start now,” and gave her that. Right away, she had, and it was heard from her. You heard her struggling to wrap her mind around the positive and Charles sat in silence with her while she did that so she could wrestle. And then she found a point she could grasp on to, how she felt about it and so that was fine. He’s meeting her where she is and she did that.

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But just to continue with that theme of designing actions and doing it now, he came back to that whole thing just a little bit later when he said, “How do you sense your mindset is shifting when you say those things?” So it’s not a future mindset. How is it going to be for you this week if you have a different mindset, which is still a great question but he is taking her into it. Like you said, she’s going to live into this positive mindset right now in the coaching session. It’s just a great example I think of that designing actions coaching competency.

Chris: Well said. I hope our listeners were able to hear that point about in the middle where everything just felt like walking through mud. She’s very definitely fully present. We heard emotion coming up. As you said, Charles didn’t necessarily explore it a whole lot. He was with her in it. He wasn’t freaked out by the emotion. He didn’t go digging deeply into it. The emotion was expressing some of the things that her words weren’t yet and he trusted the whole being of her to eventually bring it out, which it did. Hopefully the listeners heard that long pregnant pause that I was referring to at the beginning of today’s episode. That long pause and he just left it be silent because there was truly a pregnancy about it. There was something waiting to be birthed. She talked about there being a lot of feelings and he said, “Go with some of the feelings” and boy did she ever. She articulated all of those things.

You could tell, Charles must have been writing them down. A good coach is very attentive not just with his presence but he’s got a little notepad and pen there and he was writing them down because at the end of her tumbling out those 7, 8, 9 things he said, and I love this, “So hear yourself...”. What a beautiful statement for a coach to make. That’s what this is all about. Hear the Spirit speaking to you through you or hear yourself speaking to you through you. He says, “So hear yourself...” and he feeds right back to her, her very own words and then continues to just help her explore.

Now further, what do they mean? She talked about there being a lie. He said, “So what’s the truth that would combat that lie?” Used her own words and then started really driving her down to some action points. There were four just critical coaching questions that got her to do more than just explore, more than just have a great “aha.” He got her to get to a

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point where she could take something home in her pocket, so to speak, “What do you want to do with this? What support would you need to help this mindset become normal? What do you want to commit to? Finally, what awareness do you have now that you didn’t have before?”

Now those aren’t memorized things. He wasn’t working off of a script or a cheat sheet that he’s got up on his bulletin board above his phone. They were appropriate for where he was in the conversation but he was very intentionally doing what a coach does. If you have a wonderful session but don’t help the client at the end to grab the gold from it and to operationalize it to say, “So now what between now and next session” or as she laughingly said, “No, between now and tonight.” She was ready to go. We help them lock and load that next action step.

Kim: Absolutely. Coaching is all about action and some of that brain research said that Jeffrey Schwartz and David Rock have done, they have discovered that if clients don’t act on an insight, a huge “aha” moment, no matter how big it is or at least make an action plan to act on it, it’s almost as good as forgotten. Coaching just can’t be about those “aha” moments. It starts with that new awareness and new perspective but then we have to help them design a way to put legs on it and keep it in front of them so it goes forward from session to session. It’s a beautiful process.

Chris: Well, amen to that. So listen, if our listeners would like to be able to connect with Charles actually, if you enjoyed his presence and his spirit there and you would like to just get to know him better in the field, you can find him online actually. His coaching practice is called Hooper Coaching and the primary coaching he does is actually around development of the leader and their self as well as in their actions then. HooperCoaching.com, just like it sounds. HooperCoaching.com and as I said, he serves on our faculty here at the Professional Christian Coaching Institute. He teaches a couple of our different core classes, very, very capable competent Christian coach.

So until next time, be sure to visit us on the web at ProfessionalChristianCoachingToday.com while you’re there, be sure to subscribe and

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Kim: God's richest blessings to you.