



# PROFESSIONAL CHRISTIAN COACHING TODAY

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

## Episode 056

### Fostering POSSIBILITIES Thinking

CHRIS: Fostering possibilities thinking, well, this is a terribly important topic today. I think we'll have a little bit of fun with it but my goodness, when you think about the various things that a coach is tasked with doing when they show up on pretty much any coaching call, one of the primary things you would identify right at the top of the list is they are there to help a client consider possibilities, what could be here? So that's what we're going to dig into and I think we'll get up to our elbows in this so roll your sleeves up and jump in here.

KIM: It's going to be fun while we do that, Chris. I'm looking forward to it. This is such an important topic for us as coaches and I think maybe even newer coaches on the call. One of the things I've noticed as we first begin coaching is we feel this pressure. I think it's internal, or maybe it's external pressure to help the client out. We want to earn the money that they are paying us, right? We want to show that this is worth it and so the temptation is to rush right into a solution or to help them create their own solution, but in doing that narrow drilling down, what we've done is we've not looked at all the possibilities. Face it, Chris, if somebody could solve their problem that quick and easy, they probably wouldn't have had hired a coach.

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CHRIS: Probably not, exactly right.

KIM: Yeah so what happens is they come to us and they want different results, but to get different results, they need to do different things. To do different things, they need to think different thoughts. To think different thoughts, they need to be asked different questions which means we, as the coach, are there to put them in the realm where they could create new possibilities, maybe stand in new perspectives, think new thoughts, change mindsets about something or go a completely different direction, but all of those things come from a place of possibility thinking.

Today, we're going to talk about three main things – the importance of having a possibility mindset, potential obstacles to consider, and strategies for you as a coach to creating a possibilities environment. I'm going to start with the importance of having a possibilities mindset and here's the caveat for the coach. We're not even talking about the client here and I've got a really good example. I'm going to tell on myself a little bit here but I think it illustrates the principle beautifully.

One of our ICF competencies is that number 8 where we are about creating awareness for the client and competency 8A says this, "Goes beyond what is said in assessing client's concerns not getting hooked by the client's description." The client is arguably stuck that's why they are coming to the coach, that's why they are in this situation. That's what they see from their point of view and my example is this, when I first began training as a career coach, so now I'm going to add career coaching to my existing life coaching practice, I went through training Susan Whitcomb's wonderful school, The Academies, and enjoyed it. But I had this mindset, I was filled with career professionals who were speaking what almost seemed like a foreign language to me about their assessments, about owning it online, about different tools they would use, and I felt lost and overwhelmed.

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I started saying to myself, “I can't do this. I just can't do this. I don't think I can do this.” That is not a possibilities mindset. Alright, so my very first career coaching client, the phone rings and the very worst possible scenario, she had one of those circular problems and I don't remember exactly what it was but it was something like, “I need to get a job because my husband has left me and I don't have any money but I can't drive because I've been diagnosed with epilepsy and I can't hire someone to drive me to go look for a job because I don't have any money,” and then it went around and around and there was no answer. There was no way out and the whole time she's talking and I'm supposedly coaching her, I don't know what I'm saying but in my mind I'm thinking, “She's right. This is hopeless. She's right. There's no way out of this situation.”

I did my best and I don't know why she came back for session #2 but she did and in that intervening time, I quickly called Susan Whitcomb who gently laughed with me and said, “Kim, you're getting hooked by the client's description.” Just as she said that, I realized what she was saying was true. From the client's perspective, it was hopeless, but there are always, always, always possibilities and it wasn't my job to discover them, it was just my job to believe in them and to put her in a place where she could discover them.

So I didn't do anything different but I did bring my much more hopeful self back into the session just like the client and oh my goodness, Chris, by the end of the session, she was like, “Oh I could do this or maybe I could do that. Here's an idea over here,” and really nothing had changed but my attitude and perhaps my questions or the kinds of questions I was willing to ask. I learned that I learned that there are always possibilities.

CHRIS: Wow, Kim, that is such a powerful illustration of really probably the single most important message that we want our listeners to take away from this call. We're just five minutes into the episode but really want to have their and just pause and hold on to that. One of the big takeaways from today is, for you as a coach when you are in that role as coach, one of your most important things to do is to foster

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possibilities thinking, to just show up ready, prepared, in the mindset of someone who says, “There are always possibilities.”

As Kim just said, it’s not your job to know what they are. It’s not your job to even find them or create them, to drive for it. It is to be in the space of allowing for us to discern them, to invite them, to hear them because often times, they are right there and we kind of got cotton in our ears and can’t hear them. the coach’s presence and mindset, way of being, the questions that are posed that Kim was just saying there, all of those things create an environment that is conducive to the client doing one of the main things that they really came to coach with you in the first place – to see new possibilities and then to dare in that dreaming to go ahead and step into those new possibilities. Great illustration.

KIM: Thank you, my poor client. Thankfully, she lived through it and went on to achieve her goals and dreams. One of the coaches, Dave Ellis, put this whole topic that we’re discussing into a real clear picture for me when he said, “There are always possibilities even if it’s just your neighbor’s dog barking.” I don’t know if any of our listeners have ever had the neighbor’s dog bark outside the window day and night and as a migraine sufferer, that’s very hard for me and I have and I thought, “What? Sometimes, you can’t get your neighbor to cooperate,” but he followed it up by this, “Even if it’s only changing the way you think about it.” I thought, “He’s right.” There are always some possibilities. Of course, we have an even source for that which would be God who, in Matthew 19 and several other of the Gospel said this, “With man, this is impossible, but with God, all things are possible.”

CHRIS: We do serve a possibilities God and He is over and above all things and oh how often we limit our ability to see even just really screamingly obvious possibilities, let alone a big challenging one like that, what do you do with a neighbor’s dog that won’t stop barking? Well, sometimes, maybe we just look at examining our own thoughts about it and then we tend then not to obsess on it so much. Many of our listeners will be very familiar with an often cited example of the power of

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possibilities thinking. Sir Roger Bannister was a physician, but he was also a distance runner. He was running at a time when no one in the world had ever approached the possibility of actually breaking a 4-minute mile. The collective mindset was that's impossible.

He realized that it was possible when he ran in a race and clocked at 4 minutes 3 seconds and 6/10 of a second. He realized "Wait a minute, if I can do 4 minutes and 3 seconds, I bet you I can shave off 3 seconds here and I bet you, I can break the 4-minute mile. Of course, May 6, 1954, those of you that are trivia buffs, he did. He broke the record at 3 minutes 59 seconds and 4/10 tucked in there. As soon as he broke it, what he was able to say to the world was, "This really was a barrier that was in our own minds." He had to break through that barrier in his mind and then his physical body broke through the physical barrier of the 4-minute mile, but do you know his record only stood for 46 days. In other words, many other people also suddenly realized there was a possibility where they had believed there was none and we're very used to now persons pushing to get under a 4-minute mile.

Another great example of that is Dick Fosbury, again from Olympics kind of athletic things but a thing that we call now in the high jump the Fosbury flop, he was in the 1968 Summer Olympics. He was a high jumper and at that time, of course high jumping, you're just trying to clear a large bar that's real high and there were four primary approaches that people took when they were trying to clear that bar. It used to be that when you land on the other side, you land in a sand pit. Actually, they had implemented a cushioned pad now like what we're used to when we look at the Olympics with the high jumpers and the pole vaulters.

Dick Fosbury began to see a new possibility here in saying, "Well, what says I have to go over head first or straddling the thing with my leg first? What if I went over backwards upside down?" That's the flop there and again, considering new possibilities in the face of what was before him, he created a radically different

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way of approaching the high jump and pole vaulting, and to this day, it's known as the Fosbury flop and it's the primary way that people now clear any kind of a high jump.

The point here again is the mindset that you want as a coach when you come into your coaching with your clientele is often one that just says, "Anything is possible," and I'm going to have to toss in a little dad moment here. My kids and I were in a musical. We're very active in our beautiful Christian theater group here in the area called Fine Linen Theater. They did Seussical the Musical shortly after it was no longer running on Broadway and I mean they did it to the nines. One of the main songs in Seussical the Musical is It's Possible. Our kids always sing that little song. "Anything's possible, anything's possible." Well, here's one of the lines from that song, "Oh, the sea is so full of a number of fish and if a fellow is patient, he might get his wish, and that's why I think I'm not such a fool when I sit here and fish in McElligot's pool."

Those of you that are Seuss fans, you are familiar with McElligot's pool, but that's the main idea that we're wanting you to grab from this is that you show up in that possibilities mindset and you hold that belief often for your client to allow them to sit in the possibilities until they begin to present themselves even if they seem as crazy as flopping over the bar instead of going overhead first.

KIM: This is more than a simple, and I don't want to say it that way but a simple mindset issue. This is literally what's going on in the brain and so I want to bring in a brief example to show you that this is what our body is doing when we embrace or we don't embrace certain expectations or possibilities. A recent study was done by Freeman and his colleagues and just to kind of shorten it, I'll give you the condensed version. They had three different groups and they were all needing pain relief. They had this paste and they put them in three different tubes. The paste in each of the three different tubes was neutral, so each group received the exact same treatment, however, the label on the tube was different.

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Group 1 said neutral, group 2 said capsaicin, which is the active ingredient in chili powder, and the group 3 said lidocaine, which is indeed a pain reliever.

As you can guess when they took out for group 1, the one that said neutral, the people's brains did nothing. The paste was applied and they reported no effect, just what we would have expected. Group 2 with the tube label capsaicin, the people in the group, their brain started to react before anything, even though it was even neutral, was applied, and got anxious and tensed and fearful, which shuts down our creative logical thinking. In other words, people aren't going to see as many possibilities because that part of the brain isn't working as well. That kicked in and then they applied the neutral paste but people reported pain because they thought it was capsaicin. The last group where it was labeled lidocaine, the people's brains became calmer and more relaxed even though they were in pain in anticipation, the expectation of pain relief and then of course they did indeed report some relief from the pain. Literal changes in our brain according to our beliefs and our expectations. We as coaches want to have that possibility mindset and of course, we want to put our clients in that place where they can explore the possibilities.

CHRIS: We're going to talk about some of the skills, questions, and the techniques that you can use as a coach to help your clients see and create new possibilities for themselves right in the moment when they are in the session there and just in that open exploratory space. Let's step back and look at the larger picture of what might be going on.

KIM: What we're going to start with as we discuss these is think about what we would call the typical coaching situations. Somebody comes in and they want to make a decision or do something different, and we use the competencies just as the ICF has outlined them. We create a safe and trusting environment, we're willing to stay in the question and be curious. We reflect back what the client says so they can hear it, we listen and identify and articulate any hidden mindsets or beliefs that seemed behind it. We ask exploratory questions and we don't rush to a

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solution. I'd say a good, I don't know, 7, 8, 9 times out of 10, that helps the client move forward in that session and overall with their goal. Those are the techniques we want to use. There are instances when we do all of those things and it seems like something else must be going on because the client isn't making the forward movement they desire. Let's talk about some of those stickier situations for a minute, Chris.

CHRIS: Definitely. One of the biggest things that we run into pretty commonly is habitual ways of thinking. Habit, as we all know, is something that's very resistant to change and we all have all kinds of habits many of which we're entirely unaware of. We didn't even realize that it was a habit and that can be in a habit of way of doing something but oftentimes, the ones we're exploring most are habits of the ways of thinking about something. We have a habitual way of thinking about something and you just run into it and you might as well go bang your head against a brick wall. It just feels like it's not going to move at all. That is the way things are and kind of like Kim's illustration there at the beginning of the podcast when she was saying, "We as the coach mustn't get hooked into those."

If we actually believe that the way they are viewing it right now is the only way it can be viewed, well, goodness, I guess we're done right now. Wow to us. There's no other possibility here. No, we can't buy into those habitual ways of thinking but we do listen for them. We listen for the habitual thinking and then we challenge it sometimes gently, sometimes pretty aggressively. I'm going to give an example here of a very successful coach who was discussing why they did not believe that there was much possibility for them to greatly increase the current income they were making from their coaching practice. Their statement to me that just had a sign hung on it that said, "Here's habitual thinking." The statement was, "Chris, I am never going to make \$200,000 a year from coaching. There are too many things I love to do that don't make money."

There was the habitual thinking. That was a mental rehearsal that they had embraced and told themselves over and over again so they just spoke it right out



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there and rather than getting hooked by it, rather than believing that there was any truth to such a statement, I smiled real big and with a twinkle in my eye, we were face to face at a time, just said, “What about trying on something like there are so many things that I love to do that I haven’t figured out how to monetize yet?”

KIM: I love that.

CHRIS: Oh, very definitely and I saw the eyes light up when they heard that kind of pushback there and there was laughter. There was the laughter that says, “What a relief. I just felt 1,000-lb weight tumble off of my back here. The sky has opened up with possibilities. The very thing that I was telling myself was the reason I couldn’t make any more money because there are so many things I love to do and they don’t make money. It can become the actual means by which I make all that other money because I do love to do these things, which means I’m good at them, which means I know other people who can open doors for me with them, etc.” Terribly important that the coach always show up in that mindset of possibilities and then when you hear that habitual thinking that you just give a good firm push back or like I said, maybe sometimes a more gentle push back, but challenge nonetheless.

KIM: Yeah, it’s that “both and” thinking instead of “either or.” Our clients tend to come in with “It’s either this or that,” and immediately when I hear that, I start thinking, “Oh, but what if?” The possibilities as Dr. Seuss would say, right, are endless.

Another thing I think that gets in people’s ways when they come into coaching and they stay stuck is that they are tired. Their brain is tired. It’s crowded. We all know how our creativity is just zapped and we can’t seem to think of anything different to do or way to go about it. I think about this like when I go to the gym and I work out with my 15, 20-lb arm weights, my little weights, soup can kind of weights at the gym and I lift them and I lift them and I lift them and I lift them until my arm is fatigued and I can’t do another bicep curl to save my life.

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It's not that the weight is too heavy. It's the exact same weight as when I started that series of reps. It's just that I'm exhausted and the same thing happens to our brain. It gets fatigued, it gets tired and so that creative space is shut down. As a coach, when you have a client who is perpetually or even momentarily in that state, maybe we need to step back from coaching around the specific issue, stuckness or decision, and address that larger issue of what's going on. How can you create space in your life during this tough time so that you can regain some energy? What environmental changes can you make that will put you in a space of peace during times of decision? It's more about self care and self management than that one issue. When the self care, the good night sleep, all of those things get resolved, that person is back in a place of thinking and able to envision all the possibilities that are in front of them.

CHRIS: Very definitely, you want to listen for those things. You want to look for them on the prep form as when your clients are alerting you ahead of time what's going on their life. It might not have anything to do or appear to have anything to do with what they say they want to focus on and what outcome they want from the session, but if you've asked the question in the prep form that says something like, "What I had intended to do but haven't or current stressors I'm facing in my life" or anything like that and they put something in there, what Kim is really saying here is that just exhaustion that comes from grieving or from stress, from something entirely unrelated to what you're coaching around but it's real stress, or a great deal of anger that has been churned up inside of them. Those things exhaust us. Our psyche, our self, our personhood shows up fatigued and then it's very hard to do great out of the box thinking about possibilities because we're distracted and we're drained.

The coach hearing that thing calling here, it's not habitual mindset they have, there's just other stuff going on that they hadn't really been aware, "Yeah, you know, that is zapping me. That's why I'm not so creative today. Thank you. Maybe I do need just to kind of be with that stuff for a while." And likewise, a

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similar kind of a thing is what we call decision fatigue. This is a very specific kind of fatigue that comes from having too many choices.

When I think of decision fatigue, I always think about the story I heard of a friend of ours who hosted a couple coming from one of the countries in the former Soviet Union back shortly after the iron curtain fell and that couple, a husband and wife, had come here to the United States, they knew how to drive so they had taken one of the vehicles out to neighborhood grocery just to pick up groceries. When they didn't come back, it was kind of unusual and they went down here. It turns out that the husband had found himself in one of the isles so overwhelmed by all of the options for food. It's like it crushed him. He was in a fetal position unable to get up and just continue carrying on the simple task, we would say, of getting groceries because he had never seen such an array of so many choices of different kinds of foods.

In his country, when you went hoping that there was something at the market, whatever was there was what you bought. If it was somebody had slaughtered lamb that day, you've got lamb. If it was fish that came in, you got fish and if there was only bread, you've got bread. He was just entirely unable to process that. That's a metaphorical picture of decision fatigue. Sometimes, possibilities thinking can lead us to seeing so many possibilities that we get kind of in that same state of overwhelm. I see too much here and I don't know how to sort through it all or probably much more typically, we've already made so many other big decisions about other things in life that basically, our brain is just getting fatigued from making decisions – period.

The brain in terms of its decision making capacity is expandable. It does get tired overtime just like Kim's illustration there of curling the bicep. Decisions that would other times be very easy for us to make suddenly become just too much. It's just that straw that's breaking the camel's back. I can't make one more decision.

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KIM: Chris, that reminds you while you're talking about that of one of the common things I see sometimes in peer coaching that we do in classes here in the Essentials Class. Our students coach one another outside of class and in class and because they are being coached so frequently, certain topics tend to come up again and again. One of the ones that I've notice comes up is diet and exercise. Everybody wants to eat healthier, lose a little bit of weight, and move forward in that. Yet interestingly enough, it comes up again and again and again because it's not always a long term solution that they are coached to. It's often a short term solution. I've been listening to what's going on and paying attention to all of this and what I've realized is for many of our coaches, they are going through school. They are changing careers. They are trying to manage their family.

They are making these huge decisions in life. Do they really have bandwidth in their brain to decide what diet, what to eat, what to bring to work, how to keep it fresh, how to cook it? All of these decisions, the "want to" is there in our clients, but sometimes, they are putting unrealistic expectations on their brain. Our capacity for massive change especially change that requires a lot of will power and a lot of decisions is like you said, Chris, very, very limited and they are only setting themselves up for failure by looking at it. Whereas a wise coach might say, "What other ways could you handle this without all these decisions coming up? Looking at the big picture, right Chris, we always coach the person, not the problem. So coaching the person, taking that holistic approach will help us not set them up in a situation where they are not likely to succeed.

Let me roll right into that because it all kind of plays together. Another common sabotaging thing I think that can happen in coaching sessions is this fear of failure that most of us have in certain areas of life. We just don't like to fail and by the time we're adults, we usually can make enough choices in life where we choose to do things we're good at and we succeed. So we're not really very good at failure.

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This is a hidden mindset that clients can bring into a situation that prevent them from succeeding because they don't realize that it's the fear of failure that's holding them back. They think it's lack of time, lack of experience, lack of opportunity, and so they tend to not want to really see the possibilities because if they saw the possibilities, they would have to take them. I see this when clients come into marketing their coaching business for the first time for example. There are a lot of courageous decisions, telling people that you're a coach. That's just a whole different identity kind of thing. Sitting down with friends saying, "Yes, hire me and yes, pay me money."

That's a courageous conversation for a lot of people, and so some new coaches are tempted to say, "You know, I'm not ready yet. I think if I had one more certification, I think if I had one more class, I think if I did just a little bit more research, I think..." and they are not seeing the possibilities of marketing their coaching business because they are scary possibilities. Again as coaches, it's our job to listen for the things that they can't see and point them out. It's certainly up to them to make the choice what to do, but it's up to us to point them out so they see them clearly in front of themselves.

CHRIS: And as you said, one of the things that we're going to be hearing here is fear. Fear, we all know, is a terrible crippler and so when the coach believes that they are hearing some kind of a fear based response, we again either gently or sometimes fairly assertively, maybe even aggressively press into that fear, call it by name. I couldn't help thinking when you were talking there, Kim, about one of the therapists who worked for me back when I ran my therapy practice 20 some odd years ago. Incredibly sharp gal and she was very, very skilled with children.

Well, you were a therapist so you know how much work is involved in becoming board certified in play therapy, tons and tons of hours of practice and supervision and all. She was board certified in play therapy. she had two master's degrees and she was a mom. She's banging on all cylinders here and we were talking about the importance of her going out with me to begin doing some more

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marketing of her practice to build her caseload. Her response to me was, “You know, I still feel really kind quite not ready for that. Honestly, I think it would be a whole lot more confident if I finished my doctorate work.”

What you hear there is fear of marketing, not the need for a doctorate on top of all of that other education and certification. It was fear of the marketing and of course, that was the conversation that we had and it was kind of like, “Yeah, okay, probably,” but as a coach, we just always would be listening with half an ear for that issue of fear because again, it will cripple the client and heaven forbid, not only the client hears their fear and speaks it forth, but then the coach gets hooked into the fear and believes they really can’t do that or they really do need something other than what they already bring, we just wind up hobbling them ourselves. We’ve handicapped them ourselves.

**KIM:** Alright, so we’ve talked about the importance of possibility mindset for the coach. We’ve talked about some of the obstacles or the barriers that prevent our clients moving forward and how we want to work around them and so the third section of our conversation today, we really want to focus in for you, the listener, on some of the strategies that you can use, very specific practical tools that you can use today with your clients to help keep them moving forward. We are not in any way pretending this is an exhaustive list or an exhaustive treatment, but we did want you to leave with some practical tools.

The first one is what we call imagining or visioning the future. I want to start with a quote by Daniel Polley. He is the Associate Professor at Harvard Medical School and Brain Imaging Research. He’s always looking into the brain and providing coaching applications and real world applications for the rest of us, which I really appreciate. He said that imagination and mental pictures are very valuable way of stimulating possibilities. For people who do not use mental pictures, possibility can seem like it’s not really going to happen. What he is saying we’re priming the brain and saying, “You can take this path. This is a

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legitimate destination.” We do that by helping our client step into the future or imagine the future.

Simple questions would be, “Imagine it’s five years from now and this project has been 100% successful. What is it like? What kind of positive experiences are happening in your life? How is your family reacting? What is your favorite part?” Really helping them imagine it emotionally, viscerally, physically in every way possible. Another way is to think about it in terms of other people in their life, people who wanted good relationship with their children sometimes they will say, “Imagine that Johnny is graduating from high school and he’s class valedictorian of all things and he’s reading, “And I owe it all to my dad because he...” What would he say? What do you want him to fill in the blank with? What’s important about your relationship?

And it doesn’t even have to be distant future, Chris. Sometimes, client’s goals are “I want to have a good conversation with my boss about this promotion and I’m really nervous about it. It’s next Thursday.” Well, step into the future. So it will be, “Imagine that you just walked out of your boss’ office and that conversation was a 10/10. What happened? What did you say? How did he react?” One of my favorite questions to ask at that point, “Right before you knocked on his door and went into the office and everything within you screamed don’t have this conversation. How did you talk yourself into it? How did you overcome your fears? What are you saying to keep you moving forward?” I want them to imagine not just the physical event but the self talk that’s leading to that positive experience.

CHRIS: Tremendously helpful to verbally take our clients out to possibilities of the future and to invite them to just try them on. Don’t have to keep anything but you’re just going to try it on and see what’s different when you’re in that space. A similar tool that we want to offer is the magic wand question. Pretty much everybody is familiar with this, but if you were facing this challenge right now and you had a magic wand and you could just wave it and get rid of the obstacle

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or wave it and make this thing happen or wave it and change your current circumstances, what would be possible? What would be the result? What would happen?” You invite them to simply consider that.

Now, part of this sounds kind of childish. I mean, imagination, that’s like childhood tent. That’s like me quoting Dr. Seuss a moment ago, but we’re trying to get our clients to access a part of the brain that we as adults often unlearn the access to. It’s like we closed the door to imagination sometime in our teen years when it wasn’t cool or something. I don’t know what happened but we’re trying to access that very creative imaginative part of us by giving them these little things like, “Let’s step into the future” or “What about this?” or “If you had a magic wand and just bippity boppity boo, you could just wave it over the thing, what would be possible? What would happen to that? What would you see now?” many times, our clients will kind of play along, maybe even kind of give a little snarky chuckle about it but they will step into it and boy, there it is, cork is out of the bottle. All kinds of new possibilities suddenly start tumbling out. That’s all you really want is to get that cork out of the bottle.

KIM: Yeah. Another way to do this is with that 30,000 foot view type of question. One of the ways I look at it is, I’m not big into hunting obviously but some people are, but apparently geese and ducks, when they are on the ground, they are just like us. They have eyes on either side of their head. They can see only as far the first obstacle, right? They can’t see around it anymore than we can see around it on the ground. That’s how we tend to look at life, but when geese fly in the air because their eyes are on the side of their head, they can actually see 360 degrees and they see where they have come from, where they are going, and they see over any obstacles in their way, they see paths they didn’t see before, sources of nourishment, obstacles like hunters and the list goes on and on.

God has given human beings and the brain this amazing ability to what I call time and space travel. We can move ourselves mentally into a different time or different space. When we ask our clients to mentally rise above and look down as



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if at 30,000 ft on their problem, again Chris, a simple perspective change but with powerful results. They are all like, “Oh, well, I see that I’ve ran into this problem many times over the years and every time, this seems to have helped” or “I see that in the big scheme of life, this is a small thing and if I just approach it this way” and on it goes.

One of my favorite big perspective questions though is the God question because of course, He is the ultimate perspective and the true perspective. I like to set God up to really shine by making our problem harder before He makes it better. Often I’ll say to my clients and I’ll just reiterate whatever is going on. “Alright, so the desires of your heart are A and everything within you wants A. The circumstances of your life seemed to be B, C, D, E, and F and they are completely hemming you in,” and then I just let them sit with that for a minute because that’s how they feel – stuck. I’ll say, “Huh, I wonder what God is thinking about all that? I wonder why He thought this was a good time in your life for that to occur or why you were just the person to choose for this situation.”

They will just pause and looking at from God’s point of view, from a spiritual point of view, the Kingdom point of view. It’s amazing what they will come up with. So often, it’s like, “Alright, so it’s not about the financial troubles. He’s been trying to teach me perseverance. He has come at me at several different directions. Now that I think about it, that’s what this is about.” Now, they can think of a different way to approach it. Possibilities open up.

CHRIS: Definitely. That’s a 30,000-foot view, 5,000-foot view, or climbing to the top of a tree or in that case, trying to step into the mind of God if we could do such a thing and catch some little glimmer of what He would see, which of course would be abundance of possibilities.

Similar to that, other people in the individual’s life. Maybe not so large and grandiose as God but somebody else who they admire or know who has already done what they are trying to do or who seems to be successful in this or seems to have an easier time with such and such, might be a friend of theirs, a hero that

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they look up to, might be just a wise friend, might be another person facing similar kinds of things from the past who has written a book or whatever, but you invite them to consider it from those perspectives and you just say, “Okay, so you have read a lot of so and so’s works. What do you figure they would say about your situation right now?” or “Okay, so you said so and so has really accomplished such and such in their business world. What would they advise you in regard to this?”

Now the words that come out of the client’s mouth are going to be the client’s words. They are putting words into their hero or their mentor’s mouth, but it’s coming from their own mouth to themselves because you invited them to give themselves input from a different space within self, again, an imaginative space. “What would so and so say?” Many times once again, that’s all that’s required to get that little cork pop out of the bottle and here we go.

KIM: Yup, possibilities, possibilities everywhere. Let’s finish up with just one more primary tool and I call this exceptional thinking. So our clients come to us because they want exceptional results, not average results. Chris, I would say that the people who are listening to this podcast want to be exceptional coaches or they would not be listening to the podcast. There are areas in almost all of our lives where we really want to be above ordinary. We want to be exceptional, but when you think about the average bell curve, most people fall into normal, ordinary, just fine.

That’s just the general distribution and the way things go, and so that tends to be, I think the way our minds work and our client’s minds work when we ask about possibilities, different things you could do, different ways to look at it, they are all tend to falling in the bell curve. The question is, what’s exceptional in this situation? If you want an exceptional result, what would that be? If you want exceptional results, that takes exceptional actions. What’s an exceptional action look like in this circumstance or who do you know who is an exception to this rule? How did they do it? Once again, you open up to the mind that okay, not

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everyone hits the glass ceiling at work. Some actually manage to rise above it. Why are they the exception? Once we open our minds to the fact that there are exceptions then we can start to discover they are out there.

CHRIS: And boy, this is a frequent conversation around the dinner table here at the McCluskey household. We have a large family. We've got seven kids and my kids often remind me when we're facing things that I begin getting some limiting thinking on. They will say, "Dad, you always say anything is possible." They are right and good for them for holding on to that. Some of the wild, crazy things that they have done and succeeded in were birthed out of that mindset that has been so drummed into the kids as part of our kind of approach to home schooling and life and all.

Kim, I pulled a quote that I use with the kids that kind of I think illustrates this general approach to just life, to growing up, to trying things, to entering the workforce, etc. It's from Pablo Picasso, the very out of the box, very beyond the normal bell curve artist. He said, "When I was a child, my mother said to me, if you become a soldier, you'll be a general. If you become a monk, you'll be the pope. Instead, I became a painter and wound up as Picasso."

KIM: That's beautiful.

CHRIS: Isn't that great? Now, what I love about it is this is just a mom bragging up her kid and thinking that her kid ought to be pope or anything that can be done, it ought to be you doing it. This is not about braggadocio building up just an ego. This is about a mindset that says, "Wait a minute. Somebody is going to be general. Somebody is going to be pope. Somebody is going to be a great artist and so if I instill in you that possibilities mindset that says, "Well, his mom didn't know that he was going to become a painter but he had this mindset that talked about thinking outside that bell curve, looking toward exceptional. What's unusual? What's different? What could be here and living in that space?"

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Yeah, he wound up as Picasso and you wind up as Kim Avery and I wind up as Chris McCluskey, and any of the rest of us that are listening here, we wind up becoming maybe more completely who God created us to be, maybe more fully living out everything that he actually loaded in there and the hardwiring and the software that got installed to us, all that could have been, I would propose that most times, it is we who limit all that would be possible, and it's just our own thinking, our own fear, our own insecurities, our own doubt, our own habitual thinking, all of the things we've been talking about that can limit us which is why we're so high on coaching.

That's why Kim and I both always use our own coaches. We are better selves when we have somebody else come alongside of us and help us call us out to possibilities thinking. Let's start to wrap this baby up here and bring this plane into land as we so often times say.

KIM: Well, that's funny that you would say that, Chris, about landing the plane because it just occurs to me that possibilities thinking is really what led the Wright Brothers to attempt flying when we had never flown before. It's the early astronauts who dared to dream of walking on the moon. All the exceptional things in life that have occurred are because people believed in the possibilities. I believe you have one final inspiring quote for us before we finish for today, Chris.

CHRIS: Well, I do but I love what you said there about the Wright brothers and the early astronauts and all. Talk about a word picture or a metaphor that we can hold in our minds. Wow, what's possible? Somebody is standing here on earth and looking up the moon and saying, "I wonder what it would be like to walk on the moon." or watching birds fly, "I wonder what it would be like to be able to fly," and then finding out a way to do it. That's a great illustration.

The little quote that I thought I'd wrap us up with today, gang, is from one of the authors that probably many of you have read some little poems to your children from Shel Silverstein. He says this, "Listen to the mustn'ts, child. Listen to the

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don'ts. Listen to the shouldn'ts, the impossibles, the won'ts. Listen to the never haves, then listen close to me. Anything can happen, child. Anything can be.”

That's a great little fun, light, and playful, powerful, deep truth. As coaches, we will listen to our clients mustn'ts, shouldn'ts, and don'ts, and they will hear them themselves. We simply mustn't allow them to stay there, to only listen to those things. We create the opportunity, the possibility for them to think about other possibilities because indeed, anything can happen, anything can be.

Well, in contemplating that little point for meditation there, we encourage you to visit us again out on the web anytime that you're out there. We would love to hear from you on Facebook. Our Facebook profile of course is just Professional Christian Coaching Today and if you're on the web, be sure and visit our main website where all of the past episodes are listed as well as our blog is there and a search engine for Christian coaches and all other kinds of things at Professional Christian Coaching Today.

Particularly while you're out there, let us draw your attention to the group that Kim and I co-facilitate for coaches to help them with their possibilities thinking particularly in regard to marketing and getting outside your own limitations with regard to what you could charge, what's possible for growing your business and diversifying your various offerings for other income streams and such. If you scroll down on the website, you will see on the right hand side there an icon that says “High Impact Mastermind.”

That is a group that Kim and I co-facilitate. There are actually two different versions of it. For newer coaches just starting out and for more experienced coaches that are looking at diversifying their offerings, if you have any interest in joining she and I for that mastermind group, that's an ongoing thing we facilitate through our private practices, click the link there. There is an application to fill out. It comes to us directly and we will get back with you immediately to see if you could fit into one of those groups.

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With that, until next time. Keep raising the standard of coaching and changing the world.

KIM: God's richest blessings to you.