



PROFESSIONAL CHRISTIAN COACHING TODAY

Chris McCluskey & Kim Avery

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

Episode 004

From Tragedy to Triumph: John Ramstead, Part 2

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.

Here we are again, picking up actually from a previous episode with our friend John Ramstead. If you have not listened to the first half of this podcast, you will want to go back and hear that story. But just to recap what we heard before, before we kick into the second half here: John is a gentleman with an amazing background before he even came to the Lord. The Lord had wired this guy for pretty amazing things, a very decorated military veteran, a highly successful executive, a financial advisor, a husband and father of three, came to the Lord, seeking to lead his family in some very dynamic ways and on many planes by many different measures of success, seemed to be knocking on all cylinders there. And yet, he talks about a smoldering discontent that was often present with him, even after coming to the Lord, even after his wife had joined him in that. And they were leading what looked like a rich Christian life. There was something very present in his being that said there's more. You were created for

PROFESSIONAL CHRISTIAN COACHING TODAY

more and this is not where the Lord has called you for this season. Well, if you've listened to our previous podcast, well, the Lord took him to a very harsh place. We talk sometimes in Christian circles about severe mercies. The Lord in His mercy sometimes, well, He chastens those He loves and so John went through an amazing accident. Absolutely by any measure should have taken his life. At the very least, should have left him a paraplegic, quadriplegic, terribly impaired. A horse accident, again, you can hear more about that on the first half, but the Lord not only spared his life, He met him at the very moment of the accident itself. Spoke words, John said, very, very clearly to him, articulate words, giving him assurance that He was with him, he was going to survive this and this was going to be used. And in the subsequent three and a half years from that accident until today when we're having this conversation, the Lord has done amazing things in giving him back full recovery, full cognitive ability. He can walk and talk and drive a car and still fly an airplane even. And he is now a full-time practicing Christian coach with a very successful podcast of his own and Kim and I are going to pick up with the second half of the interview that we shared with him, as he continues this amazing story.

John: This is about two years and I'll never forget it. I'd just felt like I had made so much progress and all of the sudden I'm in my prayer time and I hear God's voice again. And this was right before I ended up reaching out and talking with you, Chris. What God shared with me was, "I want you to use this life that I've given you to equip and inspire leaders to work in my kingdom. And I had no clue what that even looked like. Like, okay great. That's a great mission statement. What do I do with that one?"

Chris: What does that mean, right? [laughter]

John: So this was on a Saturday and on Monday morning I was meeting with a friend of mine. I was still working at this company, called Financial Designs. And I'll never forget this, my friend, very successful businessman here in town. He goes, "Hey, here's how I view my life right now. I've got these three pillars: business, my family, and my faith. And whatever I focus on does extraordinarily well and whatever I'm not focusing on, the other two, languish. I feel like the answer to pull all three of these together is

PROFESSIONAL CHRISTIAN COACHING TODAY

right in front of me and I just can't get there." So he goes, "I've just decided to hire a coach and I think you should be a coach. And if you decide to do that, I'll be your first client." Now, I'm like...You know, other than working with Jeff Spatafora, I didn't know much about coaching and the coaching world so I reached out to a friend of mine, who's an executive coach. He's a Christian. We spent two and a half hours talking and he said, "I really think this is something you need to do. I don't tell that to many people but I'm telling you, this is God. Your whole life has prepared you to be doing this."

And here's the scary part about this, though, Chris. Here's a guy who at the time can work twenty hours a week, totally dependent on the salary from this company, and the healthcare benefits. And to really pursue a career in coaching, I would actually have to step away from that, cut the cord and step out totally in faith that I could actually develop a coaching practice and support my family because my wife is a physical therapist and she's been home with the kids for fifteen years. And because of the accident, now she has to go back to work. In Colorado, you have to retake the Boards to work in Colorado, if you haven't worked in five years. That's at least a year process so I knew she was at least eighteen months away, literally, from being able to do anything to support the family. That's where we were at when we had to make that decision. And that is, as you know, the decision that I made to cut the cord and step out completely on faith to go in this direction and I felt this is what God had called me to do.

Chris: It's a monstrous decision that you made and I want to underscore a couple of points here. First of all, I love the metaphor that it sounds like that coach gave to you and then the Lord kind of spoke to you. "How is it that I'm wired?" Well, you've got an electrical engineering background and a tech background. Wiring is a metaphor that would work for you. And you know that when you wire something, you as the creator of it, you, John Ramstead, would wire it to do certain things and you're saying it really came to a place of saying, "Wow, I'm at a season of my life where I'm realizing I'm not really clear how God, my Creator, actually wired me, at least for this new season." It's not that you'd done nothing up to that point that was in keeping with His design but there's some whole new thing that is what He spoke to you about when you were lying there in the

PROFESSIONAL CHRISTIAN COACHING TODAY

grass after being thrown off that horse. And you don't see it but you're wired for it. The software's in there. It's already been downloaded, it's just not booted up yet or something and so that sounds like the process that you were going through in the coaching with Jeff Spatafora. So when these questions began to be explored and you started looking at the constraints and the limitations and the "yes, buts," you know, you're just barely making it with the income that this place is giving you as a salary for the few hours of work you can even put in. Donna's not going to be able to reenter the work force for at least twelve to eighteen months. You're going to start a coaching practice of your own? When you have no real background in that, don't really understand the field, just experienced it. So that is the point at which you and I first connected. So let's just jump our listeners in there but, wow, what a lot led up to that phone call.

John: I'll never forget that phone call, because I remember things just...signposts and doors...that this is really the direction I need to go into and so I asked Jeff, I said, "They have an enormous coaching initiative that's global. I think they have forty, forty-five coaches." And he said, "Listen, there's only one place I'd recommend. It's where we have every one of our coaches trained and it's the Professional Christian Coaching Institute. Here's the name of my friend, Chris McCluskey, and get in touch with him. And I want you to at least go take what they call The Essentials of Coaching class. Take that class and then I think you'll be able to see if this is something that's really for you." Um, you know I think Jeff was coming from the approach of let's kind of make this a probe into coaching and see if this is something you want to do.

And you know, as a...I ordered the books, I think I read the first text for that Co-active Coaching. I think I had finished reading that book before the first class started. And I'm like, you know, this is for me. And you know what? I heard your story, Chris. It was so encouraging because you went through with Lyme's disease very similar physical things that I was going through, some limitations on your time. And I realized, you know, in coaching not only could I honor God and what He's done to me, I can have an impact on people's lives. That's truly on my heart; that is the driver. But I can do that in

PROFESSIONAL CHRISTIAN COACHING TODAY

a way that supports my family and it felt like everything lined up. That being a Christian life coach and then taking those skills and moving into where I was comfortable, in executive and leadership coaching was the way to go. And so I signed up for the course and I, honestly, had six, seven figure bills over the last three years. I had not really had any income to speak of. I had no idea how I was going to pay for, you know, next month's mortgage sometimes, let alone adding in coaching expense. Totally stepped out in faith and just signed up for the Essentials course. And then something very interesting happened, didn't it?

Chris: It did! I did not know that background that you just shared there. But, yeah, I got a phone call. Well, you probably better tell this part of it because you know the players, but there was supposed to be an anonymous phone call. Some friends of yours, who had been closer than a brother, they had been standing with you in the Lord throughout all of this. Got together with each other first and then reached out to me. So yeah, paint that picture there.

John: Yeah, you know, I told them what I was doing. One of them asked me how I was going to pay for it and I said, "I'm just stepping out on faith. We're going to make it work." Uh, that was it. I didn't ask anybody for help. They got together as a group and called you and said, "How much does the whole process cost, including in advance, sort of everything, right? And they got together and wrote you a check for the entire cost of all the training I did through and for you and I feel...And honestly, except for, I know one of the people in that group, everyone else wanted to stay entirely anonymous. And I have continued to follow up with that one person to share with that group, who I don't know all of the people to this day, just about the stories of the coaching I'm having, the impact in people's lives, the breakthroughs they're having, the results, the outcomes in their marriage, their relationships, their faith, their business, cuz I want to share with them the encouragement of what God's doing through me and the coaching I'm able to do now. Just to let them know that that investment has now impacted hundreds, thousands, millions, I don't know. Maybe God will show me some day but that's what they helped start.

PROFESSIONAL CHRISTIAN COACHING TODAY

Kim: And that's the power of coaching, isn't it? That power of the ripple effect. How one life can really change everybody in their sphere of influence and those people go out and affect other people and on and on it goes. Which is what I think makes coaching so attractive and so rewarding. I just want to highlight the fact, you know, that from the human point of view, none of that would have happened, if you hadn't stepped out in faith. You know, lots of times people say, "I don't know. How do I know if this is the right thing, if it's God? And I just noted what you said that you listened to what God was saying to you. God spoke through other people into your life. He provided signposts through circumstances. He asked you to step out in faith before He gave you this miraculous provision and then it came, which...isn't it just like God? It's just a beautiful, beautiful thing. So yeah, keep going. This is such a great story. So pick up from there, John. What happens next?

John: Well, it was very humbling. I gotta tell you, you know, it was incredibly humbling. The other thing that struck me at the accident, being in God's presence, feeling that unconditional love. Something that I really have to tell you guys that really struck me is I was really convicted of is do I have that level of agape, unconditional love with my wife Donna, with my kids, with my friends? How important, really, are relationships. I was so wired as a business guy before. I would, you know, go to a networking event, look at people, and say, "Okay, who here can we make money from? What's a relationship I need to focus on?" And everything there was just completely flipped on its head and I realized, you know, it's really true, deep relationships with people you're adding value in your life, where you can really start taking what God has done for you and start bringing that out into the world. And, you know, that for me has been a profound change in really how I think and how I do things and who I am. So I don't know if that answers your question there at all.

But what happened next is I did, I started the course, and then, I remember, I had a conversation with you, Chris. I'm like, "You know what? The course is great but--" But how long is the Essentials course, about twelve weeks?

PROFESSIONAL CHRISTIAN COACHING TODAY

Chris: Fifteen weeks.

John: Fifteen weeks. "Okay, buddy, I can't wait fifteen weeks to get some clients." You know I'm kind of used to being an entrepreneur, let's rock and roll, let's get this up and running.

Chris: Right.

John: I said, "Here's what I know I don't know how to do. I don't know how to coach. I don't know how to build a coaching practice. I don't know how to run a coaching practice. So you're helping me out with the whole how to coach things so what I do to do the marketing, the sales, talk about coaching? I really need some help." And you referred me to Kim Avery. Kim, you're on the call. And I remember I hired you right away before I was really even into the Essentials course cuz you just specialize in the marketing work with coaches. Anybody who's listening that's trying to, you know, get a practice up and running, I cannot recommend Kim highly enough. And that is not a paid comment, by the way.

Kim: Ah, thank you.

John: But you really helped me take my business experience in the past and shape that and apply it to what I now had to do in a whole new arena. And then I was learning the skills from the Essentials class. And I think about three, four weeks into the first class, I'd been talking to people about what I am doing. Kim had equipped me on how to have those conversations and I had my first paying client and it was at five hundred dollars a month. And then the number of clients and what I was starting to charge was on a monthly or yearly basis, continued to go up from there. In six months we had a coaching practice that completely supported my family. And in fact, it was making as much, actually more than I was making on the salary from that other company after I even took out my own healthcare benefits. So it was an incredible journey. It took a lot of work. There were definitely some challenges, some ups and downs, doubts, fears, concerns, worry. And I had a coach through that whole period of time that I worked with. And it was...I mean, I wouldn't exchange it for anything.

PROFESSIONAL CHRISTIAN COACHING TODAY

Chris: No, really, once the pieces started to fall into place, you're right. That entrepreneurial, let's get going here part of you definitely kicked in. I can remember those conversations, too. You took the whole slate of classes that these friends of yours had ponied up for; you took them rapid fire. You had two, three, four classes you were taking at the same time, while you were also putting together the pieces of the infrastructure, so to speak, of the private practice. Now, most coaches like yourself, it's a solopreneurial practice. It's just you at home in your office where you're speaking to us from right now. And so it's not as if you suddenly were able to kick back into something unhealthy like sixty, seventy, eighty hours a week work weeks. You were still resting and doing your reading, listening to podcasts and classes as you could just lie down in a comfortable setting with a headset on and keep downloading the things the Lord was showing you here.

But the pieces began to fall into place relatively clearly and I always emphasize to our students...well, John, the class that we used to call The Accidental Entrepreneurs, now called The Successful Coach. It's one where we take them by the hand and just walk them through realizing to set up a private practice like this is not all that complex. It is business. It does have pieces and parts to it that need to be put into place, need to be activated, need to be worked with consistency, but this is not rocket science. This is not terribly complex, high-pressure kind of business. This is micropreneurial, solopreneurial, working from home kind of stuff. And through principally, what Kim emphasizes so often in her marketing programs, it's through relationships, relationship marketing, letting people know what you're doing that these first conversations happen. And just like you were illustrating there, your first clients begin to come forward. They hear what you're doing and they're saying as your friend did there, "Well, when you get set up, you let me know cuz I'm your first client." And somebody else says, "Well, I'll be number two." And somebody else says, "Well, I'll be a guinea pig. You can learn on me." And you turn around and you're, "Well, look what's happened here. Persons who have areas of gap in their own lives, wanting to grow, sensing God calling them to a new phase, not sure what that is or not sure how to operationalize it and make it happen, hear that you're a Christian who coaches in a professionally trained paradigm,

PROFESSIONAL CHRISTIAN COACHING TODAY

and they're saying, "When can we start?" I know that sounds like hype or oversell, but that's exactly what you're illustrating and that is exactly what happened. I mean because you've been at this just barely over one year. You started those classes in, what? March, maybe, of last year so it's been about a year and four months.

John: Or was it August? I think I had my first client in June of last year, so it's been fourteen months since I started the coaching practice.

Chris: And your coaching practice, you don't have to give us specific numbers, but you just underscored where it is, it's replaced what you were making. You're in a six-figure range. Give a kind of a take on typical John Ramstead life now, working from home, the number of hours you're working, basic income frame, etc.

John: Well, yeah, income, I mean gross income - we still have a lot of expenses and debt we're paying down - but it has been...my first year was just over a hundred thousand and, you know, that was a huge stretch goal for us. And our goal for the end of our second year is to do significantly more than that. I decided because of my time and limitations and other things that I would like to focus on, that I'm only gonna work with twelve clients. And I spend a lot of time with my clients and typically I like to do a year contract up front cuz I want their buy in because I know a lot of the work is, especially with executive coaching, you know, there are a lot of issues and things that definitely take some focus and perseverance to make some of these changes both in our personal lives, our companies and things to get to the results. So I meet with my clients, you know, it kind of depends, Chris, but I have three days a week between eight and one o'clock blocked off to meet with my clients. Mondays and Fridays I'm doing other things. Afternoons I have to keep free cuz I, typically, I can only work about twenty-five hours a week. I have to take a two to three hour nap most days still, just cuz how severe some of the brain injury was, even though cognitively I recovered. I've been told by the doctors unless God heals it that's just part of having this kind of injury, this is going to be ongoing for the rest of my life. But it's given me the freedom.

PROFESSIONAL CHRISTIAN COACHING TODAY

Um, we can talk about it. I've started a podcast that has done incredibly well on iTunes, starting another initiative with the company to reach out to do work in corporations, not just with people one on one. And here's something...a year ago I had this crazy idea. My son's going to college next year. I'm like, "What if we took our old pickup and rented a thirty-five foot RV trailer and took a month, just as a family and went around the country and just connected and had that time together before John goes off to college?" Well, we just got back from that trip, Chris, last weekend. It was an absolute blast and you know, I told every one of my clients, during the month of July, we're going to have to coach over the phone. And I've done that. I've actually tried to set that up where a majority of my clients we do a lot of either phone or in person or we mix it up. So I coached every single one of my clients while I was on the road. I remember once being, you know, I was in a coffee shop in Canada, Tim Horton's. It's like a Dunkin' Donuts.

Chris: Yeah, yeah.

John: And all these bikers come in. I mean like biker dudes, Harley guys, to get their coffee and donuts while I'm having one of my coaching sessions with one of my friends. It was actually kind of funny. But you know what? We made the whole thing work. And one of my dreams is, cuz a lot of the executive coaching that I've been doing has really been low key. You know, I've had to go to their offices, work with their teams. We're really trying to...over the next year my goal is to have the coaching practice such that it's completely location independent. And so that's some of the things we're putting into place so if I need to be here, it'll be on a much more limited scale because there's just so many things that God is opening up, you know.

I just was invited to go teach leadership training to some of the top companies and ministries in South Africa for a two-week trip at the end of this month. It would be an amazing opportunity to go that. And I just got a call from someone who's been listening to our podcast, who's a leader in Bangladesh. He is a Muslim; he's been listening to every one of our podcasts, which are very Christian based, but you know what he said? "Listening to you and hearing about this...you know there's 300 million people in

PROFESSIONAL CHRISTIAN COACHING TODAY

Bangladesh, a million and a half are Christians but a third of all the initiatives that are having a positive impact in our culture, business, you know, faith, you know, ethics, are coming from that Christian community. So would you be willing to come to Bangladesh and help me start a leadership institute out here?" Ah, I don't know if I could do that after being to South Africa for two weeks. But, you know, it's amazing to just see. These are opportunities that are a dream to me. And you know, if I'd just been working at that company, going in, putting in my sixty hours a week, building it, it was an insurance and asset management practice, I wouldn't be doing any of this. I wouldn't be sowing into people's lives. I wouldn't be, you know, having a positive effect, you know, in the kingdom and just this joy following God's calling. So you see, you've got me in a place I just love talking about but...

Kim: I can hear the energy. Yeah, yeah, it's crazy.

John: So I'm in a place I never...you know, it was hard, you know, the cost, the entrance fee to get here was steep but I'm glad that I got through the doors.

Kim: Yeah, so just in looking back, we talked earlier in our conversation about success and how about in different times in your life you defined success as being at the top of your class or getting to Top Gun or having the nice house in the big neighborhood. How do you define success now?

John: Well, it's a deep question. I'll never forget lying in the hospital bed. The first six weeks I was in ICU and a couple days in, the doctor came in to tell Donna and me, "We have to do brain surgery." They had to actually take off most of my skull to get in and repair everything. And he told her that the outcome of the surgery was very questionable and I could definitely not be the person she knew, ever, after the surgery. And he asked her if I had a will. And we'd just been working on it. We were going to actually sign our newest estate plan when I got back to Denver the following Monday. And he said, "Listen, we can delay the surgery until the morning. Can you have your attorney FedEx it up here so John can sign it before we go in?" Which I did. But I was lying there in my bed, going, "You know, from an inheritance stand point, Kim, my wife is taken care of,

PROFESSIONAL CHRISTIAN COACHING TODAY

my kids are taken care of, financially." And it made me emotional because I started thinking from a legacy perspective. What have I left in my wife? In my children? In my friends and the world around me? And if it is my funeral in a week from now, how excited would I be for what they're gonna say about me? You know what they're gonna say, "He's a great guy and he did this and he did that." But now it's three and a half years later. If people were sitting around having coffee, they'd be like, you know, "It's sad what happened. I wonder how's Donna doing? We miss having John around. So, Kim, how's business? How are things going?" So how I define success is I want to have, add so much value to people's lives, that the use of my life outlives my life and has eternal meaning. So that is what drives me every day. If I can succeed by just pouring myself into another person in a way that just helps them get where they're going. My passion is just to help people find God's purpose in their life, to figure out how they're wired and then how do you apply that into your business, into your faith, into your relationships. If I can have a funeral someday, whenever that is, and there's more people than the facility can hold and everyone just talks about the impact I had in a positive way in their life, I see that as a life well lived.

Chris: Wow. John, our listeners can't see you as Kim and I can right now, wiping away the tears and those are genuine. And you referenced my own health struggle and the crises that we've gone through. We are probably twin brothers of different mothers, you and I.

John: Yup.

Chris: We have that similar husband and daddy heart in us. And, you know, we've been talking here about the financial side of things and friends stepping forward to help you pay for this while you were terribly deep - you said six and seven figures - in debt. And we talked about the amazing income that's to be made from this and it distracts from the rest of the conversation. It feels like, gee, suddenly this interview went in a direction that I really didn't want it to go. I don't want to talk about the money. I mean, that's great that he got taken care of but the reality is that it takes money to put food on the table and if you can't pay that mortgage payment, a family is having to look for a different place to live and that disrupts the schools for the kids and everything else that

PROFESSIONAL CHRISTIAN COACHING TODAY

provides stability and grounding for our families. So money is an important piece of the story that you just shared, but you also hit on not just what the Lord is bringing in, restoring those years that the locusts have eaten, but the theme of debt. I've emphasized so many times that there are all kinds of debt in life. And if I've got to choose my debt that I might go to the grave with or my debt that I have to live under here in this life, I'll choose financial debt over relational debt any day of the week.

So I love what you said just as you were sharing that heartfelt definition of success with us. That it comes down to nothing having to do with the bank account and how much money is coming in and how much do these corporate and executive clients pay you and, "gee, look where we are now, financially. But instead it's we just took a month off and took the old beater truck and went out and camped. And, wow, I've got opportunity to work with people via telephone and maybe I go to South Africa and maybe I go to Bangladesh and maybe I don't. Maybe we work out something with video conferencing but impacting, making huge deposits in people's lives and all the lives that those lives touch, that's really our measure of success. That's what gives us the greatest joy." I love the Half Time motto: moving from success to significance. It's a different definition of what it means to succeed, to live a life that's significant because it touches other lives. Just kind of wanted to...I know that's your heart but I just wanted to be able to put words to what we're seeing on the screen as you wipe the eyes and say, "Yeah, that's really what it all comes down to, eh?"

John: Yeah, I think that's the measure, you just hit the nail of the head, Chris. At the end of the day when you're done running the race is that the life that you have here, the time that we're given, was it significant eternally? Was it significant in the lives around you? And that's what I strive for, that's what my prayer is every day, for wisdom and discernment on these opportunities coming in front of me that, you know, that do serve that direction. You know, God has just become my best friend, my best business partner, you know, at the same level as my wife, we go through this. And it's a place I never thought I could get to, but it's a place that before, that story I told you, that smoldering discontent. I think that He created us so that longing was there. I just

PROFESSIONAL CHRISTIAN COACHING TODAY

couldn't put my finger on what the longing was. And then, how to ever begin to address it. And that's what I love about the coaching that I get to do because, you know, a third of my clients are not believers. Some of them have hired me because of what I've gone through and my background. They know exactly what my story is. But no matter who I get to work with, to be able to have that kind of influence in their life.

You know, one of my clients just tripled the revenues of their company but he did it in a way that reduced his time at work from sixty hours a week down to twenty because through our coaching he realized the calling on his heart was to serve the people in Sierra Leone. He had no idea how he could do that with the hours he was working so we restructured everything about how the company was working, helped him to get total clarity on what God's calling him to do. And today he's actually working ten hours a week and his goal is twenty. And he is starting a non-profit that is impacting lives in a huge way in these tribal villages in Sierra Leone and at this point he can't even go there because of the Ebola problem. And he cannot wait until the day that the door opens because he's going to be on the first plane down there to do that. So just to be part of people's stories, you know, a small part or a big part, whatever it happens to be. If people are actualizing that in their life, for me, it's been worth everything I've gone through to get here.

Chris: Ahh, golly. Yeah, and what a statement that is because we know we wouldn't wish those kinds of trials on our worst enemy and yet to say and mean from the bottom of your heart, "I wouldn't trade it for the world."

John: Totally.

Chris: Everything is made new; everything is fresh. John, I'll be honest. I think I'm going to pull up short on one point because I'm afraid we're going to be remiss, if we don't tackle one other piece of your story. There are so many facets but I recognize for some of our listeners, they're hearing your background in executive and leadership in corporate kinds of settings. And so we're talking about the kind of practice that you're able to set and the fees you're able to charge and all. That's not the only kind of coaching. That is by no means a typical transition in to this field and so there are coaches that work on a

PROFESSIONAL CHRISTIAN COACHING TODAY

lot of other kinds of planes, just in life, life balance, new season of life. And so the other half of the John Ramstead story here is Donna Ramstead, the other half of you. Would you mind letting us peer behind, kind of, how Donna has gone through a little bit of this transition and her own experience with coaching and getting used to this new normal. Is it okay to probe there?

John: No, I think that's great. I'll never forget, Dr. Dobson actually asked us to come back on his radio show, Chris. And dwelling back, you know, she was my caregiver until I could learn how to drive again, for almost the first year and a half. I'll never forget asking her to help me remember some of the things, you know, what she went through, and I'm kind of preparing for this interview with Dr. Dobson. And she broke down sobbing, weeping, because this was so hard for her. And I hadn't realized how hard it was, she was trying to hide all that from me cuz she was trying to protect me. And as we...it was actually a really healing moment and opened up some conversations. But as I was being led into what I felt was, like, this dream that God had put on my heart, I didn't want to leave Donna behind. You know, how do I go pursue coaching and, you know, and she's here as a homeschool mom and she doesn't know, could I stroke out? The doctors kept warning us about this because of my injuries, a stroke or early onset Alzheimers, there's so much uncertainty, fear, doubt that she had. And, uh, I've heard your story and I heard Rachel share on your story, it's okay to share, but I reached out and I said, "Hey, I think...I talked to Donna and she just needs somebody to talk to. I don't know if it's so much coaching or just somebody who's been through it." Almost a mentor but...We'd actually brought the family to some Christian counseling just to help repair some of the damage. I can tell you, my recovery was very hard. I was a very different person with the brain injury, as you're aware. You know, my emotional control, my decision-making, just everything. I was a different person. It was very hard for my kids and Donna. And so she started working with Rachel and it was one of the biggest blessings for Donna to have somebody to talk to about. You know, it's interesting cuz I had this big vision that Donna would be my partner in the coaching practice and I was honestly kind of pushing for that. Um, I wasn't using very good coaching skills, Chris and Kim. [laughter]

PROFESSIONAL CHRISTIAN COACHING TODAY

Chris: I didn't know that.

John: “Look at Chris and Rachel. Come on, let's do what they did.” And she's like, "I don't know if that's really what I'm about." Well, you know what? It's become very clear through the coaching with Rachel that Donna wants to help me as much as she can but she feels with absolutely one hundred percent conviction - she didn't have this before - that she has been called to raise her three boys, our boys that we have, in the best way possible. That is her mission in life and until our last kid graduates, her attitude is “Don't talk to me about anything that gets in the way of that.” But when we had clarity together, and Rachel helped us bring that out, coaching did, about really what's Donna's role? What are her strengths and skills? She's the least technically savvy person ever. She's just started telling me about this and so, Kim, I was trying to have her help me on how to do Twitter.

Kim: Uh huh, yeah.

John: And she's like, "Uhhh." She couldn't do it. She couldn't do Twitter. A hundred and forty characters. I'm like, "Honey, you've got to be kidding me." [laughter] But I'm watching and I'm not saying anything. So anyway, here's what it allowed us to do, is to get in alignment together, to get on the same page. Where does coaching fit in to actually do? Now, what is the vision, mission, and purpose of actually our family and our marriage. We never talked about that before. Let's start there. What does that look like? What role do I have in that and what does coaching have in that? Here's your calling. She wants to be a stay at home mom, and a homeschool mom and now she's actually back, she's working part-time. She's working today two days a week. Um, how does this all fit together? So it became a situation. Instead of being one, it became very stressful and anxiety filled for her to one where, I gotta tell you really, over the last probably three, four months...Remember when you first started dating somebody? And like you couldn't wait - this was back before cell phones and texts, right? - so you couldn't wait to call them.

Kim: Right.

PROFESSIONAL CHRISTIAN COACHING TODAY

John: And then you call them and you're on the phone for like three hours. You're falling asleep and you're saying, "Good-bye, I love you." And she says, "I love you." It's like twenty minutes to get off the phone. Remember those days?

Kim: Uh huh.

Chris: Oh, yeah.

John: That is how we are back today. So Rachel has helped bring that into our life. You know, God has helped with that, the coaches I've had. But just think about that. You guys have that in your lives but that is there. It feels like something very aspirational that we should be striving for. What I love to tell people is, you know these things, these hopes, these goals, whatever you want to create, the marriage you want to have, the relationship with the kids you want to have, the options you want to be able to have in your life. And yes, a lot of those are driven by finances, but how would you actually like to manifest those? There is a path forward to doing that. And that's why I got into coaching. I honestly think a lot of my clients can get to where we get to, working together, on their own. It might take them two, three, four years to get there, cuz they're smart people. But if we can shrink that timeline down to results to six months instead of two years. So what if we now in a two year period, they do six months and then they hit a new set of goals in six months so they're at a place four times higher than they ever thought they'd get to two years out than doing it on their own. And honestly, that's where a lot of my passion comes from with helping people. So, anyway, it's a great question and I'm glad you asked it cuz it was really hard for Donna. I really want to honor her and what she's gone through and what she's done for me to get me where I am.

Kim: Yeah. It's just such a beautiful, holistic approach because she has her own way she's wired by the Creator and, you know, gifts and things in connecting her calling but yet you all still partner together.

PROFESSIONAL CHRISTIAN COACHING TODAY

John: Yes.

Kim: And so you honor each other's calling but still are a unit that can contribute something to the world that you couldn't if you were apart. And how coaching, God through coaching, has played a role in all of that. So, Chris, it's probably time for us to wrap up our fascinating conversation.

Chris: Here we go. Yes, I could talk forever and I know John could talk forever but we've gleaned a lot and John, thank you so much for sharing, not just your story but your heart and sharing so transparently. It is a beautiful testimony and we know that that's a terribly important part for all of us in living out the Christian life. Persons are won over by the power of our testimony. The Lord said that He would use this in your life and there is great good already manifesting from it and much, much, much more to come, as best we can ascertain now. Listeners, if you want to connect with John - I'd imagine you do, if you want more of that heart share - you'll find him actually on the Web at eternalleadership.com and that also, of course, corresponds with the podcast that he launched. He also co-produces that with our producer here, Steve Rider. And so, again, you'll find their podcast, as well as the website, at eternalleadership.com. John, thanks again for being with us and for sharing so transparently from your heart.

John: Well, thank you, Chris and Kim, for both having me on. If I can ever be helpful to anybody, I always keep a couple of appointments on my calendar every week to just pay it forward so you can reach out to me at John@eternalleadership.com. I'd love to hear from you and serve you any way that I can. And thank you both for what you're doing. It is so important, so valuable, I love you both and you're just dear friends.

Chris: Well, until next time, gang, keep raising the standard and changing the world.

Kim: God's richest blessings to you.