

**Synthesised Summary Statement from Co-
Researchers in Doctorate Research
Exploring the Experience of Developing
Professional Coaching Practice**

Summary Statement

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“My experience of developing professional coaching practice has been one of a quest where I have confronted steep and rocky paths, blissful vistas and extreme emotions. At times it has felt that I have been out on an edge without a parachute and this has evoked anxiety, fear, vulnerability and loneliness as well as excitement, freedom, elation, affirmation and pride.

Core to this rollercoaster ride has been the opportunity to complete a puzzle that I have subconsciously been building for years. Developing professional coaching practice has allowed me a vehicle to integrate many varied life experiences and knowledge and to reconsider my personal and professional identity.

Initially the journey was one of self understanding and whilst I had experienced much self development throughout my career, this aspect of the journey has challenged me deeply, forcing me to make my core values and beliefs evident and then to test these in practice to consider if they are core to me. Thus I have consistently been challenged as to how I see and understand and consequently participate in the world.

When starting this quest I considered myself open to learning, accepting of diversity and to be a role model for embracing change. However I have been tested to explore just how open and flexible I really am. When forced to face the world in a different way, I resisted and rejected many learning challenges offered to me preferring to stay with what I knew and understood, fearful of the unknown. My discomfort with ambiguity and my desire for there to be a “right” answer haunted me and initially compelled me vehemently to seek clarity, structure and a destination. I finally had to face that there was no end point and that the journey to professional practice is evolving and infinite.

When I did eventually “let go”, I was plunged unceremoniously into a cesspool of unconscious incompetence where I wallowed for some time in a place of low confidence and self doubt before emerging with an ever increasing sense of confidence and self belief. I began to value my own skills and gifts more deeply whilst simultaneously acknowledging my limitations and failures.

This emergent space is a grounded and centred place where I know who I am and what I can offer to the world, not just as a coach but as a human being. For me, coaching is no longer something I do when I am sitting in front of a client; it is part of who I am. I now feel seen as a whole person and a more mature, conscious individual. I know who I am and who I am not and no longer need to prove myself, having more confidence in my contribution. As a result, I have moved on from some people during this journey and connected more with others.

At times the quest has felt like a learning assault where I have been forced to take responsibility for myself and my learning. In some ways this mirrors my own and my clients’ experience of being coached. I have learnt that knowledge alone is useless and that application of knowledge is what leads to

critical integration and ultimate effectiveness. The role of developing reflective capacity has been immense and has become an unconscious skill that will continue to inform and evolve my practice. I have an increased sense of responsibility and ethical consciousness towards others and whilst I occasionally feel daunted by the concerns my clients entrust to me, I feel resourced to handle these.

I am aware however that I did not get to this point on my own and acknowledge that whilst I could have done, it would have taken years. The journey itself has been a teacher and my education programme has proved a crucible for my growth. My clients, peers, supervisors and friends have offered feedback, affirmation, challenge and support to get me to where I am today. The task of creating my own coaching framework and model has been paradoxically liberating. For whilst it has forced me to really think and be conscious of how I actually work in a structured and explicit way, it has afforded me the freedom to create my own approach which is coherent, explicit and up to critical review. Reflecting at this stage of the journey I am conscious of how much of my framework is no longer as explicit as it once was, integrated into unconscious competence. However, I feel more confident and equipped for completing this rigorous task and conscious that being an evolving framework it will remain a foundation for my professional development throughout my coaching career."