

CASE STUDY

HENLEY PROFESSIONAL CERTIFICATE IN COACHING



Julie Smith

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Why did you choose the Henley Professional Certificate in Coaching?

'Because coaching is an unregulated market with no professional body, I wanted to increase my credibility through a coaching programme. So it had to be one that really got into the guts of the subject. I read about the Henley course and liked the balance between theory and pragmatism, and it had lots of time for reflection. There was nothing else from any of the other providers that was nearly as strong as Henley.'

So what were your expectations, and how did the reality differ?

'The quality of the course shone through from day one, and it's the first piece of learning that's ever taken over my life!

It's designed for people who want to learn and who are prepared to recognise their own skills and foibles. You have to take what you can from the programme – you're not given a knife and fork and handed it on a plate. The pre-work had a tremendous impact on me – it was like holding up a mirror to your life and seeing how your preferences, beliefs and practices might hold you back, not just in coaching, but in life too. I was also taken by the revelation that, contrary to the myth, sometimes the coach does have the answer!'

What were the other highlights?

'The tutors, Alison and Tracy, have complementary styles, so they were able to spark different elements of progress; the way they work together is outstanding. The programme is divided into three sections: knowing yourself, tools and techniques, and integration. Eight months after the programme finished, I'm still quoting things they said on the first day, which is a testament to the impression they made.

The realisation that people are always in the middle of their lives also resonated with me, so when you're coaching, you always have to recognise that while a coachee leaves you in a particular place at the end of one session, they can be in a totally different place by the start of the next session.'

What has been the impact of the programme, professionally and personally?

'We've set up our own internal version of the programme at work, to try to replicate some of the spirit of the programme – momentum, cohesiveness, support and so on. We want to transform the culture, but we know we can't do it overnight, so we're focusing initially on 25 people who will spread the word.

For me, my questioning style has changed; I'm more aware of me and those around me, and our individual responsibilities. And it hasn't gone unnoticed by my family! I'm getting married shortly, and the things I've learned have definitely made it easier to deal with some of the challenges of that! And I'm now hoping to develop my skills further by taking the MSc.'

So what advice would you offer to anyone thinking of doing the Henley programme?

'If you want things to be different, you have to be different – Henley can help you with that. If you're passionate about people, this allows you to step inside their world. You'll have better conversations, and this programme will support any other studies. It's pragmatic, and I loved it!'

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