

Great Coaching Podcast Transcript

- Empowering-

(Series 1 Episode 2)

Voices of the Podcast

Intro / Outro Theme: Craig Blain, UK Coaching

Narrator: Craig Blain, UK Coaching

Guest: Marcellus Baz, Boxing Coach and UK Coaching Ambassador

Coach Developer: Mark Bateman, UK Coaching

Podcast Transcript

Guest: Marcellus Baz

You do want them to feel as if they are actually taking ownership of that session. You know, they are actually supporting people that are new and talking to them and encouraging them rather than you because they feel that they own that session, that's their session. My name is Marcellus Baz, we are at Nottingham School of Boxing and Switch Up.

Intro Theme:

This is the great coaching podcast. A series dedicated to exploring the Great Coaching Principles from UK Coaching. Episode 2: Empowering.

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Narrator: Craig Blain

Being able to create a sense of empowerment within the sessions you deliver is a key contributor to creating an experience that makes people want to come back again and again.

Speaking to UK Coaching Ambassador and boxing coach Marcellus Baz, I was first curious to understand who he engages in his boxing sessions.

Guest: Marcellus Baz

People from all walks of life. People from all races, religions, cultures, ages, abilities, everybody coming together. It's a big melting pot and we empower people, we help people grow and we give them that self belief and confidence to be able to go and grab life by the neck and, you know, be the best they can possibly be, help them reach their full potential in life and we use the power of sport to do it.

Coach Developer: Mark Bateman

I'm Mark Bateman, a Coach Developer from UK Coaching. It is important to reflect on the positive aspects of your coaching and make time to

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understand your strengths and how these will impact others. I will be providing some reflective questions to help you make sense of the conversation you will be listening to.

Narrator: Craig Blain

Empowerment sits at the heart of Marcellus' values as a Coach.

Something that was obvious when listening to him speak about his past experiences and what a great coaching support network had given him.

Guest: Marcellus Baz

I found boxing as a way of keeping me out of trouble. When I was younger I was involved in the wrong crowd, I would always get into trouble. But when I went to boxing it gave me a sense of belonging, it gave me a vent to be able to channel my anger and aggression - which are natural emotions everybody has – and I channelled them in a positive way. I was surrounded by positive role models, people that would empower me and encourage me and support me to become a better person. It gave me communication skills, it gave me life skills, it gave me self-esteem, it gave me confidence. It was my way of self

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medicating from all the hurt and anger that I had in my life. The positive role models started to plant seeds in my head to start turning my perception of starting to live a better life that the one I was living. It was my clean glass of water, when I had always been drinking from the dirty glass. So that was the alternative, you know?!

Coach Developer: Mark Bateman

How can you draw on your own experiences and make sense of them to apply them within your coaching?

Narrator: Craig Blain

It was fascinating to listen to Marcellus' story and how he had connected with the sport of boxing. I was curious to know if there had been a coach that stood out for him on his journey, making a connection with him and empowering him to become the person he is today.

Guest: Marcellus Baz

There was one particular coach, he was observant, he was accepting, he was encouraging, he was asset based, he would always look at the

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assets in everybody. I followed exactly what he was, you know, I wasn't a young person who was easily engaged by people, I didn't trust people. And for him to just get me, just like that within a split second, just the way he looked at me, the way he spoke to me. He gave me his undivided attention, you know, especially when there was a group of up to 30 other people in that room, and I felt special, I felt like I was the only one in that room. It was incredible, absolutely incredible. And, you know, I wanted to come back every day, whenever anything was going off the one thing I was looking forward to was to go back and meet Albert and talk to Albert about things. The thing is, I knew I could talk to him about anything, I could talk to him about what was going off at home or what was happening out on the streets. He was helping me to become an athlete, helping me to mould my body and making stronger from the outside and the inside.

Narrator: Craig Blain

Listening to Marcellus' story, it was clear to see that his own experiences had helped shape his own approach to coaching others.

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Guest: Marcellus Baz

It's important to give everybody a little bit of you. People are coming there for you. You don't know what is happening in their lives, you don't know where they are coming from, you know, or if they are having a difficult time at home or are they under a lot of stress at work, you just don't know where they are coming from. But when they come under your roof you want every person to feel special, you want every person to feel like they have been heard, like they've been listened to. That particular person has a big smile on their face, before they leave they are actually talking about the next session. So, they are looking forward to that next session before they actually leave that last session. To be able to see them full of joy, happiness and enjoying working out. Working out should never be a chore under a good coach, it should be fun, it should be empowering, it should be making you feel absolutely amazing.

Narrator: Craig Blain

If you have taken the time to listen to the first episode in this series, focused on the Great Coaching Principle of Person Centred, you may note a lot of sentiments of what Marcellus is talking about in relation to

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Empowerment. I was curious to understand more about how Marcellus creates an empowering environment for the people in his sessions, what are some of the challenges he might face when working with a mixed ability group and more importantly, how does he overcome these?

Guest: Marcellus Baz

I don't necessarily go in there and say you know, "we're going to start off like this, and then we're going to do this, and then we're going to do that", it's improvised and adapted to the needs of the people in that session. Fair enough you will have a vague plan of what you want to do that day, but the order of what you might want to do that day will be shifted to the people in the room. For instance, if you have somebody who has just come in, you don't want them to not be able to do what everybody else is doing, so you throw something in, an alternative and say look, "I don't expect everybody who has just turned up to be able to do these exercises, because you lot have been here for the last past 6 months, so anybody that is new you can do an alternative". There are different variations, it's important to give those variations. To see people not getting embarrassed, to see people not getting put down like they

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aren't good enough or they can't do it. So as a coach you must be observant, a coach needs to be very understanding.

Coach Developer: Mark Bateman

How well do you know the people in your sessions? Can you take cues from their behaviours so that you can adapt and evolve your session on the go?

Narrator: Craig Blain

I wondered what it was that Marcellus looks for in a coach that would be able to create this Empowering environment. More to the point is it just the coach that contributes here, what role might participants have to play?

Guest: Marcellus Baz

I mean, you look at the normal things like qualifications, DBS's and Safeguarding etc and once you get passed that you want to know what the person is like. So, when you are interviewing that person you are having a genuine conversation and you're asking them questions about

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why they want to be a coach, just like you are asking me now. I think I want coaches in here that are looking at developing people. I would like coaches that are empathetic, caring, I would want coaches that would go the extra mile. You are part of a family here, you know. I think it's very obvious when you start to talk to people, get to know people a little bit more, what their drivers are. So, once you understand someone's drivers, then you know whether their own values actually align with the organisations values, when they do, you can produce an environment like this.

Coach Developer: Mark Bateman

What does a caring and empathetic environment look like for you?

Narrator: Craig Blain

Listening to Marcellus, I was curious to understand what the role of those taking part might be.

Guest: Marcellus Baz

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You do want them to feel as if they are actually taking ownership of that sessions. You know, they are actually supporting people that are new and talking to them and encouraging them rather than you because they feel that they own that session, that's their session. So, when I'm walking in to do a session, I've got regular people that are actually welcoming new people rather than me, do you know what I mean, because that's their session and that's the kind of environment you want. We do get quite a lot of people who come in and they just see this ethos of everybody getting along, nobody has got egos, nobody is putting each other down, you can be at different abilities, you can have disabilities, you can be obese, it doesn't matter here. Everybody is equal, and we've got that ethos in here that we accept everybody, we support everybody, we help everybody, and everybody helps everybody, and that encourages a really empowering ethos right the way through the gym.

Coach Developer: Mark Bateman

How do you develop connections with the people in your sessions to keep them engaged whilst allowing them to take ownership for their learning and training?

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Narrator: Craig Blain

Focusing in on the Great Coaching principle of Empowering in isolation is a real challenge. As in reality to create this you need to take a person centred approach. So, there is an obvious overlap between the different principles we discuss in this series. Marcellus took the time to share more about the success factors he felt were key in creating this empowering environment for others.

Guest: Marcellus Baz

I think you've got to lead by example, you can't just expect things to happen. You've got to make sure that people agree with your values, your vision and your methodology. You've got to know what your why is, and when you know what your why is everything starts to come together. And I know what my why is, I know why I created this environment, I know why I use the power of sport to transform lives. You know, we've had young people here that have been referred to us by social services, leaving care or care, probation, you know, people that have been written off by society, unengagable. And these are the same people that are

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friendly, that have been able to empower themselves to be able to communicate and change their perception.

Coach Developer: Mark Bateman

In order to develop an empowered environment, how do you share your why?

Narrator: Craig Blain

I wanted to learn more about Marcellus' thoughts on communication as an enabler for empowerment in coaching.

Guest: Marcellus Baz

Communication is one of the major tools a coach should have. It's not about shouting instructions at people and expecting them to do something. Communication isn't just verbal, it's your facial expressions, it's your eye contact, your affirmations, your body language, your voice. You know, you might have somebody who has anxiety or depression and they have made a massive step in coming into your place, and with them you're not going to be raising your voice, you're going to be talking

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to them in a lower tone of voice, you're going to be completely giving them your undivided attention with eye contact, with your affirmations, and if they say something you've got to use your facial expressions to show empathy, you've got to be connected to that person, yeah, you've got to be connected to be able to communicate with that person effectively. These things can be right across the board, it doesn't matter where they are from, they are universal. When you speak to somebody you have got to be able to show respect, you've got to be able to listen, that's part of communication.

Coach Developer: Mark Bateman

What examples of positive communication can you think of? How do you use these to develop empowerment within your coaching?

Narrator: Craig Blain

The Great Coaching Principles were derived from feedback from participants on what it felt like to experience great coaching. I wanted to understand what Marcellus thought coaches had to offer people.

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Guest: Marcellus Baz

Well, you're providing them with a safe and inclusive environment that's an empowering environment to be able to come in and feel empowered, whether you are there or not. You're giving them the confidence and self-esteem. Trust is a big word, you know, trust to be able to use this place, feel like they are part of this place, that have ownership of this place and to receive and to gain the skills, confidence and self-esteem to be able to excel to their full potential in life, and that's not just in here but outside as well. So, before they come in here they may feel that they are depowered outside, feel like they are down trodden, or they're isolated or not being heard, but when they come in here they are gaining the skills to be able to deal with those barriers and obstacles.

Coach Developer: Mark Bateman

What aspects of your own coaching practice can you emphasise or develop to further enhance empowerment within your sessions?

Narrator: Craig Blain

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Finally, I was curious to know what creating an empowering environment for others had done for Marcellus' own wellbeing.

Guest: Marcellus Baz

I think the fact of seeing people growing, seeing people happy, it's infectious. So, when you're in that you start feeling good, you start feeling empowered because you feel that you've just done that. And it's like, for a coach - to see someone to grow into a phenomenal human being - it's absolutely amazing, it's addictive.

Coach Developer

Taking time to reflect on the positive aspects of your coaching is important for both the continued development of your coaching practice and your own wellbeing. What opportunities can you think of to self-reflect or connect with others to explore this?

Guest: Marcellus Baz

I'm always looking for a reason to get in here, you know, I will come here whenever I have an excuse, or I finish early. I will come here, and I will

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continue to coach, I love coaching, you're never going to stop me coaching.

Outro Theme:

This has been the Great Coaching Podcast from UK Coaching. If you would like to find more episodes on the great coaching principles, search for the Great Coaching Podcast on the UK Coaching website ukcoaching.org.

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