



## **Practitioner Diploma in Executive Coaching**

### **“As a coach I’ve blossomed” – Lucy Day**

**You have worked predominantly in the NHS in organisational development roles. Who or what introduced you to coaching and led to you signing up for expert coach training with the AoEC?**

I first became interested in coaching whilst working in service transformation in the NHS. The role required me to save £millions whilst improving outcomes for patients, I soon appreciated that logic wasn't enough to convince people of the need to change. I started exploring the human dimension of change and realised one of the best ways to lead change was to enable those affected by the change to identify their own motivations and solutions. A good friend recommended AoEC to me. She's a successful coach and had heard recommendations and thought the experiential learning might suit my needs.

**What were some of the positives and challenges you experienced while doing the AoEC Practitioner Diploma in Executive Coaching?**

The programme started pre-pandemic and it was really valuable to meet the course participants face-to-face. I loved the experiential learning. My coaching capability and self-awareness grew exponentially. It was tough on my energy and emotions doing the programme whilst working in the NHS as the pandemic took hold, as well as going through a re-structure. I lost a few lunch and coffee breaks to futures negotiations with my employer and had plenty of material to bring to sessions as the client! For the conclusion of the programme and our assessments we transitioned from face-to-face to virtual. Initially challenging, it was great experience for the future of online sessions with clients.

**Looking back at doing your AoEC Practitioner Diploma in Executive Coaching, what has been its lasting impact on you as a person and you as a coach?**

I had a real breakthrough moment working as a client with the coaching cards. I'm a thinker and so exploring the images really got me out of my head and shattered the misconceptions I'd previously held about creative tools in coaching and, personally, the session helped me recognise and accept my feelings, in order to move on. As a coach I've blossomed. Prior to the programme, I was good at listening, using open questions and even bringing constructive challenge, but I relied heavily on the dialogue and had an advice monster lurking within. My coaching partnerships are more client led now and as a result, more transformational. My awareness is far broader than the narrative and I'll often invite attention to non-verbal cues and broader connections.

**Can you tell us more about your personal coaching model and how this has evolved since doing the AoEC Practitioner Diploma in Executive Coaching?**

My approach to coaching is non-directive and in partnership with the client. My style is practical, solution-focused, challenging whilst grounded with compassion, authenticity and humour. I invite consideration from other perspectives, explore connections and systems (internal and external). I love to incorporate using both structured coaching models, as well as creative tools. My personal coaching model continues to evolve as I believe our priorities and needs as humans

shift and evolve. Over the last couple of years, co-active coaching and Nancy Kline's Thinking Environment have increasingly influenced me.

**What are some of the issues and opportunities you coach clients around and what kind of impact is the coaching having?**

My coaching partnerships often focus on personal leadership/who am I dilemmas, identifying and addressing self-limiting beliefs, seeking balance and fulfilment or work and home life boundaries, feelings of overwhelm, personal impact, having courageous conversations improving team relationships and performance. My clients report improved self-awareness, increased insights and appreciation of the connections and themes between topics they bring, improved leadership impact, confidence, motivation and capability of growth. As my coaching has matured, feedback increasingly reflects the transformational impact coaching has had on clients.

**What do you find most rewarding about your work as a coach?**

I love building the trust and confidence in coaching partnerships and in the client's resourcefulness. I derive huge pleasure in witnessing the value it brings to the client and their systems, both during our partnership and often way beyond.

**What is your top advice to others considering coach training?**

I'd encourage anyone to consider it. If I'm honest, one of my primary motives was to become accredited and be credible outside of the NHS but I got so much more!

Whilst I had some experience of coaching, it opened my eyes to different tools and approaches and witnessing the impact of these in others coaching sessions really built my confidence to experiment and become adept using them in a safe environment. Having worked in the NHS for over twenty-five years it was inspiring to train with and coach participants from really diverse backgrounds. There was such a collaborative spirit in our cohort, and many are still connected and cheer each other on in our continuing professional and business development. The programme was also a great springboard for ICF accreditation.