

WHY COACHES REALLY LEAVE THE BUSINESS OF COACHING (AND HOW THE RIGHT CPD KEEPS YOU GROWING — AND IN BUSINESS)

By Richella Boggan



**Not to judge.
Not to fix.
Just to notice.**

Here's something most coaches don't like admitting — mainly because it happens so quietly it barely registers:

Most coaches don't leave the profession because they can't find clients. They leave because they stop growing... and don't notice it happening.

I've seen it happen in supervision rooms, in peer conversations and — if I'm honest — in myself at different points in my career.

A coach builds a solid practice. Clients get results. Sessions feel competent. The diary fills.

From the outside, it looks like success.

And yet something inside flattens and goes blah... Nothing is obviously wrong.

But nothing is stretching, emergent or transformative. That's usually the first warning sign.

THE SLOW PLATEAU MOST COACHES MISS

Very few coaches wake up one morning and think, “I’m stagnating.”
It’s much subtler than that.

It sounds like:

- “My clients are all quite similar at the moment.”
- “I know what to do here, but it’s not landing like it used to.”
- “Sessions are fine — I’m just more tired than I should be.”

Here’s the uncomfortable pattern underneath:

Many coaches end up with one year of experience repeated ten times.

Same client dynamics.

Same emotional hooks.

Same supervision insights — often genuinely good ones — that disappear by the next week.

Fun (and painfully accurate) coaching fact:

Most coaching insights arrive after the session — on the walk to the car, in the shower, or while making tea.

By the time the next client arrives, they’ve evaporated.

Not because they weren’t important.

But because there was nowhere for them to land.

When learning doesn’t stick, development stalls.

And when development stalls, coaching quietly becomes maintenance work rather than developmental work.

WHAT STAGNATION DOES TO CLIENTS (EVEN WHEN YOU CARE)

Every coaching session generates information — not just cognitively, but emotionally and physically.

Clients bring patterns. Those patterns activate something in us.

If a client intellectualises, something in you tightens.

If a client wants rescuing, something in you leans forward.

If silence stretches, your body reacts before your brain does.

This is not a flaw. It’s part of being human.

The issue isn't activation.
It's unexamined activation.

When coaches don't process what's stirred up between sessions, they begin to coach from blind spots — subtly shaping conversations away from areas that feel uncomfortable or unfamiliar.

Ten years ago, structured questioning and action plans were often enough.
Clients experienced that as insightful and valuable.

Today's clients are different.

They've read the books.
They've done leadership programmes.
They've reflected, journaled, therapised, and optimised.
Many have already asked AI more questions than we sometimes do.

What they need now is not better logic.

They need someone who can:

- Stay present when things are messy
- Work with ambiguity rather than rush to clarity
- Hold silence without filling it
- Notice what's happening in the system — including themselves

That requires a coach who is still developing internally, not just externally.

When coaches default to linear problem-solving, they're often offering last decade's service at this decade's prices.

Clients might not be able to articulate what's missing — but they feel it.

WHY MOST CPD DOESN'T SOLVE THIS

Here's where many well-intentioned coaches get stuck.

Most CPD is designed to add:

- More knowledge
- More tools
- More frameworks

And none of that is inherently bad.

But very little CPD is designed to change how you *show up* in the room.

If CPD worked by accumulation alone, most of us would be transformed simply by attendance.

We're not.

That's because the real ceiling in coaching is rarely technical.

It's personal.

You can only sit with clients at the depth you're willing to sit with yourself.

You can only stay present in complexity if you've learned to regulate yourself there.

The right CPD doesn't just teach you what to do.

It works with your edges — the places you habitually avoid, rush, intellectualise, or rescue.

'Coaching at the Living Edge'

“Presence isn't passive — it's how
information in the system becomes
available.”



WHAT ACTUALLY WORKS: DEVELOPMENT THAT COMPOUNDS

The coaches who stay alive in the profession tend to do one thing differently:

They treat their practice as live developmental material.

They work with a simple but demanding loop:

Practice → Pattern

What keeps showing up across your clients?

Where do you consistently feel hooked, drained, or overly responsible?

Pattern → Presence

What does that pattern reveal about you?

What belief, identity, or fear is being nudged?

What haven't you fully processed between sessions?

Presence → Practice

When something genuinely shifts internally — not just intellectually — your coaching changes.

Your pacing softens.

Your silence deepens.

Your interventions land differently.

This is learning that sticks.

Not because it's clever, but because it's integrated.

Anything you are not integrating, you are choosing to repeat.

THE BIT MOST TRAINING NEVER TAUGHT YOU

At Sandown, we talk about two journeys happening simultaneously.

Your client is on one journey — navigating challenge, threat, meaning, and redesign.

You are on another — managing your state, your beliefs, your nervous system, and your capacity to stay present.

Here's the part many coaches were never explicitly taught:

You cannot reliably take clients deeper than you have gone yourself.

If your own development hasn't included working with uncertainty, emotional charge, and identity-level shifts, your coaching will default to insight and action.

Helpful — but limited.

Eventually, clients need more than insight.

They need space to reconfigure who they are.

WHY THIS MATTERS NOW

AI will take technique.

It will take structure.

It will take process.

What it won't replace is integrated human sense-making:

- The ability to sit in ambiguity
- The capacity to regulate presence under pressure
- The courage to stay with what doesn't resolve neatly

The coaches who thrive won't be the ones with the biggest toolkits.

They'll be the ones committed to recursive self-improvement — learning that compounds rather than repeats.

SANDOWNISMS

- If learning doesn't change how you show up, it hasn't landed.
- Busy isn't the same as developing.
- Insight without integration evaporates.
- Presence is the intervention.
- Anything you are not integrating, you are choosing to repeat.



THE SIGNATURE COMMUNITY QUESTION

So here's the conversation I keep returning to — and I invite you into it:

What pattern keeps showing up in your client work right now — and what might it be asking you to look at?

Not to judge.

Not to fix.

Just to notice.

The coaches who stay in the profession aren't the ones who've arrived.

They're the ones willing to keep growing — visibly, imperfectly, and honestly — alongside their clients.

That's what keeps the work alive.

And that's what keeps you in it.



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