

Phil: Welcome to the show Emmanuelle, it's really lovely to have you here.

Am I saying your name right? By the way, Emmanuelle?

Emmanuelle: Yeah, it's Emmanuelle. Thank you, Phil, for having me. I feel really grateful to be here with you this morning.

Phil: So we first met very briefly at the ACT Brown University get together, didn't we? Where we had the Alumni coming together in October, wasn't it I think? Which was a fantastic occasion, I really enjoyed it. We didn't really get a chance to talk so much, but I thought it would be really fascinating

by speaking to some, folk who weren't necessarily in the States and, people who are in the other part of the world, in Europe. So I'm in London, I'm in the UK, and you're in Belgium, so tell me a little bit about where you are located, yeah.

Emmanuelle: I'm based in Brussels for nearly 30 years. I'm French, and I'm already in my third career.

Phil: Third career, wow. Alright, I'm really curious about that, and I'll get to that in a minute because I really want to know about the third career.

Exploring the Coaching Niche and Client Challenges

Phil: I always start these shows with asking you a bit about your niche because I think people aren't necessarily aware that coaches have many different approaches and many different niches that they can focus their work in on, it's not like the old days or when you trained to be a coach it was either like a life coach or a business coach. Now we have these really interesting subsets or sub niches and i'm really curious, what your focus is on, who is it that you work with and what is it you help them with?

Emmanuelle: I'm not really sure I already have a niche because I'm just starting coaching, actually, I'm originally an innovation consultant. I guess I've started with my network. So they are mainly executives or leaders and they want to manage their team better, they want to develop their leadership,

some are looking for their next step, some are looking at just doing their new position the best they can. Basically I think they are all going through a kind of change in a way and either they want to develop themselves and they want to go

through personal change or they want to really move on in their career and develop their career.

Phil: And how do you find that they are struggling because they haven't got those things figured out?

Emmanuelle: They are struggling with being present. Although they don't know what presence is when they come to me usually. The struggle they mention is that they have difficulties turning off when they come back home and we have those very interesting discussions about how to be present to your work when you're at work and with your family, with when you are with your family.

Yeah, and basically it's made me having, coaching them but also championing them and what I experience is that people are very alone. A

Cultural Perspectives on Coaching in Europe

And while in Europe, coaching is not as famous as it is or common as it is in the U.S. People have this feeling that coaching is about fixing something rather than discovering things about yourself

Emmanuelle: and developing yourself. So maybe that's why I'm really, my niche is limited to executives because they get some knowledge from leadership programs in their companies or for reading the Harvard Business Review or something like that, but, it's not very common now.

So I do not get clients from, from the average European citizen for the moment. I don't know if it comes from my own network, because being a consultant, of course, I have many executives and leaders in my network or is it because coaching is just not known enough, I don't know.

Phil: That's interesting. Yeah, I've actually got a couple of friends in Belgium who are coaches and a couple in France too. It's so global now I think, but I think different countries approach coaching in different ways, don't they? I think the acceptance levels are very different still.

But it's coming in all countries, I think, and slowly and at different time, timeframes, like here in London, coaching is totally acceptable and it's, celebrated and understood and people don't think it's snake oil anymore, you know, made up, like, what do you know about my life kind of thing.

And I think that started from the top by way of people getting executive coaching or leadership coaching and work and then that then passing down as they sort of those people who were getting that coaching back in these sort of early mid 2000s and they were coming home and maybe their partners were noticing a difference or their friends and family

and so they're like, oh, you've changed in a good way. You know, what's happening here? What is it you're doing? So I think that sort of normalization is happening, but it's going to take time, to spread across the world.

Emmanuelle: Absolutely. And there is also this cultural thing about people speaking French not getting some help. They're just like getting some help is maybe understood like you're failing when actually you don't have to do it alone. Who said that you have to do it alone? No one, but most people, they have that in mind and it's not something that they do as, it's not something they've learned to do.

Phil: Culturally, isn't it as well it seems? I'm always mentioning on this podcast about how we are loved and celebrated and for our achievements and our ability to know the answers at school, depending on our age, but hopefully that's changing these days now but my sense is that when we train to be coaches, we are

building the other muscle which is about how to listen really well and how to mirror back and facilitate the magnificence in you as a human being rather than 'Let me tell you how to do this' 'Learn this book go away and do it and then you'll be fine'. It's much more about relationship, isn't it now?

Emmanuelle: Yes,

Phil: I love that you were saying culturally how because I didn't know that about France. I've had a few French clients and I have noticed that when they've been looking for coaching clients themselves, there has been that necessity to have that conversation. So it doesn't mean that you're failing if you're asking for help. I'm going to be a partner with you, a thinking partner, like I always say, like I love that phrase, thinking partner, and I'm going to couple with you two, two heads are better than one in a way, but I'm going to be leveraging your fantastic qualities. That's really fascinating. Yeah. What about in Belgium as well?

How is it received in Belgium at the moment?

Emmanuelle: I think Belgium is a bit more advanced versus France. Still, there is a difference between French speaking and Dutch speaking people. Dutch speaking people are more on the, I would say, on the Anglo Saxon side. They've heard about coaching a long time ago, and French speaking, I think there is a kind of cultural overspill from France about feeling like you have to do it alone, and you need to achieve it, to achieve stuff in life, you know.

Phil: Which can be incredibly lonely. It's like the old way of doing it, isn't it? This hierarchy of, okay, so you've got your colleagues, if you're just coming in, say like you're in the sales team, but then the higher you get, it's more like a pyramid. And then right at the very top, it can be incredibly lonely.

And yet you're expected to know all of the answers, I think. Yeah.

People come with problems and people come with criticism and very few dare actually to say well done. That's good. Go on.

The Power of Championing in Coaching

Emmanuelle: So this is a bit what I do actually. I realize I do a lot of championing with my clients.

Phil: Championing is such an incredible tool, isn't it? Like for those who don't know, haven't heard of this necessarily, it's like probably one of the most powerful coaching skills. It's like looking at the person in front of you and not just saying, oh you're great, you're doing really well with genericisms, but to be really specific about where that person has done well and who they're becoming and who they're being.

It's such a powerful tool, isn't it?

Emmanuelle: Yeah, I'm regularly acknowledging what we have done because I have the, I'm lucky enough to have clients for over a long period of time. And, I try regularly to take moments when we just look back at the journey the client has been through and what he or she achieved.

Phil: And it's really important to phrase it in specific terms.

Emmanuelle: And yeah, I experience the power of acknowledgement, yes.

Phil: Yeah, really important, isn't it? And I wonder if sometimes people find real difficulty in hearing that I've noticed have you noticed that

Emmanuelle: Oh, yeah.

Phil: Like acknowledgement. It's like, yeah, yeah, yeah. Thanks. Thanks. Let's move on. What's next? What are we doing today?

Emmanuelle: Yeah. And then the question is, what can I do better? I was just like, huh?

Phil: It's relax, just take it on board, let it land, as we say,

let it in.

Emmanuelle: Let's spend some time there, let's celebrate. And this is something that, yeah, that French speaking people are not used to doing, it's really cultural. Yes.

Phil: Hmm. So I would imagine you'd have to really stay with them and really say, no, no, I mean, let it in. Like, what do you notice when you let it in? Wow.

Emmanuelle: It was also something I had to learn personally as a French woman learning coaching.

Well, It was very uncomfortable at the beginning because, it's not something you do in France, you do not acknowledge. You simply don't, it's just like when you say nothing, it's just good. And when you say something, it's to criticize. So it's really something you need to be, this is something you have to learn.

Phil: Do you suppose, I don't know, it's a word like vulnerability comes up for me. If you acknowledge someone, And you put it out there. It's a real intimate moment, isn't it? There's real vulnerability around it, like in terms of, are they saying that to provoke me or are they trying to use that against me?

Or what is that? What do you sense around that?

Emmanuelle: There is a, do you say awkwardness? So people feel awkward when

Phil: Awkward. Yeah, absolutely. Awkward. Yeah.

Emmanuelle: Oh, where are we going? They are not sure of what you want to do. So yes, there is some uncomfot I think, yeah, it's something that that was never learned by people, and this is something that people simply do not do, yeah, it's really awkward for most of the people when you start acknowledging things and say how good people have been in that specific area. And when you champion people to simply just go on doing what is good, and what they do well, and what they love doing, it's something very unusual.

Because usually we try to just improve weaknesses in France. That's what we do. We do not celebrate strengths. So it's, yeah, it's a very interesting journey.

Phil: Yeah, that sounds really exhausting. If we're just trying to, let's improve based upon whose perception, what's broken or what's not good enough. And there must be this kind of undisclosed tension, I would imagine. Yeah, that's so fascinating and I really want to bring that more into these conversations around how cultural differences are showing up for coaches and ACT coaches and how they're doing things in our own countries and what they're noticing.

It's so fascinating. Yeah.

Emmanuelle's Career Evolution and Discovery of Coaching

Phil: And you spoke at the beginning about three careers, so maybe we could skip into that a little bit and yeah, what was that arc of your three careers?

Emmanuelle: I was very uncertain of what I should be doing after my studies. I studied economics and it was quite wide and very general. And then I did a couple of internships in publishing houses, and I love reading, so I always loved reading, and I've spent a lot of my childhood reading books, so I was fascinated by the world of publishing.

So I started a first career in publishing, I spent three years in publishing. And then I happened to meet my husband, and he's a civil servant in Brussels.

Phil: It's amazing, isn't it? Who we meet and how? Yeah.

Emmanuelle: So I had to make a decision because I tried to find a job in Brussels in the publishing house. I did not manage. So after a year I thought, okay, I need to do something about it. So I completely reoriented my resume,

uh, into what I thought I could do. So basically marketing or communication and I started another career in marketing in Brussels.

And I spent 15 years in marketing, in three different companies. And then when I was nearly 40, I thought, okay, this is not something I could do for the rest of my life, I need to find something else. So I simply stopped working I think I took a part time at the beginning, six months, a part time. And then I start conversations with people who knew me quite well.

And I had a couple of lunch, more than a couple. Honestly, a lot of lunches talking about myself and hearing people I trust talking about me and I started another career in consulting and I do innovation consulting for now more than 10 years, and basically I never knew what I'm going to do the next day because what I do is ad-hoc, so I'm never for a long time at a client.

So I meet new clients all the time and it's always different subjects and there is always something new I need to tackle. And I guess that's why maybe I also coach people for change because I ended up a lot of things myself. It's just like, I realized that going through the coaching training because for for once I sometimes reflect upon me because I most of the time I reflect upon client briefing rather than hitting upon me.

Yeah, wow. And it would make sense then it's like coming into the realm of innovation. So I'm from a branding, marketing background too web design, tech, all those things, but also innovation as well and I think in strategy, once you start bringing those things together and you hear about coaching, there's a curiosity, isn't there in a sense of, 'Oh, this is interesting'.

Phil: This feels like something which could be cool. For me, the way I discovered coaching was back when I was in a, I was a creative director and I was looking for some leadership training of some description and I came across a coach and I didn't know what a life coach was and I had this conversation with her and it was maybe two sessions in where I was just like, wow, this is fantastic, this is amazing.

And that's when I realized that this was a thing that I could do for other people. And it just brought all of those really interesting components and strands of where I've come from into a vocation. How did you discover coaching and actually what made you train with ACT?

Emmanuelle: I discovered coaching more than 15 years ago I believe, while I was working at Unilever. I was lucky enough to be part of a leadership training

and coaching was involved and I had a coach for three months. And I guess I simply forgot about it until COVID came and my business completely stopped. But many people called to ask for advice

and I was simply asking questions. And then I realized that I was coaching people without the right skills maybe I was not properly trained, you know, I was just doing it as I could. And I had time and I thought, okay, let's turn that crisis in an opportunity. So I logged on the ICF website and I've been looking at all the certifying, trainings

I could get and, I thought, yeah, coaching is not really something famous and credible in France and in the Belgium. So I need something really serious. And that's how I got to ACT Brown University partnership for this leadership program and I said, yeah, this could do.

Phil: And then I went on the website and I got really curious, especially about the archetypes.

And I had this discussion with Mike Hutchins and I asked about the archetypes and he explained how this is something that helps you and supports coaches to get more range. So I thought, yeah, this is it. Say more. I'm in! Yeah. And so archetypes for those who don't know, a part of our course where, yeah. So as a coach and as a human being, we have a certain range, don't we? But then when we step into different archetypes or ways of being in the world, then we can increase that range and it allows us to be a lot more nimble and agile for the clients that show up and come to us.

Yeah, that's a really, I think a really strong powerful piece of our course. Yeah. And when you were doing the actual training with ACT, how do you remember the experience? What was that like for you?

Emmanuelle: Oh, what I remember is meeting amazing people and we were all in Zoom. It was COVID and that's amazing how we got intimate in this cohort on zoom and yeah, I what was really important to me is meeting new amazing people and I'm still in touch with most of them and also learning about myself.

Really also learning about this journey from reactive to creative was really an eye opener to me. And of course archetypes, I was already excited about them so it was not really a discovery. But yeah, I got a lot from the training and the program. That was really an amazing transformative experience for me.

Phil: It's amazing, isn't it? How we, I think we as coaches, if you've been a coach for a while, then when COVID came along and suddenly everybody had to switch over to Zoom, it wasn't a problem for us necessarily because we'd been doing it for so long as coaches. And I think if that's your first experience of learning in this kind of way on, on zoom, it can at first feel like, that's not going to be very good

is it? Looking at a screen for this many hours rather than being in the room together. But isn't it incredible how like when it's held in the right way, the amount of intimacy that gets created and the amount of connection that happens with those people, right? Certain people I've still never met, but I've seen them on screen many times and it's, there's a relationship there.

Emmanuelle: Yes, absolutely.

Phil: Yeah, it's wonderful stuff.

Impact of Coaching Training on Personal and Professional Life

Phil: Fantastic and so with that training, so after you trained with ACT, and you've got all those skills together over that period of time, how did that change the close relationships that you have, both maybe personally and in work?

Emmanuelle: Well, in work, it changed a lot because I had, for the first time to reflect upon myself and my business, so I managed to write my purpose and I also realized that I was actually consulting in a coach like way. So finally, I managed to really, with the support of, of someone else, so I hired a consultant to do that.

I managed to really articulate what was my value proposition. I changed my logo, changed the signature, changed the website. And actually now people who come to me, clients who come to me really know what I offer and there is a better click.

Phil: This is maybe something French we say, but there is a better connection between myself and my clients, between my business and my clients.

Emmanuelle: And then there was a huge personal transformation as well because I'm, I manage much better any self generated stress thanks to the program.

Phil: And I think all this made me, a kind of better person, but also a better consultant. And I also see that I'm different when I talk to my friends and my husband catch me regularly coaching other people. While I, while I'm not really aware I'm doing this actually.

Yeah. Yeah. What was the impact like on him? Like when you had these new coach training skills, we turn up the volume on being able to listen really well, don't we? And ask really powerful questions like what was the impact on your personal relationship if you're willing to share in that way?

Emmanuelle: Actually, a close friend just told me a couple of months ago that, I've been actually coaching her for the last two years. And she said, you've been a real support and I do see what you're doing.

Phil: You can't hide anymore. Yeah. It's funny, isn't it? Some people see it and they go, Okay, I'm going to accept it and play with this. But some people are a bit like, What are you doing? Like, why have you changed? Or what's happening here?

Emmanuelle: This is not something you can, maybe I do that naturally, I don't know, but I don't have a lot of intimate friends. I like to go intimate with people and I guess that you cannot go intimate with 30 different people. It's only, it's, you only have a limited amount of time in your life. You have to pick the people with whom you want to be intimate. And, I guess also through the coaching, I got to know myself even better than I used to. And, I'm making some choices and those choices are intentional.

Phil: Hmm, like conscious choices.

Emmanuelle: Yes.

Phil: I think it shines a light, doesn't it on our own not blind spots, but our own areas of self development that we haven't necessarily looked at yet. And one of the natural things that happens, obviously, when we're training to be a coach is that we can't just pick up the tools and skills and then utilize them with everyone else around us and ignore ourselves.

It doesn't work that way, does it? Sometimes, unfortunately. It's like we have to shine the light on ourselves and take a look in the mirror, more importantly, and think to ourselves, okay, so am I showing up in the world in a way that is in alignment with who I am, my values and my purpose. How was that sort of self-discovery for you?

Navigating Personal Growth and Self-Management as a Coach

Phil: Did you find anything that you were a bit like, I'm gonna have to look at this now?

Emmanuelle: What I've learned actually is that, what I thought was a kind of weakness, for a long time, I always was considered as someone maybe too kind,

Phil: or also not, would I say, judgmental enough, because I'm not the typical French, criticizing everyone. I tend to always try not to judge, and to look at people without any prejudice and some people were turning to me and thinking I'm a bit, you are maybe a bit naive.

Emmanuelle: Because this is the typical French thing, you know, when you're kind, maybe you're a bit too naive, there is something suspicious about it. And actually going through all this journey, I learned how to embrace that. Being proud of it, which is really transformational as well, because I was always like, 'Are you too kind?'

Or 'Are you not selfish enough?' And now I know that it's not about me. And, and I embrace that ability to see other people as creative, resourceful, and whole.

Phil: And this is something that always been the kind of skill I had, but I was not embracing it to the fullest because I didn't know what to do about it.

Emmanuelle: And, I didn't know how good was it. And I've learned a lot of self management as well, because, self management was sometimes very difficult in my personal relationship and professionally, and now I'm much better, I'm still working on it, but, self management is something that, that I really, I'm really working on when anything is, uh, Yeah, because it happens a lot that the client comes with, with a topic that is related to something personal and, then there is a lot of self management that I have to do.

Phil: And how do you do that? I know we are taught to self-manage, but what do you notice when someone brings something that you recognize in your own life, maybe it's resolved or unresolved, we as coaches are not 100 percent fixed and never will be, we're constantly growing.

What do you notice and how do you manage that?

Emmanuelle: What I notice is that I have, uh, it's difficult for me to listen when it happens. So usually what I do immediately, I say, I will have to do some self management during that session. And then it helps me when I say it, then it's just like, yeah, then the voices are going less loud

Phil: Yeah.

Emmanuelle: and, and basically that's what I do

yes. And, but still for some, it depends on the topic and, as you say, is it, if it's unresolved, it's much more difficult to, to manage

Phil: Sure, yeah. I love what you're saying there. Yeah, for me that, that's exactly the same thing. Sometimes if things are too close or things are too, similar and we feel ourselves like triggered somehow, triggered into a place of, oh, I really know that pain and I really want to help you with this. I love what you're saying there.

And I do that as well. I have done. Wrap words around it and say, oh, I'm just noticing how this has impacted me personally as well. And just putting that into words, gives it permission to exist and it takes away that kind of intensity doesn't it and we're able to then get back in touch with that other person again. Yeah, it's amazing coaching in that way.

And I think that again is like so many muscles that we're building as we're going along and being a coach in the world. Being trained by a fantastic school like ACT is wonderful because we get all these incredible tools, loads of practice, and it's when we go out into the world that we start using them.

It's thinking maybe not a spanner, but maybe a hammer instead, yeah, and that's amazing.

Conclusion and How to Connect with Emmanuelle

Phil: That's a journey in itself. This has been a really fabulous conversation, thank you so much. and yeah, I'm just mindful of time like, but, how can people find you? How can they track you down on social media?

Emmanuelle: Oh, they can find me on LinkedIn. That's the main, uh, communication tool I use professionally. Yeah.

Phil: Yeah, LinkedIn's done very well, I find, because a few years ago, it felt very dry and very oh, people are just sharing their CVs, but now it feels much more communicative and there's much more life to it. Okay, so LinkedIn is the best way to go. Brilliant. All right. Thank you so much for being on the show.

I've really enjoyed this conversation

Emmanuelle: Thank you. It was a really, a nice conversation and a very nice moment. I really enjoyed it. Thank you.

Phil: Cool. All right. Take care.

Emmanuelle: Take care. Thank you.

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