

CASE STUDY: JULIA

Julia, Global Head of Risk in a FTSE 100 company, had progressed fast up the ranks, and when she came to coaching she was keen to both develop her team and to develop her career. She was aware that she had the potential to be delivering a different order of value to her company. She was in a demanding role, involving frequent intercontinental travel, and her company was in the throes of implementing a new global strategy. She commissioned seven coaching sessions from LWL.

Over the course of her coaching programme, Julia explored the patterns inherent in her career, in her behaviours and in her reactions. She articulated her values and clarified the driving forces in her role. She defined her strengths. She understood – and built – her impact and gained insights into her working relationships (and into scope for further development) through a 360° feedback exercise. She gained new perspectives on her working preferences through Myers-Briggs Step II. She looked at – and reassessed – the balance of time she was dedicating to the balance between work that her expertise was wasted on, work that needed doing to keep things ticking over, and work where she could add great value to her company, and she made conscious choices about how she wanted that balance to be different and what her options were for making that happen. She learnt how to reflect (challenging a time-pressured role) and to draw learning from her reflection. She found the coach's suggestions for experimentation sometimes confronting and certainly unfamiliar – and yet she engaged in them. As a result she gained new, sustaining and sometimes transformational learning. She built her influence and her presence, and she took greater control of her career and of the difference she was making to the company. She discovered a different sense of herself.

At the end of programme she said:

I have confidence in making bolder decisions and I have the tools to be inspirational. I've experienced self-discovery: I'm comfortable and confident in myself, which I haven't felt for many years: it's huge. Now I can add real value to the business. I have the confidence to deliver, and the company is going to involve me in higher level work to add greater value. There's an undercurrent of excitement: there's a real sense of growth in the team. They're starting to grow and flourish, and I'm stepping out of the weeds. I feel I have the potential to release my talent because now I'm aware of what my talent is and how I can free it up.

The coaching was all-encompassing, deep, and soul-searching. The coach was responsive, open, fair, tough, provocative, and thought provoking, and she threw me curve balls. She asks tough questions in a comfortable, safe environment. The coaching programme has been eye-opening and has brought out the best in me.

LWL used the coaching relationship itself as a coaching tool, working in the context of the range of systems that Julia was part of to facilitate raised self-awareness and to encourage the design of options for behaviour and thinking, and tools for evaluating them. The coach made careful use of creativity and experimentation to explore those options. Trust between the coach and the coaching client was established at an early stage, allowing Julia to think about and examine risky issues in a safe space.

During the course of the programme Julia more and more effectively managed her relationships with her team members so that they gained a new, and more proactive, sense of their roles and their contributions. By the end of the programme they were palpably growing, taking more initiative and releasing more of their capabilities.