

Threads of Mastery in Coaching



Weaving collective reflection across
ICF, EMCC, and AC paths



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COACHING

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EXPLORING MASTERY IN COACHING

Coaches presented in this ebook:

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Rekha Hatkanagalekar

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Katerina Kanelidou

Debbie Hogan

Olivia Gadd

Karl Van Hoey

Dr Jane Tuomola

Zoltán Csigás

Heru Yuwono Liem

Dedication

For my grandfather,
who studied to earn his Bachelor of Economics
while caring for the livestock and
managing the household,
and who became the most humane and humble
general manager I have known.

A true master of life whose values continue to
guide me.

Adrijana

WHERE THREADS BEGIN

INTRODUCTION

I'm sitting in a café called Linden, in my small town in Serbia, starting to write this introduction.

I tune out the conversations at the tables around me, watch the reflection of branches and leaves of the linden tree (after which the café is named) on the glass surface of the table, and listen to the wind.

And I pause to ask: who am I, who am I writing to, and why do I feel called to write this?

The lens I write from

I've often been seen as someone thorough, always aiming to go a step further, to reach the "final point." The inspiration for this ebook came during my second pregnancy and in the first days with my newborn. Since video recording isn't really my way, the idea formed for something asynchronous, something that can happen "in one's own time." From my own experience in recent years, receiving the MCC and Master Executive Coach credentials in 2025 and striving toward Master Practitioner in the following years, many new needs for further exploration have emerged.



A note to the reader

Who is this for?

The first thing that comes to mind: this is for all those who are constantly searching for answers.

And in that search, new questions always appear:

- What are we striving for?
- What do we learn about ourselves?
- How can we work better, be better?
- What comes next?
- From whom do we learn, with whom do we connect?

If I move all these questions into the coaching world, I imagine a tangled ball of yarn that needs to be unraveled. The three biggest coaching bodies—ICF, EMCC, and AC — come to mind as sources, and I picture how you, I, and the stories of colleagues, through this book, together pull out threads and weave something beautiful, inspiring, and warm — from which new ideas and connections will be born. And the pursuit of mastery continues.

WHAT WE ARE WEAVING

THE PURPOSE BEHIND THIS PROJECT

I want to gather voices that show different paths toward mastery, to offer perspectives, encouragement, and questions that spark new thinking, without prescribing a single route. I did my best, searching through LinkedIn and coach directories of the mentioned bodies, to offer as much diversity as possible. This book is offered as a free, non-commercial contribution to our global coaching community, with the intent to honour each coach's voice.

So - what is actually on the pages of this ebook?

Interviews with those similar to you and me, those who have reached certain peaks and still kept searching further.

The initial idea was to include 60 stories - 20 master-level accredited coaches from each of the three coaching bodies mentioned above.

But—life makes us adapt and change plans.

At the time of writing, I could say I've reached two peaks - ICF MCC and AC Master Executive Coach—and that I am climbing the EMCC mountain. I often pause to reflect on what I am learning about myself along these journeys.

While working on this publication, I practiced something quite challenging for me, learning to let go and allow things to unfold. “Hold it lightly,” as one of my mentors once told me. Along the way, I realized that a significant number of coaches see value in holding accreditations with more than one body, so the originally imagined 60 interviews evolved into a more organic flow of 27 stories.

You may also notice a range of writing styles, some stories expand through rich detail, others simplicity and minimalism - all reflecting the many ways mastery is experienced and expressed.

What you can definitely expect is color coding, so you can easily recognize with which body (or bodies) a coach is accredited.

With all this said, I want to send a big thank you to all colleagues who took part in this work. Here are their stories.

And special thanks to Tijana Mitrović, for the tremendous help with shaping this edition, design, and creativity, and to Tijana Karaklić, for her excellent comments and for being there to support me and help me stay accountable.

In the end, I tried—through analyzing all these stories - to answer for myself the question: What is mastery?

And also: What comes after accreditation(s)?

What is shared, and what differs in the stories of accredited coaches across the different bodies?

And I leave some questions for you:

- *What caught your attention the most?*
- *What do you learn about yourself while reading this?*
- *What will you do with that learning?*

If you are at least half as inspired as I am — reach out, so we can continue exchanging and keep weaving or climbing together (whichever metaphor you prefer :)).

THREADS AND TONES

COLOR CODING

Throughout this ebook, you'll notice that each coach's profile is framed in a specific color. These colors correspond to the organization(s) in which the coach holds their master-level accreditation. The intention behind this visual coding is to help you easily recognize the diversity of professional paths represented here — across ICF, EMCC, and AC - as well as those who hold more than one credential.

It's a simple visual guide, reflecting how mastery in coaching can take many forms, across different frameworks, languages, writing styles all united by a shared commitment to never-ending growth and excellence.



ICF Master Certified Coach



EMCC Master Practitioner



AC Master Executive Coach



Double or tripple accreditation

PATTERNS OF MASTERY

DEFINITIONS/REQUIREMENTS OF ICF, EMCC & AC

The word mastery can have different meanings to different people. As in this ebook master credentialed coaches from 3 different bodies are invited to share their perspectives, here are the requirements of those 3 bodies. (Note: I most often use the word “accreditation”, but different coaching bodies refer to it as an “award” or a “credential.”)

ICF MCC Eligibility

- 200 hours of coach-specific education
- 2,500 coaching experience hours (including at least 2,250 paid hours)
- 10 hours of mentor coaching
- Successful completion of a performance evaluation (2 recordings + transcripts required)
- Passing score on the ICF Credentialing Exam.

EMCC Master Practitioner Eligibility

Completed Practice

- Minimum of 7 years of experience
- At least 500 client contact hours
- Minimum of 40 clients

Ongoing Practice

- At least 5 pieces of client feedback within the last 12 months

Professional Development

- 48 hours of Continuous Professional Development per year
- At least 1 hour of Coach/Mentor Supervision for every 35 hours of practice (minimum quarterly)
- 5 items of documented reflection on practice within the last 12 months
- Active membership of a professional body
- Contribution to the development of the coaching/mentoring field

Qualification Competence

- Evidence of competence described in the EMCC Competence Framework
- Either completion of EMCC EQA training at this level or submission of equivalent evidence

AC Master Executive Coach Eligibility

Membership & Insurance

- Must be an AC Member or a member of another recognized professional body
- Professional Indemnity Insurance (if applicable in country of residence)

Coach Training

- Minimum of 80 hours cumulative coach-specific training

Coaching Experience

- At least 1,500 coaching hours

Written Submissions

- 2,000-word statement of Personal Coaching Approach
- 2,000-word Coaching Case Study

Ethics & Standards

- Adherence to AC Global Code of Ethics for Coaches & Mentors
- Written response to ethical dilemmas, including personal ethical dilemma

Fitness to Practise

- Audio recording of a live coaching session with transcript
- 2,000-word critical reflection on the session

Client References

- 4 client references

Supervision

- Minimum of 6 supervision sessions
- Ratio of 1 hour of supervision for every 40 hours of coaching
- Supervision log, learning record, and Coach Supervisor's reference

Continuing Professional Development (CPD)

- Minimum of 40 hours CPD per year (from coach training onwards)
- Critical reflection on key learning

Self-Assessment

- Coach's self-assessment of practice and coaching development plan



INDIVIDUALS WHOSE THREADS MEET HERE

GLOBAL REACH AND PROFESSIONAL DIVERSITY

27

MASTER
COACHES

DIVERSITY WOVEN INTO THE SCARF

- Coaches contributing to this e-book bring experience from more than 20 industries, with their diverse professional threads weaving together consulting, HR, education, finance, technology, entrepreneurship, government, and non-profit work — along with additional strands from healthcare, creative fields, manufacturing, energy, and law.
- Their educational backgrounds span over twenty fields: many threads come from business, psychology, leadership, and social sciences, while others extend into the arts, engineering, natural sciences, nursing, and law — all woven into a shared tapestry of learning.
- Credential years across the group range from 1998 to 2025 — a weave that includes early pioneers and the newest master-level coaches, with 2022 being the most fruitful year for this group.
- Many of the master-level coaches whose threads meet here also hold accreditations in supervision and team coaching, adding further breadth to their practice. Several of them are also accredited at senior levels by another body — such as EMCC Senior Practitioner or ICF PCC — reflecting the richness and diversity of their developmental paths.

These coaches are mentors, trainers and supervisors and you'll notice that there are links added below their names. So if some story/answer resonated with you - and you would like to know more, I encourage you to contact them. My voluntary initiative was welcomed with warmth and openness. :)

A GLOBAL NETWORK OF MASTER COACHES

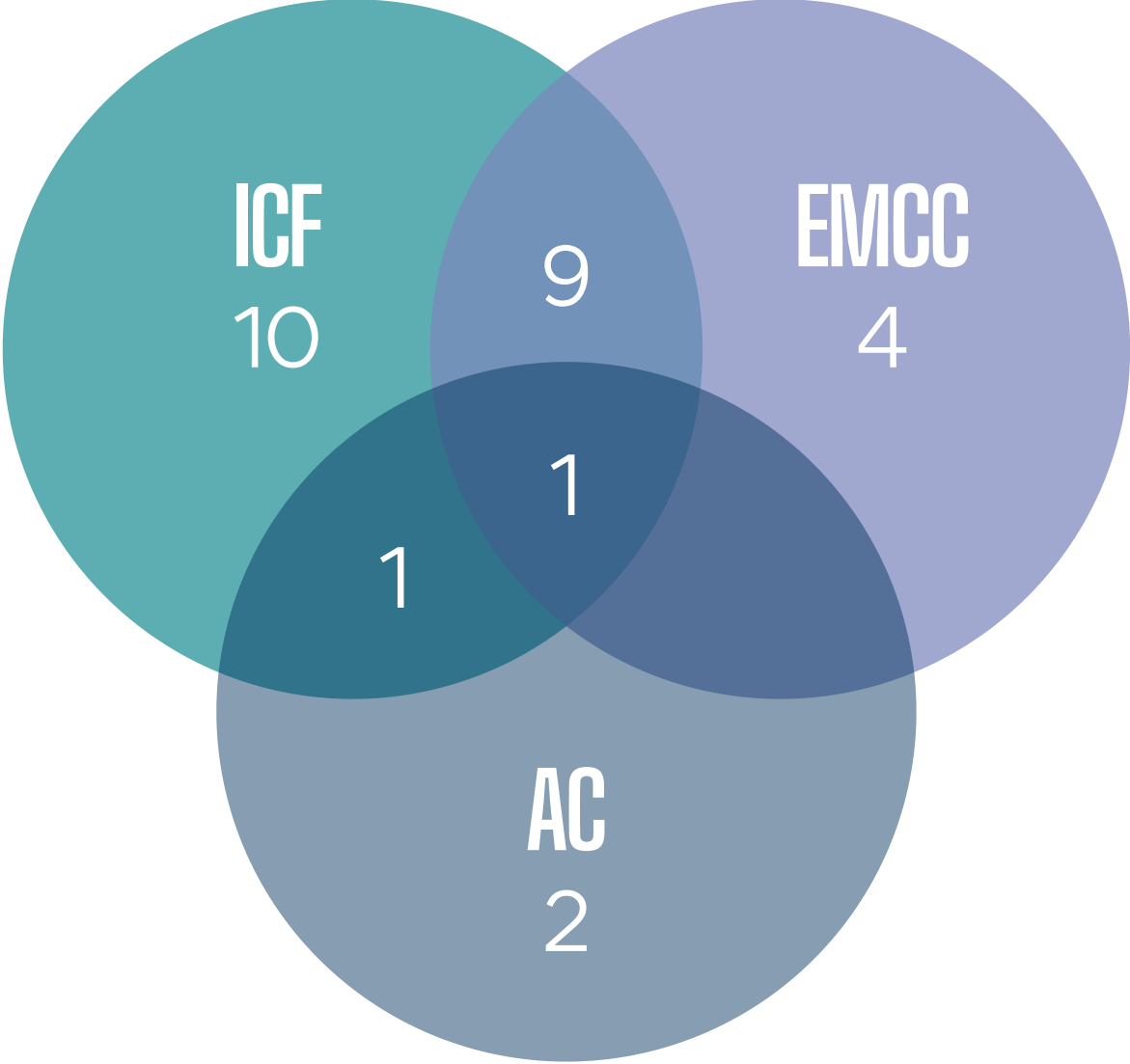


THE PLACES ALL THE THREADS COME FROM

The master coaches contributing to this publication write from across the world — from Lebanon, Serbia, Australia, Spain, Morocco, Canada, the Netherlands, Türkiye, India, France, the UK, Indonesia, Luxembourg, Ghana, Singapore, the USA, Greece, Hungary, and Belgium — bringing truly global perspectives into this shared tapestry.



CREDENTIALS AND OVERLAPS ACROSS ICF, EMCC, AND AC



30-DAY WEAVING CHALLENGE

A MONTH OF REFLECTING ON MASTERY IN COACHING

While gathering and reading these 27 stories of master coaches, I kept wondering:
What if this collection becomes more than a publication?
What if it becomes a personal reflective journey for each reader — one thread at a time?

Here is my suggested prompt for you — how to move through it:

Day 1

Choosing your first thread

Start with your own reflection.
Take the time to read the intro pages.

Reflect on:

- *What is mastery in general for me?*
- *What is mastery in coaching and how I see it?*

Let this be the first thread you place — noticing what you believe today, before the weaving begins.

Day 2 -28

Weaving insights into your practice

One story, one new strand each day.
Each day, read one story and reflect on what you find valuable there. Also reflect on it in relation to your own answers. Slowly, new colors and textures find their place in your emerging tapestry of mastery.

Day 29

Step back and see the pattern

- *What do you notice in the whole you've created?*
- *What are your impressions and key learnings from this process?*
- *How are they going to impact your practice?*
- *Notice how differently the threads connect now.*

Day 30

The story your threads tell

Look back at the first thread you placed.
Now go back to the beginning — Day 1 — and your reflections about mastery from a month ago. Think of the 8 questions I asked our colleagues and how you would answer some of them today.

Maybe share your own interview/reflections on LinkedIn and let me know.
I'll be more than happy to read it, learn, and exchange.

Personal threads unfolding

Interviews with master coaches



NADA JSERIATTI

ICF Master Certified Coach
Lebanon

Year in which you received this credential/accreditation/award(s):
2022.

[LinkedIn](#)
[Website](#)



Q

How did your journey into coaching begin?

When I first started, it was as an educator and a trainer. My experience at the British Embassy is what refined my professional identity because it allowed me to work on the Investors in People (IIP) Development Program, which was rewarding. What struck me deeply was the human potential I witnessed — how individuals transformed regardless of their credentials, background, or social status. It made me see development as something far more personal and powerful than I had ever understood.

My health problems also started around that time which included the possibility of going blind in the future. With that in mind, I had to ask myself if I was able to achieve anything meaningful without being able to see, which forced me to rethink everything I wanted to do. This meant exploring domains that provided a sense of purpose and connection to people.

That's when coaching found me. It wasn't something I had planned; it felt more like coaching chose me. What started as a practical solution became a deep calling.

I discovered a profession that honors presence, listening, intuition, and human transformation — qualities that transcended the physical limitations I feared.

From there, I dedicated myself fully — training, practicing, growing, and eventually teaching others. Coaching offered me a way not only to continue working, but to serve at a deeper level than I had ever imagined.



Q

How did your development unfold on the way to achieving your master-level credential / accreditation / award?

Mastery is a journey that I have in many forms and which is still unfolding for me. Before I achieved the ICF Master Certified Coach (MCC) credential I was drawn to excellence. I am of a mind not to put in the work unless I am fully into the topic at hand -- that was the framework which I lived by from the very beginning of my coaching career. I went to many coaching schools which each added to what I know. My growth wasn't in a single model or philosophy it was a wide range of study. At INSEAD I studied executive coaching which was very formative for me. It challenged me on intellectual, emotional, and professional levels which in turn refined my presence and deepened my impact with clients. Throughout my focus was in that of what it took to better serve my clients. In each training, supervision, mentoring session and coaching conversation I made it a point to push out boundaries. I wasn't just after meeting the marks I aspired to live out what is possible at the highest level of transformational coaching. Achievement of the MCC was a landmark but I didn't stop there. It was a point of alignment between what I stand for as a coach and the global principles of excellence. As for the MCC, it is a privilege and a forte of mine it is what my clients' come to me for which also means they are in good hands as I am dedicated to the work and to continuously doing it. Mastery is a journey -- one that I am on daily which transforms me, my choices, and my service to others.

Q

What does 'mastery in coaching' mean to you?

Mastery in coaching, to me, is not a fixed point — it's a way of being. It's less about what you know and more about how you show up. It's the capacity to create deep, trusting, transformative spaces without needing to prove, push, or perform. Mastery is spacious, grounded, and fluid.

It's also marked by humility. The more I've grown, the more I've realized that mastery isn't about having all the answers — it's about asking better questions, listening beyond words, and allowing what wants to emerge to come forth. It's the ability to sit with complexity without rushing to resolve it.

At the same time, mastery is built on discipline. It comes from years of consistent practice, reflection, learning, and feedback. It's shaped by our mentors, our clients, our failures, and our evolution. For me, it's meant continuously stretching across schools of thought, working with diverse clients, and refining my own presence as an instrument of change.

Being a master-level coach means holding the paradox of confidence and humility. It's knowing I have something valuable to offer — and knowing that the client's wisdom is just as essential as mine.

Ultimately, mastery is a devotion to the art and ethics of coaching. It's a commitment to growth, to service, and to honoring the humanity in every interaction.



In what ways do you recognize mastery in your own coaching now?

I recognize mastery in my coaching today not only through how I coach, but in how I've built spaces for others to grow into their own mastery. A key example is my Leadership Coaching Mastery program — an ICF-approved training designed specifically for leaders and coaches in our region. It's built on the foundations of our cultural context, integrating the wisdom of our leadership traditions with global coaching standards and the latest developments in areas like emotional intelligence and AI.

This program reflects how I've come to define mastery — not as a title, but as a way of thinking, being, and influencing. Creating and delivering this program requires me to stay sharp, evolve constantly, and remain deeply connected to what's emerging — both in the coaching profession and in the leadership space.

In my own coaching practice, I notice mastery in how I partner with clients. I can move seamlessly between presence and provocation, challenge and empathy. I trust the silence, sense what's not being said, and guide without pushing. I no longer seek to prove my value; I focus on creating conditions for real transformation.



How might others — clients, peers, or mentors — experience your coaching as masterful?

Others often describe my coaching as deeply grounding, expansive, and catalytic. Clients say they feel safe yet challenged — that I hold a space where they can confront what's real without fear of judgment. Especially in leadership coaching, mastery shows up in how I hold complexity with confidence. I work with identity, purpose, power, and systems — not just performance. And when clients tell me they feel deeply seen, called forward, and supported in becoming more of who they are — that's when I know mastery is alive in my work.

Peers and mentors often reflect on the intentionality I bring to my practice — the way I listen, pause, and act from presence rather than reaction. They see how I use myself as an instrument, and how my coaching is shaped not just by skill but by deep integration.

My commitment to the broader coaching community is also an essential expression of mastery. I actively refer clients to other coaches when it's a better fit, and I've built a strong community where coaches feel seen, supported, and developed. I regularly share tools, perspectives, and emerging insights — especially as coaching evolves to include cultural intelligence and technologies like AI.

Mentorship is part of how I lead — not to elevate myself, but to elevate the field. I believe mastery is multiplied when we share it. And I'm committed to contributing to a coaching profession that's not only excellent, but inclusive, ethical, and future-ready.

Q**How do you continue developing after receiving your credential — personally and professionally?**

The journey did not end with receiving the MCC credential; rather, it sharpened my focus towards expanding my personal and professional development. For me, achieving mastery means growth and evolution. Mastery entails not maintaining the pinnacle but expanding one's boundaries.

For my personal development, I remain in reflective practice. Self supervision, peer dialogue, inner work, and other forms of self reflection are things I actively engage in — not because I need to but rather because I understand self development begins with identity, not actions. In my case, I challenge myself to the embrace of discomfort, shifting assumptions, and improving my self-awareness.

I professionally commit to having one foot in coaching and the other in business. This meant paying attention to emerging changes, be it in coaching, leadership, cultural intelligence, or new technologies such as AI. I also spend a considerable amount of time learning how to scale, grow, and evolve my business. Something as simple as taking advanced courses in business strategy, marketing, systems design, and of course, coaching, has become a central aspect of my life. In my dual role of a coach and a founder, this is part of my responsibility.

I give back by mentoring coaches, participating in and shaping professional discussions, and directing Leadership Coaching Mastery. Recently, I've also created a free community to support other coaches on their journey.

I firmly believe that teaching is one of the most powerful avenues through which I can continue to deepen my practice.

For me, development isn't simply a checkbox to tick off. Instead, it's a journey towards mastery.

Q What impact did receiving the official master-level recognition have on you?

Receiving the MCC credential was a deeply affirming moment. It marked the recognition of years of practice, dedication, and inner work — but more than anything, it gave shape to something I had already been living: a commitment to excellence, presence, and transformation.

Internally, it brought a sense of alignment. I knew I had done the work — not just the required hours or assessments, but the real work of becoming a coach who listens beyond the words, sees beyond the role, and holds space with integrity and care. The recognition gave me confidence, not in the form of ego, but in clarity. It helped me own my voice more fully in conversations with clients, peers, and the broader coaching field.

Externally, the MCC credential became a door-opener. It strengthened trust with clients, positioned me to mentor and train others, and expanded opportunities for contribution. It elevated the credibility of my practice.

But perhaps the greatest impact was the sense of responsibility it deepened in me. Being an MCC is not just an achievement — it's a calling to uphold and model what coaching can be at its best. It challenged me to not only keep growing, but to keep serving — and to ensure my work elevates not just individuals, but the field as a whole.

Q What insight, inquiry or encouragement would you offer to someone aspiring to mastery in coaching?

To anyone aspiring to mastery in coaching, I would say this: Mastery is not a destination — it's a decision. It's a commitment to keep showing up, to stay curious, and to hold yourself to the highest standards even when no one is watching.

Don't chase credentials — embody the craft. Mastery is not about collecting techniques or sounding "expert." It's about deep presence, real listening, and the courage to meet your client — and yourself — exactly where you are. That takes humility, not just confidence.

Keep learning, not just formally, but through every conversation, silence, and misstep. Seek feedback. Sit in supervision. Stretch your understanding across disciplines. Study yourself as much as you study your clients. And most importantly, stay human — connected, compassionate, and ethical.

Build community. You don't grow into mastery alone. Surround yourself with peers who challenge and support you. Mentor others when you're ready. Share what you know — and keep learning what you don't.

For those in our region, know that your culture, language, and lived experience are not barriers to coaching mastery — they are strengths. Bring them forward. Coaching needs diverse voices and grounded leadership.

And finally, trust the process. Mastery unfolds through intention and attention. Stay in the work. You may not always see your growth in the moment — but one day, your presence will say it all.

BEATRIZ VALDERRAMA

EMCC Master Practitioner

Spain

Year in which you received this credential/accreditation/award(s):

2020.

[LinkedIn](#)

[Website](#)



Q

How did your journey into coaching begin?

My journey into coaching began organically, long before I used the word “coach” to describe myself. In 1998, I supported a Director of Compensation who had just been appointed Director of Training — it was more of a mentoring process, helping him navigate his new role and identity. At the time, I had already spent over a decade designing and delivering soft skills training for professionals and managers, using active methodologies and the Socratic method — which, in many ways, resembled group coaching, fostering reflection, dialogue, and self-awareness. And I had previously worked for a year (as a recently graduated psychologist) as a team coach (this term didn't exist and I didn't know how to explain what my work consisted of) in a Public Center, with a group of theater actors and psychologists, through body techniques and artistic expression.

In 2000 I had my first training in Coaching with Martha Williams and two years later I began collaborating with Washington Quality Group on coaching processes based on 360° evaluations. That deepened my commitment to one-on-one development work, and in 2003 I founded Alta Capacidad, with the purpose of accompanying people, teams, and organizations in their transformation.

Since then, I've led numerous individual and team coaching processes, trained coaches and mentors, and designed corporate mentoring programs. Over time, I've also shared my experience and research through books such as *Desarrollo de competencias de Coaching y Mentoring*, *Fundamentos psicológicos del coaching*, *Coaching de Equipos Diversos*, and *Smart Motivation*. Each one reflects my integrative and psychological approach to coaching, grounded in both theory and real practice.

Q**How did your development unfold on the way to achieving your master-level credential / accreditation / award?**

My development as a coach has been a continuous and multidimensional journey, grounded in academic depth, enriched by personal transformation, and shaped by years of professional practice. With a degree in Psychology, an MSc in Organizational Psychology, and a doctoral thesis on a new taxonomy of motivation (The Wheel of Motives), I've always sought to integrate solid theoretical foundations with practical application.

I deepened my coaching approach through advanced training with Julio Olalla (Newfield Network), who helped me embody a more integrative, ontological perspective, and with Richard Boyatzis, whose work on emotional intelligence and intentional change continues to inspire my practice.

Writing has been another powerful pathway of growth. Researching for *Fundamentos Psicológicos del Coaching* in particular, pushed me to delve deeply into the scientific underpinnings of our practice, integrating neuroscience, empathic listening, appreciative inquiry, cognitive-behavioral approaches, and systemic thinking. Each of my books helped me clarify and structure what I had learned through experience and of course, enriched my practice.

Publishing papers, giving talks at national and international conferences, and developing programs for coach and mentor training have all been ways of giving back to the profession.

One of my most meaningful contributions has been leading the building of EMCC Spain (from its foundation to over 500 members now). I also have collaborated translating and facilitating the accreditation processes in Spanish, helping to ensure access, rigor, and quality standards for our community. Today I continue to drive solid growth and reputation as President of EMCC Spain.

Q**What does 'mastery in coaching' mean to you?**

For me, mastery in coaching is like jazz. It's intuitive, fluid, deeply present, and rooted in years of practice. It's when I stop thinking about "doing it right" and simply am with the client fully, openly, without agenda. It's being able to dance with whatever shows up in the session, drawing on my psychological background, my experience, my creativity — and above all, my intuition.

Mastery is knowing when to offer a powerful model or metaphor, and when silence or laughing is the best intervention. It's co-creating with the client rather than leading, and trusting their wisdom as much as my own.

Ultimately, it's about putting all that I am (my empathy, knowledge, presence, and imagination) in service of the client's growth and transformation.

It's also knowing I'll never stop learning. Every client, every session is a new conversation, a new dance. And that's what keeps it alive.

Q In what ways do you recognize mastery in your own coaching now?

I recognize mastery when I'm fully present, not trying to "coach" but simply being in deep connection with the client. There's a flow, a sense that we're exploring together, uncovering insights neither of us could have reached alone. Sometimes it's through a well-timed question or metaphor; other times, it's about holding space for silence or emotion, letting something deeper emerge.

Over the years, I've developed models and tools, like the Wheel of Motives and the MOTOR test, and I bring them into sessions to help the coachee to discover and make sense of their inner drivers. But mastery means knowing when and how to use them — and when to put them aside and just be.

More and more, I notice that clients shift just by feeling truly understood, valued and appreciated. That tells me I'm bringing my whole self (knowledge, presence, and heart) into the conversation.

I also recognize mastery in the joy I feel after a session. That quiet joy that comes when I know the client has touched something essential.



Q How might others — clients, peers, or mentors — experience your coaching as masterful?

Clients often say they feel “safe but stretched” with me, like they can go deeper than they expected, but always with support. They appreciate the clarity they gain, the fresh perspectives, and the way we co-create strategies and tools they can use beyond our sessions. I think they sense that I'm truly there for them — not just as a coach, but as a thinking partner who believes in their potential even when they doubt it.

They often say they feel “seen” in a way they hadn't experienced before. They appreciate that I bring not only deep psychological understanding but also empathy, imagination, and a lightness that makes even the hardest work feel possible.

Peers and mentors might describe my style as creative and grounded — intuitive, but with a strong theoretical backbone. I don't stick to a script; I adapt, invent, connect dots. I think they also notice how much I enjoy the process — the curiosity, the learning, the human connection.

I hope they feel the care and intention behind everything I do. That I'm not just applying techniques — I'm offering myself in service of transformation.

In the end, I hope they feel that I put everything — my knowledge, my intuition, my whole self — in service of the client. Because for me, that's what mastery really is.

Q

How do you continue developing after receiving your credential — personally and professionally?

Honestly, I don't think I could not continue developing. It's in my DNA. I see myself as a Knowmad, a nomadic learner, passionate (some might say "addicted") to continuous learning. For me, growth is both a joy and a responsibility. I'm constantly researching, exploring new ideas, and creating models and tools that make learning and development more accessible and transformative for my students, my coachees, and of course, for myself.

My daily learning diet includes reading scientific articles, watching videos, attending webinars, and diving into online courses. I'm a regular on platforms like Coursera and edX. I'm especially drawn to areas like neuroscience, positive psychology, critical and systems thinking, which keep expanding and enriching my coaching lens.

But learning isn't only about theory. Much of my growth comes from reflecting on my own practice: identifying strengths, noticing patterns, and refining the way I show up for my clients. Every session is an opportunity to deepen my presence, my intuition, and my impact.

For me, being a Master Coach means staying humble and hungry. Credentials are milestones, not finish lines. The real mastery is in remaining open to change, to feedback, to surprise and in letting your development be as alive as the people you serve.

Q

What impact did receiving the official master-level recognition have on you?

Receiving the EMCC Master-level accreditation was both an honour and a deeply affirming moment. After so many years dedicated to coaching, mentoring, training, researching, writing, and developing people and organizations, this recognition felt like a pause to acknowledge the journey, not as an endpoint, but as a powerful milestone.

It brought me a quiet sense of pride, not the kind that shouts, but the kind that smiles inside, knowing that the path I chose, with its challenges and constant learning, has meaning and value not only for me but for the profession. It validated the integrative, psychological, and creative approach I've developed over the years, and the contribution I've made through my books, tools, and involvement in the growth of EMCC Spain.

At the same time, it renewed my commitment. Being recognised at the Master level comes with a responsibility: to uphold standards, to support others in their development, and to continue growing myself. It inspired me to keep contributing to the community that has given me so much.

In essence, it was both a celebration and a call to keep evolving with humility, generosity, and passion for this beautiful purpose that never stops teaching us.

Q

What insight, inquiry or encouragement would you offer to someone aspiring to mastery in coaching?

As a psychologist, I would say: Study psychology! And develop yourself!

The first is not a requirement, but helps a lot. The second is essential.

Mastery in coaching isn't a destination you arrive at. It's a way of being, a continuous dance between learning, unlearning, and deepening. Allow yourself to be a lifelong apprentice of human nature. Stay curious, about others and about yourself.

One powerful inquiry I often return to is: Who am I being in service of this client's transformation? This question helps me stay grounded in humility and authenticity. It's not about having the cleverest tool or the perfect question. It's about presence, connection, and intention.

Remember, if you're aiming for EMCC Master accreditation, it's not just about the quality of your coaching. You're also expected to make a broader contribution to the profession, through publishing, teaching, research, and also volunteering to raise standards and promote ethical practice in coaching. That level of commitment requires not only skill, but vision and generosity.

Get support. Training, supervision, peer reflection, and even your own personal work are essential. You can't take a client deeper than you've gone yourself. So, invest in your own growth, your own healing, your own wisdom.

Because in the end, you are the instrument of transformation. Your presence, your wisdom, your clarity, your self-awareness, all of it shapes the space your clients step into. So keep refining yourself. The more you grow, the more powerful your impact will be.

MERAL DAL KESKIN

AC Master Executive Coach
Türkiye

Year in which you received this credential/accreditation/award(s):
2020.

[LinkedIn](#)



Q

How did your journey into coaching begin?

My coaching journey began during my years as a manager and sales leader. At that time, my responsibility was focused on targets and results; however, I soon realized that true success did not come only from strategies and numbers but from people. When I took the time to listen, asked meaningful questions, and encouraged others to make their own decisions, I witnessed both their confidence and performance grow significantly. This realization left a lasting impact on me and gradually turned into a passion. I no longer wanted to only manage work but to create spaces where people could unlock their potential. This led me to specialize in coaching, structuring what I had already been practicing instinctively into a more conscious and systematic approach.

Over time, I discovered that coaching is not only about supporting others' growth but also about continuing one's own journey of development. Each session has taught me to deepen my awareness, broaden my perspective, and replace judgment with curiosity.

Today, coaching is more than a profession-it is a way of life. By combining my business experience with my passion for human growth, I support leaders and professionals in understanding themselves, discovering their potential, navigating complexity, generating innovation, and building more meaningful connections. In addition, as a coach supervisor, I accompany other coaches in their professional journeys, which allows me to contribute to the overall growth of the profession itself.



How did your development unfold on the way to achieving your master-level credential / accreditation / award?

My journey toward achieving a master-level accreditation has been both a structured learning process and a deep personal transformation. At first, I viewed coaching mainly as a set of skills—asking powerful questions, active listening, and creating accountability. Yet, as I advanced, I realized that true mastery lies beyond technique; it is about being fully present, building genuine connection, approaching with humility, creating space for what is unsaid, and enabling multiple perspectives to emerge.

This journey required me to continuously question my own patterns, assumptions, and biases—and it still does. 😊 Supervision and mentoring played a critical role, helping me to notice blind spots and develop new approaches. Every piece of feedback became an invitation to grow, not only as a coach but also as a human being.

Equally important was practice. Working with leaders, professionals, and teams across different industries taught me flexibility, patience, and the value of meeting clients exactly where they are. Over time, I discovered that coaching at a master level is not about providing answers, but about creating the space for individuals to expand their awareness, embrace responsibility, explore their potential, and experience their “way of being.” And this is a journey without an end.

Reaching this level was not a single milestone, but the outcome of years of dedication, curiosity, and continuous growth. Today, I see this accreditation not as an endpoint but as an encouragement to refine my presence further, deepen trust, and expand impact—while continuing to contribute to the development of the profession.



What does ‘mastery in coaching’ mean to you?

For me, mastery in coaching is an experience that goes beyond technical skills—it is a way of being. Asking powerful questions, active listening, or focusing on goals are, of course, important; yet at the level of mastery, coaching is more than that. It is about guiding the client to explore their essence, touching something deeper, creating a space built on trust, and enabling a journey where the client can fully reach their potential.

Mastery is not only about what we do, but also about who we are and the meaning we bring. As a coach, my presence, curiosity, non-judgment, and authenticity are as impactful for the client’s growth as any tool or technique I might use. For this reason, mastery requires not only professional knowledge but also the continual deepening of my own self-awareness.

Mastery in coaching also means being comfortable with uncertainty and complexity. It is not about knowing everything or leading the way, but about holding the space patiently and confidently so the client can find their own path. This becomes possible when the coach steps aside from ego and truly serves the client’s process of growth.

Finally, mastery is an endless journey. To be a master coach never means to say, “I am complete.” It is about staying open to learning in every conversation, being nourished by clients and peers, and contributing to the profession itself.

In short, for me, mastery in coaching is beyond methods; it is presence, depth, humility, and a lifelong commitment to growth.



In what ways do you recognize mastery in your own coaching now?

Today, I recognize mastery in my coaching most clearly in my presence, the way I build connection, and my ability to apply the 7 Eyes model effectively. In the earlier stages of my journey, my attention was mainly on asking the “right” question or structuring the process in a certain way. Now, I see that the authentic bond I create with the client, the safe and trusting space I hold, and the non-judgmental presence I offer have a far greater impact.

I define mastery as being able to offer the client new perspectives, encouraging them to reach the “next version” of themselves, building a relationship grounded in trust, and at times facilitating what feels like a truly “magical” shift for both the client and the coach.

Mastery also shows up in my capacity to hold the mirror with patience and humility—even in areas that may be uncomfortable for the client—and to do so with courage and compassion. In the past, I wanted to help the client reach a solution quickly; now, I trust their pace and respect the natural flow of the process. This allows the client’s potential to emerge in a much deeper and more sustainable way.

Another way I recognize mastery is by becoming more aware of my own biases, setting them aside, and showing up with openness and curiosity. After each session, I continue to learn from my clients and peers. That is why I see mastery not as “completion,” but as a living journey of continuous learning, transformation, and growth.



How might others — clients, peers, or mentors — experience your coaching as masterful?

My clients often describe my coaching as a space of deep awareness, insight, safety, and transformation. For them, what makes working with me different is not only my ability to ask powerful questions, but also to notice and reflect silences, emotions, and what remains unspoken. This enables them to deepen their self-awareness and step more courageously into their potential.

My peers, when working with me, often recognize mastery in the way I create new perspectives and bring an artistic lens to the process. They find inspiration in how I use models such as the 7 Eyes flexibly and creatively, adapting them to different contexts. At the same time, my curiosity, openness, and humility in accompanying the process are described by peers as both supportive and instructive experiences.

My mentors tend to recognize mastery in my ability to hold the process with an ego-free presence. Rather than filling the space myself, I patiently and confidently allow the client to find their own path. In addition, my vision and efforts to contribute to the coaching profession are seen by them as signs of a mature and integrated coaching approach.

In short, I observe that my clients experience trust and awareness, my peers experience inspiration and learning, and my mentors experience depth and maturity. To see mastery reflected in the eyes of others in this way is, for me, both a validation of my professional journey and one of the most meaningful sources of motivation.

Q How do you continue developing after receiving your credential — personally and professionally?

After receiving my accreditation, I realized more deeply that development is never a completed process, and it placed a new responsibility on me. For me, mastery means staying open to continuous learning and transformation. That is why I continue to invest in my growth both personally and professionally. Since there are only a few who hold this credential in my country, I pursued accreditation as a Coach Supervisor to support others on the same journey and completed the certification process. Since 2020, I have been accompanying and empowering coaches on their accreditation journeys as a Supervisor.

On a personal level, I make a conscious effort to deepen my own awareness. As a founding leadership team member of the Association for Coaching (AC) Turkey, I actively take part in projects, deliver webinars as a speaker, write regular articles, and engage in continuous learning through reading across diverse fields—all of which strengthen my presence as a coach. In addition, I produce and host a radio program called What If?, where I invite the business world to reflect and explore new perspectives. Supervision and mentor coaching also remain vital resources, helping me notice my biases and gain new insights. Every coaching session is an opportunity for me to update myself and sustain my growth.

Over the last three years, exploring innovative models and integrating new-generation approaches into my coaching practice has become an integral part of my professional development.

In short, I see accreditation not as a point of completion but as both a starting point and a mission. This mission is the fuel that keeps me on the path—empowering others while ensuring that I stay current and continuously evolving.

Q What impact did receiving the official master-level recognition have on you?

Receiving the official master-level recognition was both a milestone and a powerful inner validation for me. Over the years, I invested deeply in expanding my coaching skills, continuing my learning, and gaining experience across diverse contexts. Earning this credential meant that this entire journey was not only acknowledged but also valued at an international level, making my professional efforts visible and recognized.

On a personal level, it brought me a sense of confidence and peace. It deepened my commitment to myself, to my clients, and to the profession. I realized that mastery is not a level to be reached once and for all; rather, it requires becoming even more humble, staying open to learning, and continuously renewing oneself at every stage.

From a professional perspective, this recognition enhanced my credibility and became a source of inspiration for clients and peers alike. Especially in my country, where there are only a few coaches who hold this level, it carried with it the responsibility of being a role model and a pathfinder for others. This motivated me to contribute more actively to the coaching profession—through supervision, sharing my experiences in articles and talks, and supporting the development of colleagues.

In short, receiving the official master-level recognition has not been an “end point” but rather a source of greater responsibility and inspiration. Both personally and professionally, this credential has provided me with strong motivation to continue my journey of growth with passion and commitment.

Q**What insight, inquiry or encouragement would you offer to someone aspiring to mastery in coaching?**

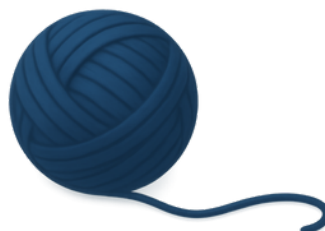
The first thing I would say to someone aspiring to mastery in coaching is this: mastery is not a destination but a continuous journey. It is not a “summit” to be reached, but rather a process that requires constant renewal, deeper exploration, greater creativity, and at the same time, greater humility with every step.

One of the most important questions to ask along this journey is: “How does my way of being make a difference in the client’s growth?” Because mastery in coaching is not only about techniques but also about the coach’s presence, stance, and curiosity. The more you notice your own biases, show up without judgment, and connect with authenticity, the deeper the impact you will create.

On the path to mastery, it is invaluable to feel gratitude toward those who have supported you and to remain open to feedback. These inputs help you see your blind spots and gain new perspectives. In my own journey, I am deeply thankful to all stakeholders who have contributed with both their positive and challenging feedback. Who I am today carries a unique touch from each of them. And I would like to offer special thanks to dear Adrijana, whose initiative made it possible for us to share these reflections.

As encouragement, I would say: Be patient and trust the process. Sometimes progress is hidden in silence, sometimes in a small moment of awareness. Do not rush—believe in yourself.

In short, the road to mastery is woven with curiosity, humility, patience, and a commitment to continuous learning. Even when you feel “complete,” know that a new door of learning is about to open.



SANDRINE SALIBA

ICF Master Certified Coach

Morocco

Year in which you received this credential/accreditation/award(s):

2022.

[LinkedIn](#)



Q

How did your journey into coaching begin?

As an internal coach for Club Med.



Q

How did your development unfold on the way to achieving your master-level credential / accreditation / award?

I was directly accredited as a PCC through the portfolio path because I didn't know about ICF at the time, and my coaching school was not accredited when I first got certified in 2007. I later renewed my PCC accreditation after three years and eventually obtained my MCC credential.

MCC was a long and demanding journey that required many hours of practice with my clients, as well as being mentored and supervised.

The PCC accreditation allowed me to completely rework my coaching approach and significantly improved my skills and core competencies.

The MCC path, on the other hand, went beyond technical mastery and required deep personal work on my way of being and mindset. It was a long and challenging process!

Q

What does ‘mastery in coaching’ mean to you?

For me, mastery means a sense of ease and a way of being and doing that becomes a natural extension of who we are. There’s a kind of obviousness to it—an ability to no longer be fully aware that we know how to do it. There’s no real effort anymore, nor any concern about the process.

It’s a very special internal feeling where you simply allow things to unfold, trusting that they will take shape in the most appropriate way for the client. It feels like stepping back and letting yourself be carried and guided by the client, like being swept up by a wave that transcends technical mastery.

Q

In what ways do you recognize mastery in your own coaching now?

I recognize mastery in my coaching when I feel completely comfortable and calm, even when the client is stuck or facing difficulties. It’s when sessions no longer drain my energy, when I can hear the subtle, almost imperceptible things and reflect them back to the client.

It’s also in the way I now dare to share my observations and sensations without hesitation or filters, in my ability to notice systemic patterns and bring them to the client’s awareness, in those intuitions that no longer mislead me, and in my ability to step back and let things emerge naturally.

I also recognize it when I feel we’re having powerful conversations that go beyond the issue the client brought, taking on a more philosophical—even spiritual—dimension.

Q

How might others — clients, peers, or mentors — experience your coaching as masterful?

Through my ability to make connections between what is unspoken and the questions I ask, and through my capacity to dig deep and offer a completely different perspective to support transformation.

Q

How do you continue developing after receiving your credential — personally and professionally?

The way I've found to continue developing is by staying connected with other MCC peers, so we can share perspectives and reflections that keep me thinking and expanding my coaching practice. But it's through supervision that I continue to grow most significantly today. It helps me remain increasingly aware of what's happening in my sessions — things that may have previously gone unnoticed, such as biases, transference, or projection.

My next steps are to deepen my background in certain psychological and philosophical concepts.

I still have a long way to go!

Q

What impact did receiving the official master-level recognition have on you?

Receiving the official master-level recognition gave me a true sense of personal accomplishment, allowing me to believe in my potential and feel proud of my journey. It provided a significant boost to my self-esteem.

Professionally, it opened up new opportunities in terms of contracts and more attractive fees. Equally important to me, it also gave me the chance to collaborate with peers at a very high level, which has been invaluable.

Q

What insight, inquiry or encouragement would you offer to someone aspiring to mastery in coaching?

Learn to work on letting go and humility — for me, that's the key to meeting the markers. It's more a state of mind that transcends the technical exercise of our profession than a matter of skill alone.

Believe in the profound difference that this mindset can bring to your sessions, even if you're already technically skilled and have satisfied clients.

Don't approach it as a rigid process, but rather as a personal journey to explore — one that can take you far beyond what you had imagined.

LILY SETO

EMCC Master Practitioner

Canada

Year in which you received this credential/accreditation/award(s):
2018.

[LinkedIn](#)

[Website1](#)

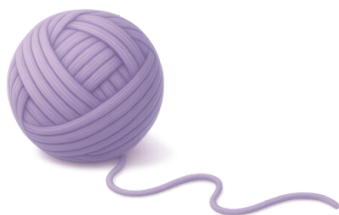
[Website2](#)



Q

How did your journey into coaching begin?

My journey into coaching began while I was serving as a Director in Human Resources and Organizational Development. One day, my leader suggested that I might be well-suited to coaching. Curious, I began researching the field and quickly became intrigued by how coaching could deepen my work with clients and direct reports. What truly drew me in was how naturally coaching aligned with my belief in supporting others to learn in ways that are meaningful to them. The idea of the coach as a “guide by the side” deeply resonated with me.



Over time, I came to recognize the importance of the Dimensions of Identity—both my own and those of the clients I partner with. As part of a role, I was tasked with building a coaching culture within a large organization, which included training internal coaches. I noticed that many emerging coaches struggled with confidence, which led me to explore coaching supervision as a tool to support their vertical development.

A pivotal moment came when I read an academic article highlighting that people of colour often face barriers to coach training and experience the highest dropout rates. This reflected my own lived experience—and it became a call to action. In response, I co-founded the 8th Element Coaching Professional Coach Training Program to help create more inclusive and accessible pathways into the profession.

Q How did your development unfold on the way to achieving your master-level credential/ accreditation/award?

My journey toward EMCC Master Practitioner unfolded naturally through a deep commitment to reflective practice, continuous learning, and service to the coaching profession. What I value most about the Mastery Level is that it emphasizes who we are as practitioners—beyond hours logged or training completed. It invites us to engage in meaningful reflection, contribute to the profession, and support the growth of others.

I've never seen "mastery" as a final destination—rather, it's an ongoing process of learning and evolving in service of the client. My development has been rooted in curiosity, love of learning, and a desire to be in community with other practitioners. Volunteer work and professional engagement have become extensions of how I practice and grow.

These days, supervision plays a central role in my development. I engage regularly with at least two individual supervisors and participate in a "super-vision of group super-vision" community, which offers rich, just-in-time learning and supports both personal and professional growth. It was a conversation with a respected EMCC colleague that opened the possibility of applying for the Mastery Level. Their encouragement helped me see that I was already embodying many of its principles. The decision to pursue the accreditation became an extension of my commitment to learning, contribution, and reflective practice.

As part of my contribution to the coaching profession, an essential element of EMCC mastery, I have served as Vice President, President, and Past-President of my local ICF Chapter over a three-year period, contributed numerous articles and chapters to books and journals, and co-edited two books: *Coaching Supervision: Voices from the Americas* and *The Practice of Coaching Supervision Groups*

Q What does 'mastery in coaching' mean to you?

To me, mastery in coaching is not a destination to reach, but a way of being. It is a commitment to continuous learning and a willingness to let go of ego, outcomes, and the desire to influence. Mastery is holding space with humility, service, and presence — allowing what needs to emerge to unfold, without forcing or directing. A masterful coach co-creates a safe enough environment for the client to explore, grow, and discover their own wisdom.

Mastery is also rooted in reflective practice — not just for the coach's own development, but in service of the client and the wider system. It involves regularly examining one's own biases, impact, and limitations, and engaging in learning that deepens the coaching craft. This kind of reflection goes beyond ticking boxes; it is about evolving as a human being and as a coach.

At the mastery level, coaching techniques are integrated seamlessly and intuitively. A coach listens beyond the words — attuned to energy, emotion, silence, and what remains unspoken. They trust themselves, the process, and the client. They know when to challenge, when to stay quiet, and when to pivot, all in service of the client's agenda and the wider system.

Mastery also includes a responsibility to contribute to the broader coaching profession and to humanity — through mentoring, supervision, writing, or thought leadership. It is about being in relationship with the wider system and holding space for complexity, ambiguity, and paradox. Ultimately, mastery is about showing up fully engaged and authentically to enable transformation.

Q

In what ways do you recognize mastery in your own coaching now?

I recognize mastery in my own coaching through the ways I deeply trust the process, the client, and myself. Rather than striving to “fix” or direct, I now hold space with presence, curiosity, and humility, allowing what wants to emerge to unfold naturally. I recognize that mastery is not about knowing more, but about being more—being attuned, grounded, and responsive in each moment.

I notice my ability to listen beyond words, to attune to energy shifts, patterns, and silence. I co-create with the client, a safe enough container for them to access their own wisdom and to navigate complexity. I am comfortable with not knowing, allowing space for exploration rather than needing to steer toward outcomes. This includes letting go of influence and ego, and trusting that the client’s agenda and timing are what matter most.

I also recognize mastery in my commitment to continuous reflection and learning. Whether through supervision, peer dialogue, or personal inquiry, I remain open to feedback and growth. Mastery for me is being “perfectly imperfect”, and being able to meet each client with fresh eyes and a deep respect for their uniqueness.

Ultimately, I recognize mastery in the way I show up in service to the client—fully present, unattached, and with the intention to support their self-discovery and development. It’s a quiet confidence rooted in experience, practice, and a deep reverence for the transformative power of coaching, and the ability to reflect, reflect in moment and reflect after.

Q

How might others — clients, peers, or mentors — experience your coaching as masterful?

Clients often use words like “she held the space for me to figure it out”, “she challenged my assumptions and biases in a kind way” and “she was fully present to who I am and how I am in the world”. I believe they experience my coaching as deeply grounding, insightful, and spacious. Many have shared that they feel genuinely seen and heard in a way that allows them to access parts of themselves they hadn’t previously acknowledged and can share something for the very first time. Clients often describe a sense of clarity emerging from our conversations—not because I offer solutions, but because I co-create a safe, non-judgmental space where they can slow down, reflect, and listen to their own inner wisdom.

They might experience my coaching as calm and steady, especially in times of uncertainty or transition. I bring a presence that is both gentle and strong, able to hold complexity without needing to resolve it too quickly. Clients often comment on the power of my questions—simple yet profound invitations that help them unlock insight or reframe long-held assumptions.

They also appreciate that I don’t push an agenda, but rather follow their pace and honour what wants to emerge. This contributes to a feeling of partnership—one in which they feel supported but never directed, guided but not influenced.

Clients have said they walk away from sessions feeling lighter, more focused, and more connected to their purpose. They feel that I am fully with them, holding the space with integrity and care. This, I believe, is how my mastery shows up: not in what I do, but in how I am—steadfast, present, and in service of their growth.

Q

How do you continue developing after receiving your credential — personally and professionally?

After receiving my credential, my development—both personal and professional—remains a central commitment. I continue to engage in ongoing individual and group coaching supervision, where I deepen reflective practice, gain new perspectives, and remain grounded in ethical, client-centered work. I regularly read leadership and coaching literature to stay informed of evolving theories and practices.

Connecting with colleagues on a one-to-one basis is essential to my learning, offering a space to exchange insights and stay relationally connected within the profession. I also give back by mentoring newer coaches, offering guidance and presence as they develop their own practice.

As a facilitator of both individual and group supervision, I deepen my understanding of systems thinking, group dynamics, and reflective inquiry—learning from every practitioner I sit with. Contributing to the profession through writing—blogs, book chapters, and editing full publications—helps me integrate ideas and continue shaping the discourse of coaching.

Teaching in a global coach training program invites me to hold both curiosity and humility as I learn from diverse perspectives and cultures. It keeps me sharp and adaptive while remaining in service to the future of coaching.

I am also consciously moving into what I call “Eldership.” This is not about age or seniority, but about presence, spaciousness, and a deepening capacity to hold complexity with compassion. Eldership means slowing down, listening more deeply, trusting emergence, and offering a grounded presence in service of the whole—clients, colleagues, and the profession alike.

Q**What impact did receiving the official master-level recognition have on you?**

Receiving official master-level recognition felt like a deep acknowledgment of the wisdom, knowledge, and experience I've cultivated over the years—an external validation of an internal journey. I appreciated that the recognition was not just about hours logged, but about the quality of presence, reflection, and service I bring to my work.

That said, it doesn't have a daily impact on how I show up as a coach. I rarely think about the title or speak of it unless prompted. For me, mastery is not a destination, but a way of being—one grounded in humility, curiosity, and continual learning. The designation was affirming, but it hasn't changed how I relate to clients or colleagues. I continue to meet each person where they are, with the same care, openness, and commitment I always have.

In many ways, the recognition quietly lives in the background as a gentle reminder of the path I've walked—one step at a time, guided by purpose, reflection, and a deep respect for the work.

Q**What insight, inquiry or encouragement would you offer to someone aspiring to mastery in coaching?**

To anyone aspiring to mastery in coaching, I would offer this: enjoy the journey. Mastery isn't a fixed point to reach but a continual unfolding of who you are as a practitioner and human being. It's a path of deepening, not arriving.

Cultivate an ongoing reflective practice—not just about your sessions, but about who you are becoming as a coach. Reflection invites awareness, humility, and growth. It's where your practice becomes truly alive and personal.

Read widely and stay curious. Explore beyond coaching—into philosophy, psychology, systems thinking, art, and culture. Interdisciplinary learning expands your perspective and enriches your capacity to meet clients in the complexity of their lives.

Connection also matters. Be part of the coaching community in ways that nourish you—whether through coaching supervision, peer dialogue, training, or mentoring. The journey is richer when shared.

Above all, trust yourself. Your path to mastery will be unique. Let it emerge with spaciousness, anchored in service, and guided by integrity. Mastery lives in your presence, not your performance. Keep learning, stay open, and enjoy the unfolding.

JULIE LINES

AC Master Executive Coach

Australia

Year in which you received this credential/accreditation/award(s):

2024.

[LinkedIn](#)

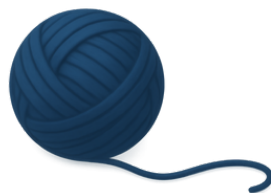
[Website](#)



Q

How did your journey into coaching begin?

Prior to embarking on a coaching career, I built a successful 25-year career in higher education, where I led teams of varying sizes and held executive positions overseeing areas such as student administration and academic facilities. My background in university management provided comprehensive experience in addressing both strategic and operational challenges, as well as coordinating complex projects requiring discretion and collaboration among multiple stakeholders.



In 2008, I was introduced to the value of executive coaching through a formative experience with a coach, which highlighted the significant impact that coaching can have. Motivated by this insight, I pursued formal coach training to enhance my leadership capabilities and expand my skill set. Over time, it became evident that the aspects of my role I found most rewarding were those related to coaching, and I deeply appreciated my involvement within the coaching community.

At the close of 2014, I made the decision to transition from my long-standing higher education career to establish my own coaching practice. Recently, I marked the tenth anniversary of my business, and continue to find great fulfillment in this work. I remain passionate about my profession and frequently express that it is an incredibly rewarding vocation.



How did your development unfold on the way to achieving your master-level credential / accreditation / award?

The International Coach Federation (ICF) credentialing process was introduced to me as part of organisational coach training at the Institute of Executive Coaching and Leadership (IECL). This prompted me to log coaching hours from the outset.

In 2015, after meeting the requirement of 100 logged hours, I obtained the credential of Associate Certified Coach (ACC) with the ICF. Initially, only renewal of the ACC was planned; however, two different Mentor Coaches encouraged me to focus on the 'markers' for Professional Certified Coach (PCC). By 2018, with more than 500 coaching hours logged, I qualified for the aware of the PCC credential.

In 2019, I completed Coaching Supervision Training through Oxford Brookes University in England, where I was introduced to the Association for Coaching (AC). The AC's focus on reflective practice, executive coaching credentials, and recognition of unique organisational coaching competencies impressed me, given my focus on organisational coaching.

In 2021, I applied for and was awarded the credential of Professional Executive Coaching (PEC) by the AC. Subsequently, I met the requirements for Master Executive Coach (MEC), including more than 1500 coaching hours. The comprehensive application process included demonstrating all competencies in my coaching practice, gathering references from organisational coaching clients, and writing several reflective pieces.



What does 'mastery in coaching' mean to you?

Mastery goes beyond accumulating coaching hours. Some very 'experienced' coaches may offer valuable services yet lack alignment with core coaching competencies. True mastery requires continuous commitment to professional growth, humility, and learning. It involves engaging with other coaches through mentorship, supervision, and exposure to different approaches. Being a reflective practitioner is essential; mastery cannot be achieved without it.



In what ways do you recognize mastery in your own coaching now?

Contracting. Contracting. Contracting. Trusting myself (my instincts and my capabilities as a coach) and trusting my client.

Q How might others — clients, peers, or mentors — experience your coaching as masterful?

Prospective coaching clients are often confused about what coaching is, so I'm not sure they ever choose a coach based on their credentials... but I do hope they experience something different in a coaching engagement when working with a Master Coach. At the beginning of my coaching journey I wanted to be seen as supportive and worked too hard to add value... now I make my coaching client do all the work. My clients describe me with words like: calm, warm, insightful, and quietly provocative.

I work as a Mentor Coach and I am a qualified Coaching Supervisor. I find this work with individual and groups extremely rewarding, as I can leverage my experience for the benefit of other coaches - making my impact wider than it can be through my own coaching work.

Q What impact did receiving the official master-level recognition have on you?

I hold dual credentials with both ICF and AC. After earning Master Executive Coach status with the AC in 2024, I no longer feel pressured to pursue the ICF MCC and am now free to explore other professional and personal development opportunities to enhance my coaching impact.

Q How do you continue developing after receiving your credential - personally and professionally?

In coaching, professional development is ongoing. There are always new skills to learn or patterns to address with guidance from mentors or supervisors. I devour podcasts and webinars—both within and outside coaching—as these broaden your perspective as a coach and your growth as a human. With a background in the higher education sector, I also keenly read new published research about Executive Coaching.

Q What insight, inquiry or encouragement would you offer to someone aspiring to mastery in coaching?

I can only answer as this question pertains to AC accreditation at Master level... the AC MEC application process was demanding and required careful planning over 12 months. I created a project plan for my application and relied on 1:1 coaching supervision to stay focused. I appreciated that the AC Assessor considered my recorded sessions along with my own reflection on strengths and areas for growth (ie my ability to reflect on the recording was of more interest to the Assessor than a 'perfect recording'). Reflecting deeply for the application and obtaining client references certainly strengthened my confidence as a coach.

ARVID J. BUIT

ICF Master Certified Coach;
EMCC Master Practitioner

The Netherlands

Year in which you received this credential/accreditation/award(s):
2014.

[LinkedIn](#)
[Website](#)



Q

How did your journey into coaching begin?

I began my career in the entertainment industry as an artist manager, designer, and producer. Working closely with internationally renowned performers, I quickly noticed a striking contrast between their public image and private struggles. Many relied on substances to cope and faced challenges in building meaningful, lasting relationships. This experience sparked my journey: supporting high-achieving individuals in finding balance, stability, and healthier ways of living.

In 2009, after gaining expertise in personality and attachment disorders, I launched my coaching practice. Collaborating with psychologists and psychiatrists worldwide, I focused on working with exceptionally successful individuals who, despite their achievements, often felt unfulfilled or displayed dysfunctional patterns that threatened their personal lives and careers.

My specialization in executive coaching evolved through authoring several books, delivering hundreds of lectures, and continually refining my approach. This work remains my enduring passion, driven by a core mission: helping successful people build sustainable happiness and lead stable, fulfilling lives.



Q

How did your development unfold on the way to achieving your master-level credential/accreditation/award?

My journey toward master-level accreditation was gradual, driven by personal experience, rigorous training, real world executive work, and the willingness to face my own vulnerabilities.

It began with burnout, panic attacks and insomnia. Pain that forced a deep self-reflection and recognition that high performance without inner stability is unsustainable. From there, in 2009, I made a conscious shift: I committed to leadership, psychology, and coaching studies: examining personality, power, narcissism, attachment, identity.

I didn't stop at theory. I applied what I learned in demanding environments: working with C-suite executives from the entertainment business, creative production, tech, family firms, PE-backed companies. These real leadership struggles taught me what works. And what tends to fail: to change behaviour at a deeper level.

Parallel to the coaching work, I pursued accreditation with multiple leading bodies. I earned master-level credentials with ICF, EMCC, NOBCO, and Marshall Goldsmith. I also became a supervisor and assessor, helping other coaches grow, reviewing recorded sessions, refining practice.

Over time, hundreds of C-suite leaders, thousands of coaching hours, writing books, public speaking, experimentation: all contributed to the depth, authenticity, and skill that underpin the 'master' level. In short: it wasn't a single moment of credentialing, but years of experience, learning, testing, and evolving.

Q

What does 'mastery in coaching' mean to you?

Mastery in coaching in a single sentence to me would be: 'Proving a unique approach with real clients that actually experience sustainable growth'. As a coach you should always focus on results for clients. Everything else is theatre. As Marshall Goldsmith taught me: 'If you're the best coach in the world, but your client doesn't change: who cares?' And 'If you're a terrible coach, but your client changes and grows durably: who cares?'. Mastery isn't about you, but about your performance.

Finding your personal niche is part of the journey. Connecting to a group of clients that you can accept unconditionally. Feeling 'at ease' while doing your job. That sounds easy, but every starting coach 'acts' as a coach. Instead of being one. I think that the second you feel comfortable with your clients, you're actually really close to becoming one.

Mastery is also about the willingness to reflect, connect with peers, and being accountable to the quality of your services. I find accreditation to be extremely powerful in that specific responsibility. Every professional coach, should be willing to let others verify the quality of your work. The pitfall in our business (as with therapists) is a closed of reality that confirms you 'being right'. But that doesn't mean it's the best for our clients.

Business wise, a master coach should be able to sustain a healthy business with durable financial growth. If you work with business leaders, it's completely implausible if you can't show your strategic competence in creating a good coaching company. In my area of executive coaching I encounter a lot of 'wannabe' coaches trying to find a pot of gold at the end of the rainbow. However: it's not about money, but about being real.



In what ways do you recognize mastery in your own coaching now?

For me, mastery in coaching reveals itself less in technique and more in presence. Early in my career, I focused heavily on models and interventions. Now, I recognise mastery in my ability to sit with the client's complexity. Whether it involves power, ego, identity, or dysfunctional patterns, without rushing to provide answers. True change requires patience, courage, and the willingness to go beneath the surface, and I trust that process completely.

Another marker of mastery is precision. After thousands of hours with C-suite executives and entrepreneurs, I can quickly recognise underlying dynamics such as narcissistic traits, attachment issues, or destructive behavioural loops. Instead of confronting them head-on, I now guide clients in a way that both challenges and supports them, allowing them to uncover the truth themselves. This balance between sharpness and empathy defines the difference between good coaching and transformational coaching.

Finally, mastery shows up in how I use myself as an instrument. I remain deeply reflective continuing supervision, writing, and research. I bring my own vulnerability into the room when it serves the client. My role is not to perform but to create a space where even the most successful leaders feel safe enough to explore their blind spots.

In essence, mastery in my coaching is about impact: seeing leaders not only achieve results but also build stable, meaningful, and sustainable lives.



How might others — clients, peers, or mentors — experience your coaching as masterful?

Clients often describe my coaching as both confronting and deeply supportive. They experience a level of clarity (I call this radical honesty) that allows them to face truths they may have avoided for years. What makes it feel masterful to them is the balance: I challenge dysfunctional patterns directly, yet in a way that builds trust and safety rather than defensiveness.

Peers and mentors frequently notice the precision with which I navigate complex dynamics, especially around ego, power, and identity. They see mastery in my ability to stay fully present, listen beyond words, and intervene only when it truly adds value. Instead of relying on formulas, I adapt fluidly; drawing on years of practice, research, and supervision, to meet the unique needs of each leader.

Ultimately, others experience my coaching as transformative. They see leaders leaving our work not just with strategies for success, but with greater stability, self-awareness, and the capacity to live fulfilled lives.

Q How do you continue developing after receiving your credential — personally and professionally?

Earning master-level credentials was never an endpoint, but rather a milestone. My development continues on two levels: personally and professionally.

On a personal level, I remain committed to deep self-reflection. I regularly engage in supervision and mentoring, not only to refine my practice but also to confront my own blind spots. I write extensively. Books, articles, and reflections, which helps me clarify my thinking and ensures I keep questioning my own assumptions. I also challenge myself to live what I coach: maintaining balance, building meaningful relationships, and staying connected to my own vulnerabilities. Clients can sense when a coach is truly practicing what they preach.

Professionally, I stay closely engaged with the global coaching and psychology community. I collaborate with psychologists, psychiatrists, and leadership experts worldwide, expanding my perspective on complex human behaviour. Teaching, lecturing, and supervising other coaches also sharpens my skills: explaining concepts and reviewing others' sessions forces me to stay precise, current, and accountable to the highest standards.

Beyond coaching, I explore new fields. Organisational dynamics, power structures, even philosophical perspectives on leadership, to enrich my practice. This interdisciplinary curiosity ensures I continue to evolve rather than repeat what I already know.

In short, development for me is a lifelong journey. The credential marks a level of mastery, but mastery itself requires ongoing growth, humility, and the courage to remain a student of leadership and human behaviour.

Q What impact did receiving the official master-level recognition have on you?

Receiving official master-level recognition was both affirming and humbling. Affirming, because it validated years of dedication. Thousands of coaching hours, continuous study, supervision, and the courage to work with some of the most complex leadership dynamics. Humbling, because mastery is not a fixed state; the recognition reminded me that true expertise requires continuous growth and reflection.

The immediate impact was a deeper sense of responsibility. Being recognised as a master coach means clients, peers, and the wider coaching community place even greater trust in the quality and depth of my work. It sharpened my awareness that my role extends beyond individual coaching: I am also accountable for setting a standard, mentoring other coaches, and contributing to the integrity of the profession.

On a personal level, the recognition gave me confidence to embrace my unique voice. It encouraged me to publish more, speak more openly about difficult topics like narcissism and power in leadership, and to challenge clients and peers with greater courage. The credential did not change who I am as a coach, but it amplified my ability to influence and serve at the highest level.

Ultimately, the master-level recognition was not an end point but a catalyst. It deepened my commitment to impact: helping leaders not only succeed, but live meaningful, stable, and fulfilled lives—while continuing to evolve myself.

Q

What insight, inquiry or encouragement would you offer to someone aspiring to mastery in coaching?

To anyone aspiring to mastery in coaching, my strongest encouragement is this: do not chase techniques, chase depth. Early on, it is tempting to collect models and interventions, but true mastery lies in your presence, not your toolkit. Clients will remember how deeply they felt seen and challenged, not which framework you used. Start with writing your own biography and learning history. Then work on truly understanding it.

Mastery also requires radical self-reflection. Be prepared to confront your own blind spots, ego, and vulnerabilities, because you cannot take a client further than you are willing to go yourself. Supervision, mentoring, and personal work are not optional: they are essential. The more you grow as a person, the more powerful you become as a coach.

Patience is another key. Mastery is measured in thousands of hours, countless mistakes, and the humility to learn from both clients and peers. There is no shortcut; every conversation contributes to your development if you are willing to reflect on it.

Finally, remember that mastery is not a destination. Even after formal recognition, I remain a student of leadership, psychology, and human behaviour. Hold on to curiosity, keep questioning assumptions, and never stop experimenting.

So my encouragement is simple: embrace the long road. If you are committed to growth, honest in your self-examination, and courageous in your work with clients, mastery will emerge. Not as a title, but as the natural outcome of a lifetime dedicated to the craft.



REKHA HATKANAGALEKAR

ICF Master Certified Coach
India

Year in which you received this credential/accreditation/award(s):
2020.

[LinkedIn](#)



Q

How did your journey into coaching begin?

As part of my professional career I have led organization, led teams developing software, been head of Human Resources and have taught Business Management subjects at B-schools. While doing this I have done a lot of work on myself through Landmark Education, Transactional Analysis and Spiritual processes like Yoga. I came into coaching bringing all of this with me so I could integrate and synthesise the knowledge, skills and wisdom I have acquired over time in service of clients.

Q

How did your development unfold on the way to achieving your master-level credential / accreditation / award?

After I completed my PCC journey, I had thought I would first earn enough money to at least recover my training fees before I can think of signing up for MCC. The exponential jump from 500 hours of coaching to 2500 hours seemed like an impossible one to take. After 2 years of practicing as a professional coach, I signed up for MCC not because I had recovered my fees but because I told myself "I am worth it" to invest in my own development. And that is what I focused on. Improving myself as a coach, getting immersed in the competencies, studying the framework of coaching, internalising the process of coaching. It meant continuous unlearning and re-learning. Challenging my own belief system and updating my beliefs that did not serve me.

Q

What does 'mastery in coaching' mean to you?

Mastery is a very heavy word. It is humbling to think of myself as a "master". What mastery in coaching specifically means to me is that (1) I have a deeper understanding of the coaching competencies (2) The process of coaching has been internalised (3) I am ok "not knowing" in a coaching conversation, about a client's domain, about client's experiences and so on (4) I have practiced unlearning and learning and am ok to learn from any source (5) I know that there is a long way to go and that it is a continuous process of evolving. This does not make me uncomfortable.



Q

How might others — clients, peers, or mentors — experience your coaching as masterful?

I find the biggest quality that I value in a coach, which I have found developing within myself, and something that is valued by my clients - whether they are coaching clients or supervisees or mentees - is the ability to hold a safe and confidential space that allows the client to go within and gather the courage to become aware of and accept themselves fully. I also find that clients appreciate openness, vulnerability and respect. That builds the container of trust which is so important in a coaching relationship. Building these strengths is a journey towards and beyond mastery. Of course clients are focused on results they want in their lives, but mastery in coaching facilitates their development as human beings that helps them produce results beyond what they came into the engagement for.

Q

In what ways do you recognize mastery in your own coaching now?

I am comfortable having coaching "conversations" rather than coaching "sessions". I find my presence has sharpened, I have made "silence" my strength and I am comfortable waiting while the client processes their thoughts. I find I am also increasingly creative when it comes to provoking thought. Over time I have evolved from a coach to a "thinking partner", taking the client gently out of their comfort zone into territories they may not have explored earlier or thought of going into on their own. This is the space where compassion, trust and confidentiality play a critical role as the client is uncovering areas they have not gone into earlier. I find a dimension of mastery in coaching is also how effectively I am able to hold a safe space for the client.

Q

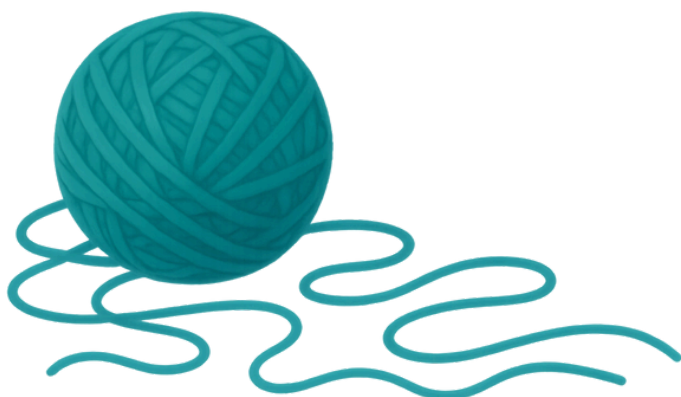
How do you continue developing after receiving your credential — personally and professionally?

I use every opportunity for Supervision, whether I am being supervised or I am providing supervision. I find it a powerful way of continuing to work on myself. For me, my internal compass is a powerful way of integrating who I am with my professional practice as a coach, a coach trainer, coach mentor and coach supervisor. I have also been a Yoga practitioner (a legacy of my country, India) for years now. That helps me be grounded and present. I look for opportunities to volunteer and contribute to the coaching profession. That helps me sharpen my skills and knowledge not only related to coaching directly, but also applied. For example, I am studying Psychodrama currently, which I find extremely useful for my personal work as well as a tool to use in my professional practice.

Q

What impact did receiving the official master-level recognition have on you?

I found myself at ease with coaching, with the process of coaching and the coaching clients. The credential also helped me build my credibility not only as a coach but as a member of the coaching profession.

**Q**

What insight, inquiry or encouragement would you offer to someone aspiring to mastery in coaching?

I would say, be clear about your purpose. "Why" do you want to become a master coach? What is driving your aspiration? Will it be adequate to stay the course? Would you have ways to hold yourself accountable? Have a clear sight beyond the acquisition of a credential. How will you continue to learn and grow? Be clear that getting a credential is only the start of the journey and not the end.

HELEN O'GRADY

ICF Master Certified Coach;
AC Master Executive Coach

UK

Year in which you received this credential/accreditation/award(s):

Master Executive Coach 2024,
MCC 2025.

[LinkedIn](#)
[Website](#)



Q How did your journey into coaching begin?

When I was nursing and became a mother in that period, I got the opportunity to work as a facilitator in leadership development. As part of that program, there was coaching — and I had never come across coaching before. I just kind of learned how to coach within that, did a tiny bit of training, and coached on the job. As soon as I discovered coaching, I loved it.

From that point, I did more and more training. At the time, I was living in Australia and tried to work as a coach within the healthcare system there, but there just wasn't funding for it. So I stepped out and became self-employed — and then, ironically, they paid me to do it in the system, but as an external person!

It all really came through leadership development and facilitation. Because I was a relatively senior nurse, I was involved in leadership programs for other senior nurses, allied health professionals, and doctors. We all had clinical skills, but that step up into leading a team and managing people was a different space — and that's where coaching really started for me.



Q

How did your development unfold on the way to achieving your master-level credential/ accreditation/award?

For a long time, I didn't accredit — I was just doing a lot of coaching and kind of learning on the job, as lots of us did. Then I applied for my PCC in Australia, so I've had my PCC since about 2018. I found that quite interesting — that rigor of going through the training.

After that, I trained as a coach supervisor because I felt like I'd plateaued a bit at the PCC level; a lot of my clients were quite similar, and I started to feel maybe I was getting a bit too comfortable. I wanted to push myself, so I did coach supervision training at that point, and I found that really useful — both for myself and for continuing to supervise lots of coaches.

Then I moved to the UK, slightly unexpectedly, and basically had to start my business all over again, which was quite hard. At that point, I was doing more supervision than coaching. I don't know what it was, but I suppose I'd had MCC in my mind and decided I was going to go for it. I was getting closer to the hours and really wanted that challenge, so probably about three years ago, I set myself that goal.

I hadn't intended to do the AC one, but I knew there was a tender coming up that required a master accreditation with one of the bodies. The hours are much less for the Association for Coaching than they are for ICF, so that's why I did that one first and got it while I was losing a lot of work — some contracts in the UK vanished. That's why it took me a little bit longer to get the ICF one.

I also do voluntary supervision for ICF UK, and you can count ten hours of CCEs for supervision in your reaccreditation. But my training was more about wanting to provide supervision. The original program I did was supposed to cover both supervision and mentoring, but it was really more focused on supervision. Later, I did more specific mentor coach training as well.

I didn't do one big Level 3 program — my training is sort of all over the place, just different bits that I've been interested in. Supervision, mentor training, neuroscience courses... not so much niche, just things that interested me and that I found relevant for the kind of work I did. It's really been about following what interested me rather than tick-boxing.

Q

What does ‘mastery in coaching’ mean to you?

I think it’s a bit of a misnomer, really — a bit artificial. We never truly reach it. Even though you might get the badge — like I’ve got one in front of me — that’s not mastery.

For me, mastery in coaching is about doing less, trusting the client more, trusting myself more, and being courageous enough to sit in uncertainty. That’s really what it’s about. And working with other coaches, I see that’s what many of us find hard — to let go of the need for the client to have some outcome, to get value, to prove ourselves. All of that goes against mastery.

I think mastery is a dance — a step forward, a step back — really led by the client, trusting them to go where they need to go. And that’s quite hard. I don’t think any coach who says they are constantly at that level for every single session is being honest with themselves.

All of us have moments of mastery. Maybe we become more conscious about moving toward that, but it’s never static. You can have one session and think, “Yes, that felt masterful,” and another where you think, “That wouldn’t have passed an ACC.” It’s really variable.

Q

In what ways do you recognize mastery in your own coaching now?

I think mastery also comes with experience — going deeper, asking questions, and trusting your intuition. For example, I had a session this morning with a new client. She was describing something, and I offered back the emotions I was noticing — grief and frustration — and she just burst into tears. She said, “Oh, you warned me, but I wasn’t expecting this.”

At the end of the session, she said it had been so helpful. And I think that’s what mastery does — it allows you to trust yourself and ask the questions that matter.

She said she’s a very busy person and expected the session to be about what she needed to do, but it became about who she is — her beliefs and her stories.

That’s the difference for clients: when we can work with them at that level, and when they are willing to go there too. We get beneath the surface — into who they are, who they need to be, and who they want to be.

It’s about trusting yourself, trusting the client, and letting go of those predetermined ideas of what you can or can’t do. Just being present and asking the question.

Q

How might others — clients, peers, or mentors — experience your coaching as masterful?

I think it’s similar. I was just looking at the feedback this client gave me today — she wrote:

“I honestly think Helen did brilliant. It instantly made me feel safe in the session to talk openly and cry (and that’s okay). She made me face feelings I’d been too embarrassed or scared to feel. She challenged me, but in a way that was just right. She also asked me questions that were really useful — things I hadn’t spent time thinking about before. I went for a walk after the session and felt like a weight had dropped off my shoulders.”

I think that kind of describes it — that you get into what’s going on in here, in the heart. The experience for lots of clients is lightness and clarity — a lightness of being rather than a lightness of doing.

She walked away with that. And, if I’m honest, on the markers that session wouldn’t pass — because we didn’t nail down a goal. I simply reacted to what she brought, and she didn’t walk away with any specific actions apart from just to slow down and to feel what she needed to feel.

Q How do you continue developing after receiving your credential — personally and professionally?

I don't think I've quite got an answer to that question yet, and I guess I want to continue to challenge myself.

I'm involved in the UK ICF, and as I said, I'm an assessor for the AC. One of the interesting things happening now is that we're starting to get a group of UK ICF MCC coaches together for the first time, which I'm quite excited about. I think that will be interesting, because what we're talking about is the future of coaching — how those of us who have nominally reached the top, or whatever you want to call it, can support other coaches, and what that means for the profession.

So I think that's how I'll continue — I'm interested in legacy, although that feels like too big a word. But there are advantages to having that experience and using it for good — for the profession, especially as it's changing, with AI coming in and the field becoming saturated. I think all of those things will keep me interested and developing in new ways.



Q What impact did receiving the official master-level recognition have on you?

There is something about it — not so much the AC one, but the ICF one. I guess there was a lot of validation. It did feel like I'd done something significant, because it's hard to get — and it had taken so much to get there, so much focus, energy, blood, sweat, tears, and money — all in one.

I think there is something in that validation. I say to coaches all the time: it doesn't matter how long you've been doing this, we all have those moments where we think, "God, am I good enough? Who am I kidding myself? I can't believe someone's paying me to listen to them."

Good coaching often looks like you're not doing very much, and that can make you feel like you're not working hard enough. I jokingly say when I teach coaching, "I'm a great coach because I'm lazy — I'm a lazy coach." But actually, that undermines how hard it is to not do very much in a session and to really be there for the person.

So that's a long-winded way of saying that the recognition brought validation — something objective and measurable that I've been able to demonstrate. My clients don't care; let's be honest, very few people do, and it doesn't suddenly bring in more work. In many ways, it doesn't make much difference externally.

But as a supervisor, other coaches do recognize what it takes to get there — and that's quite nice. More than anything, it's for me — going, "Okay, I've achieved it," and feeling really chuffed because I know how hard I worked for it.

Q

What insight, inquiry or encouragement would you offer to someone aspiring to mastery in coaching?

They build on each other, these stages — it's not a straight trajectory. It's up and down. Particularly with the ICF ones, there's a lot of unlearning we have to do, and that is really hard. It's not so much about learning new things as it is about stopping some of our bad habits and unlearning what no longer serves us.

In that process, especially when you're listening to yourself coach and reviewing recordings — which you have to do for all of them — what I hadn't really absorbed was how much that would knock my confidence at times. There were moments when I felt like I was going backwards and thought, "Who am I kidding?"

That's when I really needed supervision and people around me who believed in me and said, "You'll get there." And that's part of the process.

My encouragement would be: it's worth it. It's worth fighting for. You learn a lot from it — and don't see it as a tick-box exercise.

If you're just doing it for the letters, you're missing out on so much. But if you do it to learn more about yourself and who you are as a coach, it's deeply valuable.

That's what I liked about the AC one — having to really articulate my philosophy and who I was as a coach. With the ICF one, it's very competency-based, but you also learn a lot about yourself in that process.

We ask our clients to learn, to change, to shift — and we need to do the same for ourselves. So I would really encourage anyone to go through the process, but to do it for themselves and for the learning, not for the certificate or the letters.

TAYMOUR MIRI

ICF Master Certified Coach
UK

Year in which you received this credential/accreditation/award(s):
2017.

[LinkedIn](#)
[Website](#)



Q

How did your journey into coaching begin?

I was introduced to coaching in a leadership program at work when I was at BP. This experience opened up a number of unanswered questions for me. I started reading about coaching and eventually participated in an ICF accredited program which led me to apply for PCC and start working with senior leaders in organisations in the Middle East, Europe and USA. I found that coaching did not exist in the Iran market and not many Farsi speakers around the world had heard about it. This led to creating an online coaching education business alongside my leadership coaching service and I have continued to invest in learning and developing myself in the ICF competencies and the business of running a successful practice and supporting other coaches to become successful.

Q

How did your development unfold on the way to achieving your master-level credential / accreditation / award?

I wanted to apply for an ACTP accreditation from ICF and realised that at the time, I needed to hold an MCC credential as a program director. I also wanted to expand my competencies to add more value to my clients and eventually train others to become masterful coaches.

Q

What does ‘mastery in coaching’ mean to you?

It means having a mindset of continuous growth and learning and to live it in all areas of my life.

Q**In what ways do you recognize mastery in your own coaching now?**

I am able to make better choices for myself and I am even more trusting of my clients potential and abilities. My belief of the coaching relationships and its potential impact is ever growing

Q**How might others — clients, peers, or mentors — experience your coaching as masterful?**

I hear things like your presence has made me decide to work with you. I hear that my ability to hear what they are really saying and being a co-creator of solutions as valuable to them.

Q**How do you continue developing after receiving your credential — personally and professionally?**

I develop new programs and draw on other coach's and mentor's perspectives and knowledge. I am also part of the community of Gallup's strength coaches

Q**What impact did receiving the official master-level recognition have on you?**

The impact was mainly during the journey of learning to reach the MCC level. Once I received the ICF email with the endorsement that I had reached that standard, it opened up the path for others to more easily feel trust to experience my coaching and the credibility it brought accelerated the progress in my businesses.

Q**What insight, inquiry or encouragement would you offer to someone aspiring to mastery in coaching?**

Although at first it might be a focus on external endorsement and certification, you will find the journey part of your internal transformation. Your clients will start noticing the change in you and your coaching before your certification and you will notice how your mind is tuning in differently to yourself and those you interact with. It is an insightful and sometime challenging journey as you learn to deepen your competencies and develop your mindset further.

SLADJANA MILOSEVIC

EMCC Master Practitioner

Serbia

Year in which you received this credential/accreditation/award(s):
2019.

[LinkedIn](#)



Q

How did your journey into coaching begin?

It started in 2007 when I initiated the establishment of EMCC Serbia.

Q

How did your development unfold on the way to achieving your master-level credential/accreditation/award?

Accreditation at Practitioner Level in 2010. Upgrade of individual accreditation to Senior Practitioner Level in 2015. Upgrade of individual accreditation to Master Practitioner Level in 2019. Supervision accreditation in 2020. Renewal of Master Practitioner Accreditation in 2024.

Q

What does ‘mastery in coaching’ mean to you?



Basically, proof that I have been in industry almost since its beginnings at the global level.

Q

In what ways do you recognize mastery in your own coaching now?

Being in the flow constantly while I coach, mentor and supervise

Q

How might others — clients, peers, or mentors — experience your coaching as masterful?

I think this is a question for them ;-)

Q

How do you continue developing after receiving your credential — personally and professionally?

In diverse ways. I believe that for the master it is important to learn more outside of the profession that within it. For me personally, philosophy is the area of my future personal development.

Q

What impact did receiving the official master-level recognition have on you?

To be quite honest, none.

Q

What insight, inquiry or encouragement would you offer to someone aspiring to mastery in coaching?

Having being recognized as master from the professional organization is just one "dimension". If You get it, OK. If not, life goes on even if You are a (Senior) Practitioner!

FRAN FISHER

ICF Master Certified Coach
United States of America

Year in which you received this credential/accreditation/award(s):
1998.

[LinkedIn](#)
[Website](#)



Q

How did your journey into coaching begin?

My journey began in circumstances that greatly challenged my physical, mental, emotional health, and my financial survival (abusive husband, divorce and single parenting two children). In the 1970's and 80's I reached out for help: psychics, therapy, self-help books, tapes, and personal growth programs. Those courses showed me my workaholic pattern of giving away my power to fear of not- being-good-enough and fear of being judged not-good-enough. The other message was "put yourself in the center." I took that leap of faith in 1989 and started learning how to live true to my essential self, my purpose, and core values. The quality of my life started turning around. I attracted small business entrepreneurs who wanted to be more successful, so I launched a business, facilitating them in a process I developed called Living Your Vision.

That led me to meeting Laura Whitworth and Henry House. They invited me to take their introduction to coaching course in 1991. I started incorporating coaching principles into my LYV program and studying with Laura and Henry as they launched their coaching school.

I founded my coach training school in 1997: Academy for Coach Training. My school was one of the first three coach training schools accredited by The International Coach Federation.



Q

How did your development unfold on the way to achieving your master-level credential / accreditation / award?

In 1992 I volunteered as Treasurer on the board of the newly established Personal Professional Coaches Association – the first international coaching association. We had a vision of what coaching will look like in 20 years: “We are Weaving Coaching into the Fabric of Living.” That was the theme for our first international conference. Long story short, we ultimately joined forces with the International Coach Federation to become ONE international association. I was a Vice President of Ethics and Standards, and my immediate responsibility was to lead a committee to develop the credentialing paths for coaches and coaching schools. That took two years. We rolled out credentialing requirements in 1996. I was grandfathered as a Master Certified Coach in 1998. I have been an assessor for ICF accreditation applicants since 1998. In 2014 I was on the committee to develop the PCC Markers. These opportunities have grown me. I have always been passionate about coaching, teaching, mentoring and assessing as ways of guiding and supporting coaching in their continuous development.

Q

What does ‘mastery in coaching’ mean to you?

I don’t see myself as a Master, except for my longevity of experience, but I am always striving for greater mastery. Whether coaching or mentoring, I treasure the humbling learning journey it has been for me so far. In the last 30 thirty years I have been privileged to be part of the extraordinary evolution of development in our field. The goal for mastery individually and organizationally has continued to move beyond our horizon. And it’s not just about developing skills, it is about mastering who we are being as well.

As a mentor for coaching going for their Master Certified Coach accreditation, I find that the successful ones are learning to consistently exhibit inspired trust in themselves, their clients, and the coaching process. They are consistently responding to what their client presents - with expansive space, embodied presence, and connection, i.e.: BEING a sacred space for their client’s wholeness. They come to enjoy a felt sense of freedom and more elegance in the flow of their coaching conversations.

Q

In what ways do you recognize mastery in your own coaching now?

In my own coaching I have been experiencing greater mastery in my ability to connect with and respond to my client without agenda, or the need to fix or change anything about them or for them. I have gained greater mastery with leveraging silence, which offers my client a sacred space to relax and listen to their deeper self-awareness. I used to have a habit of asking long convoluted questions that would meander and clutter up the space with wordiness. With a lot of intentionality and practice, I have finally learned to ask more simple, succinct, curious questions that evoke their learning and noticing about themselves – with greater clarity, and ease.

Q

How might others — clients, peers, or mentors — experience your coaching as masterful?

The best way to answer this one is to provide a few testimonial quotes from my clients:

” If you are lucky enough to have Fran as a Mentor Coach, you have received a true transformational gift. Her knowledge of the ICF Core Competencies and ability to provide specific aligned ‘feed forward’ is coupled with her genuine love and compassion for the art and science of coaching.”

“Fran helped me move through a breakdown to a breakthrough and from doubt to confidence. She brings her authentic, cheerful and buoyant qualities to her coaching work and I am fortunate to have been her mentee. Thank you, dear Fran, for your encouragement and support during this crucial professional development journey!”

“Dear Fran, you didn't try to take me anywhere, solve anything, be knowledgeable, unconsciously try to fix...you just kept the space in which I could let go and be. The example you shared for me became the image of my mind exploding with reasonings, movement and analysis, and through your gentle and constant presence, little by little my mind relaxes, and my being shines out. Harmonization of self.”

The qualities that many clients appreciate about me are my flexibility, generosity, and humility.

Q

How do you continue developing after receiving your credential — personally and professionally?

My belief is that the coaching profession is spiritual work and that my personal learning and growth journey is soulful, guided by my life principles, spiritual beliefs, and values. Continuous learning and improvement are important to me. I honor ICF core Competency #2 Embodies a Coaching Mindset as a personal and professional responsibility:

“Engages in ongoing personal and professional learning and development as a coach. Works with coaching supervisors or mentor coaches as needed. Develops and maintains a mindset that is open, curious, flexible and client-centered.

I engage in continuous learning training, and I reflect on my own performance in my coaching and mentoring, putting in course corrections as I go, and passing it along to my clients and peers.

Q

What impact did receiving the official master-level recognition have on you?

Impact:

- Recognition for the investment, commitments, and contributions I made in the early 1990's toward launching ICF; personal fulfillment in being part of the mission to manifest the vision for coaching in the world
- Credibility and visibility in the marketplace

Q**What insight, inquiry or encouragement would you offer to someone aspiring to mastery in coaching?**

First of all, **START NOW** regardless of where you are on the path. Don't wait until you have your required hours of experience to start reaching for next level of accreditation. As you aspire to greater mastery, learn how to let go of past roles (habits, beliefs), expand your identity, deepen your self-knowledge, and move through learning passages to new states of being.

The deep inner work that masterful coaching requires is a unique journey for each of us. The inner work is for accessing your authentic power and wisdom. It requires dropping your conditioned persona, habitual fears, and automatic reactions—essentially transcending ego and awakening into higher stages of awareness. If you identify with a narrow separate sense of self (safety, control, attached to the way we always did it, etc.), you lose the opportunity to cultivate your connection to something larger than yourself and move into higher stages of awareness and connection.

The Japanese use the word *Fushimi*, which means “the node on a bamboo shoot,” to acknowledge that we grow in stages. If we are open to the transition, instead of holding on too tight to what has been, we can experience great insights and flow into the next stage, whether or not we feel ready.

Beth Hampton, author of *WABI SABI*, Japanese wisdom for a perfectly imperfect life.

With the blessings of this inner work, you will notice your heart opening, your mind relaxing, and your sense of self enlarging to include more parts of yourself. Wisdom is letting go, surrendering, and allowing emergence of something larger than SELF.

SARI VAN POELJE

EMCC Master Practitioner

The Netherlands

Year in which you received this credential/accreditation/award(s):

2023.

[LinkedIn](#)
[Website](#)



Q

How did your journey into coaching begin?

I wanted to become an organizational consultant since I was 17. I chose to study organizational psychology, and while still a student I started my training, coaching and consultancy business Intact Academy in 1985. At 26 I was headhunted as the corporate management development head at KLM. I went on from there to fulfil various regional and global HRO functions in different multinationals, alongside building up my Transactional Analysis coaching and consultancy school. My purpose was always to support change in systems, first through large scale change, and then through executive and team coaching. And here we are 40 years later....

Q

How did your development unfold on the way to achieving your master-level credential / accreditation / award?

After my university degree, I became accredited as a Teaching and Supervising Transactional Analyst in 2003. Realising I needed a coach accreditation as well I became a EMCC senior practitioner in 2010, which I followed up with a EMCC Master in coaching, team coaching and supervision in 2022-2025.



Q

What does ‘mastery in coaching’ mean to you?

For me mastery in coaching is an art and a science. It is the ability to create a space and relationship in which the coaching client can feel supported and challenged, can change and flourish. As a coach this means you need a strong grounding in the science of coaching - theory, methods and techniques - and the art of being in relationship, with yourself and the coach, to do the right thing at the right time to get unstuck. As a team coach you need these abilities, plus the ability to work with the whole team as an entity.

Q

How might others — clients, peers, or mentors — experience your coaching as masterful?

see above

Q

What impact did receiving the official master-level recognition have on you?

I was very touched to be recognised as a master coach, by my assessor and my peers. It almost felt like a lifetime achievement award:)

Q

In what ways do you recognize mastery in your own coaching now?

Today I was really touched when one of my clients said: "Being coached by you is like having a "wax on, wax off" experience, like in the Karate Kid. I learned without understanding I was learning. And I know what I learned will stay with me to my dying day". That is how I recognise my mastery in coaching - clients have deep transformative experiences which change the way they think, feel and behave.

Q

How do you continue developing after receiving your credential — personally and professionally?

Throughout my career I have always followed workshops in associated fields, from art, to science. And I have always been in supervision, and had a supervisor for my work. Continuous learning is my passion.

Q

What insight, inquiry or encouragement would you offer to someone aspiring to mastery in coaching?

Do the work, reflect after every session: "What did I do: Why did I do it? Could the coaching client have got there more quickly if I would have done something else?" Seek out different learning paths, get support, be humble. We are privileged to do this beautiful profession.

VIJAYALAKSHMI S

ICF Master Certified Coach;
EMCC Master Practitioner

India

Year in which you received this credential/accreditation/award(s):

ICF MCC: 2018/EMCC MP: 2021.

[LinkedIn](#)



Q

How did your journey into coaching begin?

My journey into professional coaching began almost 25 years back with Team Coaching, as an internal Coach. Prior to that, even in my growing up years I was fortunate to have received support from several Coaches thanks to my exposure & love for Sports. Soon, and quite naturally I evolved from a Team Coach supporting teams & businesses in the organizational context to supporting individuals & leaders through 1:1 Coaching as a part of my leadership role. A decade ago, I decided to commit myself to being a full-time professional Coach as I set up my practice CoachConsult driven by the philosophy - "Play at Full Potential". Embarking upon my Coaching Mastery journey and being awarded the ICF-MCC in 2018 followed by the EMCC-MP in 2021 and ICF ACTC in 2023 have been important milestones in my growth as a Coaching practitioner.



Q

How did your development unfold on the way to achieving your master-level credential/accreditation/award?

I am not sure if there was ever a carefully laid-out plan; this journey to Coaching Mastery evolved so organically. Looking back, some milestones on the way I recollect are:

- After my ICF MCC, I felt a deep calling to pursue the EMCC MP. While both journeys truly called upon me to embrace Mastery & had similarities, they were uniquely different too - enabling me to build on different dimensions of myself as a Master Coach & Mentor
- I consciously started giving back to the profession and contributing in small & big ways as a volunteer leader
- I built myself as Coaching Subject Matter expert by sharing my thoughts, experiences & perspectives to Coaches & non-Coaches. I also studied Coaching trends & developments in my own region & globally
- I had the good fortune of building connections with global peers who were also committed to Mastery. Learning from them and across cultures has been very valuable
- I diversified my practice working with a range of clients including populations that had lesser access to Coaching
- Chose to work on demanding, high-stakes & unconventional coaching engagements
- Led probono Coaching movements & initiatives in times like the pandemic where Coaches needed to show up to serve the world with their craft.
- Approached my credential renewals with utmost sincerity & as opportunities to build myself deeply and equally recommit myself to my vocation.
- Intentionally pursued creativity & innovation in my practice.

Q

What does 'mastery in coaching' mean to you?

A seemingly straight-forward question that has so many layers to it, and honestly a tough one to encapsulate in one answer! I would attempt to answer what it means to me through the dimensions of Coaching Mastery as I have experienced it.

Coaching Mastery is

- Absolute commitment to one's craft, and relentless pursuit of excellence
- Putting the client first - every single time
- Holding the delicate truth that one is an evolved & experienced practitioner & at the same time is a life-long learner of Coaching
- The grace & humility to make mistakes... and learning from them
- Commitment to deep reflective & reflexive practice
- Comfort with navigating & thriving with paradoxes
- Focus on fundamentals & keeping things simple
- Above all, the contributions one makes to their profession & society



Q

In what ways do you recognize mastery in your own coaching now?

Some ways through which I recognize Mastery in my own Coaching currently are:

- Relying on myself, on who I am & what presence I can offer in the client-partnership rather than on any external tools or frameworks
- Being a better Coach version of myself session after session
- Learning humility & agility
- Comfort in making mistakes & taking risks
- Passion for keeping things simple & focus on the very basics
- Unconsciously practicing deep reflective & reflexive practice
- Lightness & ease I experience in my work
- Systemic being, thinking & doing
- Intentional focus on Coach sustainability
- Staying human & humane in my work
- Making a difference to the Coaching ecosystem & the society through my work

Q

How might others — clients, peers, or mentors — experience your coaching as masterful?

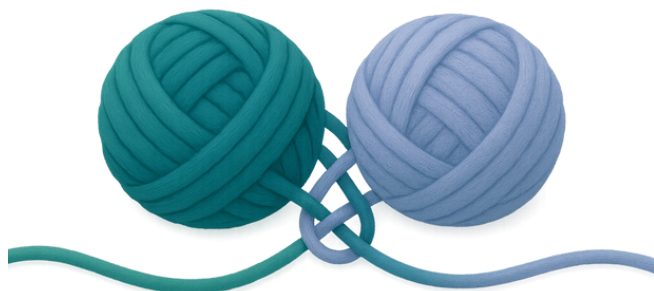
There could be overlaps from my previous answer as many of the elements of Mastery I experience in myself would probably well be experienced by my clients, sponsors, mentors, peers etc. I would still highlight them from how I believe these stakeholders would describe my work:

- Uncompromised on professionalism, ethics & Coaching ethos
- A clear Coaching philosophy that is often embodied
- Simplicity in her approach
- Caring, courageous & compassionate
- Patience & perseverance
- Lightness & laughter in the sessions
- Fluidity, agility & artistry
- Comfortable in her own skin and confident about her craft
- Crystal clear on Coaching fundamentals
- Humility & a beginner's mindset
- Understands her limitations & that of Coaching
- Can hold depth & breadth both, equally with ease

Q How do you continue developing after receiving your credential – personally and professionally?

I have always believed that the real journey to Coaching Mastery begins after you receive your credential! I realised how much there was to learn and that Mastery was a life-long journey & commitment. My approach to holistic Coach development includes:

- Reflective & reflexive practice
- Mentoring, Supervision & peer-learning
- Commitment to social initiatives that require me to embrace a Coaching mindset & embody Coaching competencies
- Giving back – to clients & peers, pro bono Coaching, Mentoring & Supervision
- Sharing my knowledge and experience through articles, webinars, master-classes – when we do that our knowledge is enhanced & perspectives clearer
- Working with a wide range of clients – honouring diversity & inclusion in my practice. This allows me to truly grow
- Consciously spend time in non-Coaching communities, relationships & spaces.
- Identifying learning themes for a year or specific time-periods and committing resources to go deeper into those themes
- 10% of my time & earnings is invested in my own learning & self-development



Q What impact did receiving the official master-level recognition have on you?

Like I had shared earlier, receiving the master-level recognition was only the starting point. I would therefore like to reflect on this question as the journey to Mastery that I have been on & what impact it had / has on me.

- It has made me even more committed to my work – On why I do this & what it truly means to me. To me Coaching is a sacred profession of hope and I realise this even more today
- Less is more – this enables me to be more masterful in my work, irrespective of who the Coaching client is or what is the theme
- Comfort & confidence in navigating the unknown, challenging contexts and high-stakes work
- Natural Trust in the client & in myself
- Being mindful about the systemic impact of my work in every engagement
- A greater sense of responsibility – to the profession and to being a role-model
- Identifying & visualising myself as a Coach-leader and often asking myself – “what impact does my work & actions have on the world?” and “what difference do I make each day I serve as a Coach?”
- Invest regularly in rejuvenating myself & in resets as I have understood that this deep work brings with itself its share of fatigue & heaviness

Q**What insight, inquiry or encouragement would you offer to someone aspiring to mastery in coaching?**

I would invite them to reflect on:

- What is my Coaching-Mastery why? Why am I really embarking on this?
- Am I ready to commit to being a life-long learner?
- Do I really feel the urge to being the best Coach I can be? (not in comparison to any peer)
- Am I comfortable working with several unknowns & to simply flow as the Coaching partnership requires?

I would also add:

- The journey to Coaching Mastery is not about gaining yet another credential. It is not a natural next step to a prior credential. Some may never be ready nor choose to pursue Mastery and that is perfectly ok
- This journey is as much about the impact it would have on you the Coach as it would on your clients
- Mastery is also about a Coach looking at their work as being beyond themselves and their immediate client-circle. It is about one being a small (or big!) but significant part in a larger, purposeful ecosystem that comes together to leverage the power & potential of Coaching.

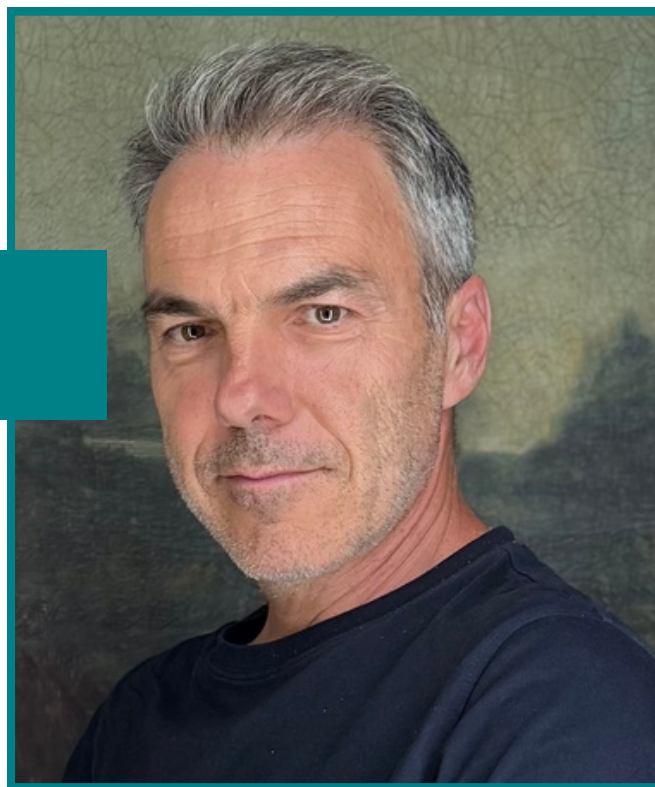


SRDJAN PAVLOVIC

ICF Master Certified Coach
Serbia

Year in which you received this credential/accreditation/award(s):
2025.

[LinkedIn](#)



Q

How did your journey into coaching begin?

I was in a leadership position in a multinational corporation searching for a better way to lead people and lead productive 1:1.

Q

How did your development unfold on the way to achieving your master-level credential/accreditation/award?

I always thrive for improvement. Focusing on MCC was my primal goal, because I was sure that I will grow as a coach, leader and a person.

Q

What does ‘mastery in coaching’ mean to you?

Being an MCC is confirmation that I adhere to the gold standard of coaching, as promoted by the ICF. This is an official confirmation of what I have done for my clients.

Q

In what ways do you recognize mastery in your own coaching now?

Deep listening, partnering in coaching conversations, and providing silence as a safe space for my clients.

Q

How might others — clients, peers, or mentors — experience your coaching as masterful?

The most important confirmation of my skills is the honest words of my clients: "You changed my life." Being recognized in the peer community is the second important evidence.

Q

How do you continue developing after receiving your credential — personally and professionally?

I took a program in coaching supervision, which helped me master my coaching and elevate it to a whole new level.

Q

What impact did receiving the official master-level recognition have on you?

Being an MCC helps me learn about myself, understand my learning journey better, and accept uncertainty.

Q

What insight, inquiry or encouragement would you offer to someone aspiring to mastery in coaching?

Who you are is how you coach. Listen deeply and master silence to provide a safe space for your coachee.

LISA LARUE

EMCC Master Practitioner

UK/France

Year in which you received this credential/accreditation/award(s):
2021.

[LinkedIn](#)

[Website](#)



Q

How did your journey into coaching begin?

My coaching journey began with working in local government, delivering community services projects, before joining an enterprise, training, and employment NGO. I later transitioned to the private sector, working with a global training and employment services provider, where I delivered career development, training and employment programs.

Around 20 years ago, I transitioned into private practice, specialising in helping people optimise or change careers. I found that in private practice, I was better able to leverage my skills to meet my clients' needs, enabling them to feel empowered, equipped and motivated to achieve career success and fulfilment. Word of mouth grew, and within a year, my fledgling coaching practice had become a successful and rewarding career.



Q

How did your development unfold on the way to achieving your master-level credential / accreditation / award?

As a passionate life-long learner, I was forever enrolled in courses and training programs to improve my knowledge and skills. I admit that along the way I wondered if I'd ever be qualified enough because it seemed the more I learned, the more I realised how much there was to learn! However, there was a point where I realised that I had enough qualifications and that the feedback from my clients was always so positive. I diversified my development activities by incorporating things like daily reflective practice, supervision, peer networking, collaborative projects etc. Some of the projects I became involved in or initiated were developing other coaches and making a broader contribution to the coaching community which I found really enriching. The culmination of all those years of experience, learning, and developing myself and others, built a natural pathway to achieving my master-level award.

Q

What does 'mastery in coaching' mean to you?

Mastery in coaching means finding your uniqueness as a coach. It's also about ensuring that you continually develop skills in nurturing meaningful and engaging connections with clients that provides a safe, supportive and enjoyable environment for exploration, growth and transformation.

Q

In what ways do you recognize mastery in your own coaching now?

Now, I recognise mastery as being present, intentional, curious and continuing to believe that masterful coaching makes an incredibly valuable contribution to humanity. I know it sounds like a lofty belief - but day after day, as I witness the power of walking alongside my clients as they navigate life's complexities, coaching mastery is about human connection. It's about valuing our and our clients' uniqueness and gifts they bring to the world. When our clients thrive, we thrive. And when we thrive, we can do our best work. That's coaching mastery.

Q

How might others — clients, peers, or mentors — experience your coaching as masterful?

My clients often describe their coaching experience as transformative which makes the work I do extremely fulfilling. Whether it's transforming their perspective and approach on a challenging situation or helping shine a light on their talents, coaching and mentoring that helps people thrive feels masterful. My peers and mentors describe me as warm, creative and inspiring with an integrative and agile approach that is focused on meeting my clients needs.

Q**How do you continue developing after receiving your credential — personally and professionally?**

Some of the ways I continue developing personally and professionally is through an ongoing, proactive yet organic process of reflection and learning. I regularly engage in informal and formal learning and development activities where I bring an open mind and willingness to be challenged.

Q**What impact did receiving the official master-level recognition have on you?**

Receiving master level recognition was quite surreal. After so many years of dedicated focus on honing my skills and gaining experience, I felt a huge sense of gratitude at having the external validation of not just my credentials, but the recognition of the contribution I had made to the profession.

Q**What insight, inquiry or encouragement would you offer to someone aspiring to mastery in coaching?**

If you're reading this and you are aspiring to mastery in coaching, I encourage you to explore, identify and leverage your unique talents and strengths. There's only one you and no one can take that away from you. Don't compare yourself to others, but instead, recognise, celebrate and honour your uniqueness and your own journey to coaching mastery.

ZSOFIA JUHASZ

ICF Master Certified Coach

Australia

Year in which you received this credential/accreditation/award(s):

2022.

[LinkedIn](#)
[Website](#)



Q

How did your journey into coaching begin?

I received coaching as well as having my sales colleagues tell me about their experience as they received coaching in 2003. I first studied at an internal/leader as coach program and then, 6 years later enrolled into a 1y, 150h course.

Q

How did your development unfold on the way to achieving your master-level credential/accreditation/award?

I first applied for my ACC when I moved to Australia and became involved with the ICF. Soon after, I progressed to PCC, which sparked reflection on my next learning journey. Coaching supervision emerged as a valuable development pathway, expanding both my practice and perspective.

During the pandemic, I was fortunate to engage in extensive coaching work while also participating an MCC group mentoring program. By then, I had accumulated 1,800 coaching hours and, a year later, applied for my MCC credential. While awaiting the results, I discovered the ICF's evolving education structure (Levels 1, 2, and 3). This innovation inspired me to co-create an ICF-accredited Level 3 program, designed to support coaches in deepening their mastery at advanced levels.

In addition to my ICF journey, I am pursuing continued growth through the EMCC. Last year, I achieved the Senior Practitioner credential and I am currently applying for the ESIA (European Supervision Individual Accreditation). These milestones reflect both my commitment to professional development and my dedication to advancing the field of coaching and supervision.

Q What does ‘mastery in coaching’ mean to you?

Mastery means a continual journey of growth, reflection, and deepening skill—never a fixed endpoint. It involves striving for comprehensive understanding and high proficiency in a chosen field, paired with the ability to apply knowledge flexibly and intuitively in different contexts.

For me, mastery feels like moving beyond technique to create real impact through presence, curiosity, and adaptability. It demands self-knowledge, humility, and an openness to learning, allowing for guided improvement and the pursuit of outstanding outcomes.

True mastery blends technical excellence with ongoing self-reflection and the courage to be vulnerable and experiment. The process itself is transformative; mastery brings confidence, fulfillment, and the capacity to foster growth in others.

Above all, mastery is an endless path of purposeful learning, self-awareness, and application—where practice itself becomes a source of satisfaction and meaning.

Q In what ways do you recognize mastery in your own coaching now?

I recognize mastery in my coaching through intuition, and deep presence. I notice that my approach has become instinctive and adaptive, allowing me to respond to each client’s unique needs and dynamics without relying solely on set techniques—my questioning and listening uncover what lies beneath surface issues, enabling meaningful shifts in perspective and behavior.

Developing my mastery means creating an environment of trust and openness, staying fully present with clients and reading subtle cues that lead to breakthroughs. My holistic perspective allows me to see the wider systems at play—organizational, societal, relational—and facilitate change that has a ripple effect, impacting more than just the individual in front of me.



Q How might others — clients, peers, or mentors — experience your coaching as masterful?

When experiencing my coaching as masterful, clients express it like this:

"I truly feel seen and understood as a whole person, not just for what I say, but also for who I am and how I show up. You notice things I might not even be aware of myself, and you ask questions that help me uncover those insights. Your ability to listen deeply, pick up on subtle cues, and ask simple but powerful questions makes me reflect and discover new possibilities.

You create a space where I feel safe to explore my thoughts, even in silence, and your non-verbal communication reassures me that I’m supported. I appreciate that you’re precise and intentional with your words; you help clarify what’s important to me and keep our sessions focused, which makes every interaction purposeful.

Overall, your coaching helps me find my own answers and move forward with greater clarity and confidence."

Q**How do you continue developing after receiving your credential — personally and professionally?**

After receiving my credential, I view development as a continuous journey of growth. I engage in regular self-reflection and mindfulness practices to deepen my emotional intelligence and maintain resilience. These habits help me be fully present and authentic in my coaching relationships.

Professionally, I prioritize lifelong learning through advanced training, supervision, and staying abreast of emerging coaching models and research. I attend conferences, workshops, and webinars to expand my toolkit and stay connected with the coaching community.

Peer coaching and mentoring are vital to my development—I actively seek feedback and share insights with fellow coaches to refine my skills and explore new perspectives. Mentoring emerging coaches further sharpens my mastery, challenging me to articulate core competencies and adapt my approaches.

I apply new learnings thoughtfully in practice, experimenting with techniques to maximize client impact. Balancing skill development with cultivating relational elements like empathy and curiosity is essential for me.

Finally, I regularly review coaching outcomes and client feedback to inform ongoing improvements in my approach. This cycle of learning, application, and reflection sustains my passion and commitment to coaching excellence, ensuring that I continue evolving both personally and professionally as a coach.



Q What impact did receiving the official master-level recognition have on you?

Receiving my official master-level recognition was both surprising and deeply gratifying. I was more than surprised because many of the coaches I look up to had initially faced setbacks or failed before achieving their credentials. This made my accomplishment feel even more meaningful and real. Beyond happiness, it brought a profound sense of validation and confidence in my abilities as a coach. The credential affirmed the dedication, reflection, and skill development I invested over the years.

It also expanded my sense of responsibility and purpose—knowing I am part of a global community of master coaches committed to excellence and ethical practice. This recognition has sharpened my focus on continual growth and mentoring others on their coaching journeys.

Ultimately, it transformed how I see myself as a practitioner—more intentional, capable, and connected. It motivated me to deepen my impact and step into leadership roles within ICF and the coaching community (SME volunteering, Education APAC ambassador or even initiating the Level 3 program). The achievement is not just a milestone but a catalyst for ongoing learning, contribution, and passion for the craft.

In essence, receiving master-level recognition was a moment of joy, humility, and renewed commitment to lifelong mastery in coaching and service.

Q What insight, inquiry or encouragement would you offer to someone aspiring to mastery in coaching?

To someone aspiring to mastery in coaching, I would offer this insight: Mastery is not a fixed destination but a lifelong journey of learning, growth, and deepening presence. Stay curious and open to feedback.

I encourage embracing vulnerability as a strength—it opens doors to authentic connection with clients and fosters your own self-awareness. Mastery requires commitment to self-reflection and continual refinement, recognizing that real growth often emerges from discomfort and uncertainty.

Ask yourself regularly: How am I showing up for my clients? Am I truly present, listening beyond words? What biases or assumptions might I be holding that limit deeper connection?

Finally, nurture relationships with mentors and peers who challenge and support you. Mastery unfolds best in community, through shared wisdom and honest dialogue. Above all, remember that your passion and integrity are just as vital as your skills. Let these be your compass as you walk the path toward coaching mastery.

MARCO TIELEMAN

**ICF Master Certified Coach;
EMCC Master Practitioner**

The Netherlands

Year in which you received this credential/accreditation/award(s):

EMCC MP: 2016 | ICF MCC: 2019.

[LinkedIn](#)



Q

How did your journey into coaching begin?

My ambition was and is to contribute to a better world. In projects throughout Europe, I saw that when I worked with techies, the technology wasn't the problem, but rather the way they got stuck in communication in terms of relationships and processes.

I saw that as a coach, I could have more impact by leveraging soft skills. That's what I chose to do.

I started a one-year training course to become a trainer and coach and have been working independently since 2007, mainly as a coach for the last 10 years.

Q

How did your development unfold on the way to achieving your master-level credential/accreditation/award?

My development towards Master Practitioner and MCC did not proceed in a linear fashion, but in circles and layers. First, I became a Senior Practitioner in 2011. My first application for MP was (rightly) rejected. After that, each step in my development brought me closer to myself and to the essence of the profession.

Less and less head and more heart, gut and balls. Bodywork alongside cerebral methodologies and models are valuable, but real depth arises in the (physical) encounter between two people.

Reflection, a great deal of supervision and intensive work with clients were my most important teachers.

The journey to where I am now required me to keep looking honestly at my own patterns: where do I take up space, where do I avoid, where do I seek confirmation?

It was precisely by going through that that I gained more freedom and a firmer foundation.

Q

What does ‘mastery in coaching’ mean to you?

For me, mastery is a state of simplicity and presence. I feel that I no longer need to prove or convince anyone, but that I can and dare to be with what is.

Of course, on the one hand, it means mastering the technical aspects of the profession, but on the other hand, it also means daring to let go and go with the unique dynamics of each client.

For me, mastery is less about grandeur and more about sensitivity: subtly attuning to the head, heart, and gut. It is the confidence that the conversation will always find the right direction if I truly listen.

I also see in my colleagues how I want to be an example of mastery and continue to develop myself: 10 years ago with e-coaching, nowadays with AI.

Q

In what ways do you recognize mastery in your own coaching now?

I recognise mastery in my ability to slow down and use the tension or silence that this creates as a powerful tool. Whereas I used to focus more on achieving quick results, we now take a slower but deeper approach.

It is no coincidence that my motto is “Go deeper to reach higher”.

I also see it in how clients mirror me: they feel seen, not judged.

I dare to work more intuitively because my professional knowledge and experience form the foundation for that intuition. I notice that I work less hard in conversations, and that this actually leads to more happening. The process unfolds more effortlessly.

Q

How might others — clients, peers, or mentors — experience your coaching as masterful?

Clients often experience my coaching as profound, right from the intake, yet light at the same time. They mention my ability to create a safe environment and to confront them gently but clearly, often with humour.

Peers recognise my focus on innovation, integrity and my willingness to show my own vulnerability. My peer supervision groups are very dear to me!

My supervisor and several mentors have said that I dare to go deeper without losing contact. Given my themes and history, that is a rich development.

Others experience mastery primarily as calmness and steadiness: I am present, unhurried, and willing to focus entirely on the other person.

Q

How do you continue developing after receiving your credential — personally and professionally?

After receiving my accreditation, the real work began. I found it genuinely strange that I had reached the highest level while I could see how much I still had to learn.

I continue to learn through supervision, peer review and coaching other coaches.

Personally, I invest in more physical work, silence and reflection, because my presence is my most powerful tool.

Professionally, I immerse myself in the application of AI and stress coaching, always asking myself: what really serves my client? For me, development is not about gathering more knowledge, but about refinement and discovering which innovative applications can add something to our profession: for example, using wearables or AI to enhance the core of what coaching is.

Q

What impact did receiving the official master-level recognition have on you?

The recognition gave me a sense of pride and felt like confirmation of years of dedication.

I also became restless, because I still felt the urge to continue developing, and the recognition seemed to slow me down in that regard.

It made me more humble, because I realised that mastery does not end with a title, but rather begins with an attitude of “not knowing”. It also gave me a sense of responsibility: to put my experience at the service of the wider coaching community and to contribute to the development of the profession.

Although I no longer had anything to prove (although I was happy to do so again with my MCC at ICF), I felt the need to continue developing myself.

Q

What insight, inquiry or encouragement would you offer to someone aspiring to mastery in coaching?

Be prepared to go deeper, to reach higher. Mastery is a journey, and hopefully not a destination for you.

Dare to face your own shadows and be prepared to break patterns. Time and again... in every phase of life, your patterns reveal themselves in new triggers.

Be sure to seek good guidance (supervisor) and feedback, but also develop your own voice and colour.

Mastery is not about perfection, but about authenticity. My encouragement: slow down. Dare to be empty, without a plan, and trust that the encounter with your client is enough. From that simplicity, the greatest depth unfolds.

SCOFRAY NANA YAW YEBOAH

ICF Master Certified Coach

Ghana

Year in which you received this credential/accreditation/award(s):
2025.

[LinkedIn](#)
[Website](#)



Q

How did your journey into coaching begin?

I had participated in a 9-month Life Design transformational training in 2001, and during that period, I overheard our trainers from the United States talk about coaching. And I inquired about what it was because the “coaching conversation” had nothing to do with sports or soccer, which was all I knew about coaching, as soccer is the passion of the nation of Ghana. And Bettie Spruill, the founder of Ideal Coaching Global in the United States, gave me a brief insight into it, and my heart never rested. I knew that was what I would love to be and do.

Q

How did your development unfold on the way to achieving your master-level credential/accreditation/award?

I did not plan to rise to the MCC level until 2023, when an MCC friend, Ruth Kudzi, and I were nerding about coaching and its potential in Ghana, and she questioned why, with all the hours, why not MCC. Again, during the launch of the ICF Ghana Chapter, Dr Dumisani, the board chair of ICF Global Enterprise, and Malcolm Fiellies, ICF Regional Director for Europe and Africa, also asked what I was waiting for. These two moments were divinely and universally timely because the momentum was innately nurtured after I completed the mBIT Master Coach certification in South Africa. There, the philosophy and spirit of mastery, rather than just an expert level in coaching, settled deeply with me. And in July 2024, I embarked on MCC mentorship as required by ICF, got my two audios reviewed and passed in March 2025 and followed up with CKA in April and passed.

Q**What does ‘mastery in coaching’ mean to you?**

Mastery in coaching is more profound than English terminology or clichés of an “expertism”; it is a way of being, a spiritual embodiment, a sense of mindfulness, and an ecological (generosity) to share who I am being daily towards growth, development, and legacy. To hold space, trust and belief for my clients and society to live their purposes and possibilities. It is coaching in the sphere of quantum reality, knowing and acknowledging the infinite possibilities for everyone who dares to choose to keep growing, developing, and living rather than merely existing (in a survival state).

Q**In what ways do you recognize mastery in your own coaching now?**

Mastery can be likened to braiding a woman’s hair, where both the coach and coachee hold trust, vulnerability, and safety to co-create beauty that stems from within and is projected outward. It is dancing within the realms of the core competencies, standards, ethics and values of ICF as MCC with flair, finesse, vulnerability, dynamism, authenticity, etc

Q**How might others — clients, peers, or mentors — experience your coaching as masterful?**

My insight into mastery is not limited to transformational executive & leadership and team/group coaching. It is a daily embodied reflection and transpositional way of my beingness as a coach, which shows up in my language, thought formation, actions, and transformation-driven insights and conversations. Mastery to me in this essence is that connection or entanglement at the quantum or deeper intuitive level of courage to ask questions of what is not being said through what is being communicated. Yet in trust, safety, emotionalities, and space. In consulting services and corporate training facilitations evokes this mastery to forge collaboration, communication, connection, co-creation of impact, transformation, enlightenment, etc.

Q How do you continue developing after receiving your credential – personally and professionally?

I am committed to continuous professional development through workshops, training, webinars, mentoring & supervision, as well as writing and blogging about coaching, leadership, neuro-emotional intelligence, neuro-authentic leadership, neuro-resilience, etc. I invest in books and articles from thought leaders across many disciplines, research from the International Coaching Federation, and video on demand on the ICF website, accessible to members. With my background in mbraining my zest and hunger for neuro-cognitive, neuro-cardiology, neuro-gastroenterology, autonomic nervous system, quantum being etc.

Q What impact did receiving the official master-level recognition have on you?

There is courage, confidence, resilience, intellectual/expertise humility, and vulnerability to walk in the beingness of mastery. It has also expanded and deepened my visibility, awareness, and network within the coaching ecosystem in Ghana, Africa, and the global market. It has also solidified my executive-leadership coaching rates and broadened my global mindset, professional outlook and tools when facilitating trainings and advocating for coaching. It has widened and deepened my worldview, mindset, behaviour, attitude, and enriched my essence in life and purposefulness.

Q What insight, inquiry or encouragement would you offer to someone aspiring to mastery in coaching?

Mastery, to me, is not an academic achievement, though it does not come on a silver platter; it is an ontological, ecological and neurological magic that allows you to experience the best you are, continuously to be, and to generously gift the world the light of possibilities, shaping leadership and inspiring humanness. It is the height of one's professional calling that sets a different experience of what we call highest expression (authentic enlightened leadership) in mbraining.

NADINE HEMMER

EMCC Master Practitioner

Luxembourg

Year in which you received this credential/accreditation/award(s):

2015.

[LinkedIn](#)
[Website](#)



Q

How did your journey into coaching begin?

After graduating from university in 1994, I implemented several diversity enhancement initiatives before joining a Luxembourg National Institute as a psychologist and project leader. I established a career advisory and job-seekers support service which offered one on one coaching. I also designed and facilitated leadership development programmes which integrated individual coaching sessions.

Q

How did your development unfold on the way to achieving your master-level credential/accreditation/award?

In the 90s, my coaching practice mainly focused on performance and career development. Coaching barely emerging at the time, I relied on my academic background in psychology and on early coaching literature to shape a professional coaching approach. As my practice evolved, I increasingly partnered with executives and leaders, offering developmental and transformational coaching. Alongside this, I began working as a psychotherapist. To deepen and enrich my approach across both disciplines, I pursued advanced training, completing a postgraduate Diploma in Cognitive & Behavioural Therapy, and hypnosis and systemic coaching training. While formal education has been a vital foundation, much of my development has come through on-going learning, self-reflection, and reflection on the practice. Diverse professional experiences including contributing to professional conversations on psychological flexibility through presenting at conferences and training coaches, writing articles and volunteering with EMCC Global, have allowed me to contribute meaningfully to the advancement of the coaching profession. Supervision has been instrumental in enhancing my personal and professional maturity and operating at a higher level.

Q What does ‘mastery in coaching’ mean to you?

I'm not entirely comfortable with the term mastery, as it suggests a fixed endpoint rather than a continuous journey of growth. For me, evolving mastery is reflected in:

- An intuitive ability to respond fluidly in the moment with clients, grounded in self-awareness and accumulated experience and knowledge.
- Systemic awareness to hold and integrate complexity when reflecting and making decisions.
- Thoughtful contracting to minimise the impact of psychological contracting.
- Heightened self-awareness—being fully present and attuned to both body and mind.
- Trusting intuition while remaining critical of its origins, acknowledging personal biases and limitations.
- Deepening ethical maturity—letting go of assumptions, external prescriptions, and expert-driven norms to shape a personal coaching stance, while continuously challenging oneself and one's practice.

Q How might others — clients, peers, or mentors — experience your coaching as masterful?

As practitioners, we also foster development by role modelling. I pay attention to the quality of my presence, slowing down, embracing my own vulnerability, and letting go of the fear of not being good enough to create space for clients to do the same.

When appropriate, I can also share personal challenges as it highlights our common struggles as human beings; what feels deeply individual is often universally experienced, and it's very reassuring to acknowledge this.

Compassion for myself is still an on-going journey. I feel this is an important element. Having compassion for self also supports compassion for others. It strengthens the coaching alliance, honours resistance as a meaningful part of the process and cultivates a safe environment for open, constructive feedback.

The coaching work invites humility. Often, it's not the question we feel most insightful that leaves a lasting impact, but rather our relational presence or a single, simple remark that resonates most deeply.

Q In what ways do you recognize mastery in your own coaching now?

Over time, I have developed my own signature style as a coach and supervisor—grounded in what truly matters to me and without the need to constantly prove myself. This allows me to be more present, make more informed choices, let go of the need to know better and navigate ethical dilemmas with greater clarity. Being more conscious of the wider systems, issues, and my own limitations, I have strengthened the contracting process with my clients. Confident I can rely on a range of approaches, I have shifted my focus from doing to being, trusting the process and embracing whatever unfolds. I rely more on my intuition and a deeper awareness of the systems I am part of, to capture information from multiple lenses and in a more holistic way. This has also helped me to better identify parallel processes when they occur.



Q

How do you continue developing after receiving your credential — personally and professionally?

All my career has revolved around lifelong learning, driven by personal curiosity and a love for growth through connection. I tend to embrace both the discomfort and the joy that come with learning, regularly engaging in webinars, collaborative experimentations and of course supervision to expand my practice and support myself and other practitioners to become more agile. My approach is grounded in evidence-based practice, filled with research and literature. Training with Coaching Supervision Academy has been a pivotal step as I aligned with their belief that “who you are is how you supervise.” Nurturing self-awareness is key, and I continue my exploration to integrate art, spirituality, and reflection. In times of rising extremism, polarisation and misinformation, I believe practitioners have a vital role in hearing all voices, especially disruptive ones. Leading the EMCC Global Centre for Excellence in Continuous Personal & Professional Development, I have the opportunity to explore with the team the learning needed for coaches, mentors and supervisors to thrive in an evolving world.

Q

What impact did receiving the official master-level recognition have on you?

Building the portfolio for master practitioner accreditation was a nice way to harvest everything I did and my insights from my years of experience. It prompted further reflection on the purpose and essence of my work. It also revealed all the things I still wanted to explore. The process helped shape my development plan and reaffirmed my aspiration to foster greater connection, understanding, and growth within the coaching and supervision communities.

Q

What insight, inquiry or encouragement would you offer to someone aspiring to mastery in coaching?

I would like to invite practitioners to look beyond credentials and instead focus on what truly nurtures them—both professionally and personally. The art and the heart of coaching lie in the relationship, on the way we bring our whole selves to this work. Self-awareness is essential, even more so than mastering a variety of techniques.

Every life experience is a learning opportunity, if we remain attentive. Cultivating curiosity and a growth mindset, engaging in high-quality supervision, staying informed about our evolving profession and being intentional, all contribute to building our own identity—one that AI cannot replace. I’m grateful to Adrijana for this project, which beautifully highlights the richness and diversity of paths toward mastery in our field of work.

KATERINA KANELIDOU

ICF Master Certified Coach
Greece

Year in which you received this credential/accreditation/award(s):

2021.

[LinkedIn](#)
[Website](#)



Q

How did your journey into coaching begin?

My journey into coaching began long before I formally trained as a coach. One of my first jobs, back in 1992, was as a sports coach. But it was in 2008 that I truly stepped into life and executive coaching, when I completed a Diploma in Personal Coaching in London. Soon after, I enrolled in an online ACTP- ICF accredited program - and began working as an executive and leadership coach.

It felt like a natural evolution. My professional path had already taken me through physical education, therapeutic mediation, adult education, mental health, and special education — always driven by a holistic approach to human development, inspired by my professors' teachings to work on every level of human growth.

Still, a question kept growing within me: “Now what?” What could take me further, beyond the limits of the methods I already knew? My intuition told me that coaching might be the answer. After much reflection and exploration, I took the leap and joined my first personal coaching course. A few months later, I decided to fully commit my time, energy, and resources to complete an ACTP program.

At the time, I wasn't entirely sure if coaching was for me — or if I was for coaching. Seventeen years later, it looks like it was, and I am. I remain fully dedicated to this profession and the profound human growth it makes possible.



Q**How did your development unfold on the way to achieving your master-level credential / accreditation / award?**

Formal credentials have always been important to me. I believe in standards, in structured pathways for acquiring knowledge and expertise, and in the professional bodies that uphold those standards. As someone who is neurodivergent, having clear goals and milestones also helps me stay focused and motivated.

More than anything, pursuing advanced credentials has been part of my personal commitment to growth. I want to continually deepen my understanding of the science, art and practice of coaching so that I can support my clients in the best possible way. That can only happen if I continue to grow professionally myself.

My background as a dramatherapist and in the mental health field also shaped this approach. There, ongoing professional development is simply part of the culture — through continuous education, research, supervision, mentoring, and participation in seminars and conferences. It's an embedded standard of good practice.

Finally, I see it as a matter of integrity. How could I advocate for a profession dedicated to growth and development if I weren't embodying that same principle? I believe our credentials reflect not just what we've achieved, but our ongoing commitment to evolve — as practitioners and as human beings.

The process was not always easy. It required a "village" of people, ongoing investment, and a clear focus supported by resilience. Members of my village included mentors and supervisors — I'm a firm believer in the value of coaching supervision, even though it's not formally required for the MCC credential. It was through supervision that I gained the insights and awareness needed to reach the master level of coaching practice — which, after all, was my true goal, even more than the award itself.



What does ‘mastery in coaching’ mean to you?

For me, mastery in coaching is not a final destination but a continuous refinement of presence, skill, and understanding. It’s about moving beyond excellent technique into something more intuitive, fluid, and wise.

Mastery means being able to meet each client at a deeper level, creating space where insight and transformation can emerge naturally and effortlessly. It’s the ability to hold complexity with simplicity, to listen beyond words, and to respond from a place of grounded awareness rather than method.

It also represents the artful integration of everything I have learned and lived — from my background in education, sports, dramatherapy, entrepreneurship, and mental health to my years of coaching practice. At this level, it’s less about doing coaching and more about being a coach: fully present, attuned, and confident in both the process and the unknown.

Ultimately, mastery in coaching is a way of being that embodies wisdom, humility, and curiosity. It’s the quiet knowing that there is always more to learn — and the joy of continuing to grow alongside those we coach.



In what ways do you recognize mastery in your own coaching now?

I recognize mastery not as something I claim, but as something I notice in the quality of my presence and practice. Beyond the credential markers that anchors our assessment, I observe it in the ease with which I can hold space for complexity. In my ability to trust my self and my client to whatever emerges. To follow the client's energy and to sense when to inquire deeper versus when to simply witness.

I notice it in my relationship with uncertainty — I'm more comfortable not knowing, more willing to be surprised, more trusting of the coaching process itself. Where I once might have felt pressure to be brilliant or insightful, I now focus on being fully present and attuned.

After sessions, my self-reflection centers on questions like: How am I feeling now? How was I feeling during the session? What would I do differently?

The mastery reveals itself in these moments of honest reflection — in my capacity to notice patterns, to self-manage, and to continually refine how I show up.

Q How might others — clients, peers, or mentors — experience your coaching as masterful?

For mentors, the evidence lies in the demonstration of the core competencies and markers — measurable, observable elements of coaching excellence that meet the profession's markers and standards.

For clients, the experience manifests in more profound ways. Consistently, I observe several indicators: the depth and quality of their discoveries, the speed at which meaningful breakthroughs occur, and the powerful insights that create lasting transformation. Many have shared that a single session revealed more clarity than months of other approaches.

But perhaps most telling is what happens in the coaching space itself. Clients often describe feeling deeply understood — not their words, but their essence. They feel safe enough to explore uncomfortable territories, challenged enough to grow, and trusted enough to find their answers.

The feedback I receive frequently mentions how they feel simultaneously comfortable and stretched, how insights emerge that surprise even them. This isn't about my brilliance; it's about the quality of the container we create — one where their own power can emerge.

Q What impact did receiving the official master-level recognition have on you?

Receiving the MCC recognition brought a profound sense of responsibility — and with it, a deeper commitment to how I show up.

There's an heightened awareness of representation: I am now not just coaching for my clients, but in some way, representing what masterful coaching can be. This manifests in how I prepare for sessions, how I engage with the coaching community, how I share knowledge, and how I uphold professional standards even when no one is watching.

The recognition also brought a kind of internal scrutiny, when for example I question a choice I made in session, which - I hope - keeps me honest and humble.

Finally, it deepened my sense of service — not just to individual clients, but to the profession itself. I feel called to support others, to contribute to the field's development, and to advocate for the standards and ethics that make coaching a transformative practice.

Q How do you continue developing after receiving your credential — personally and professionally?

My development continues with the same intentionality as before the credential: through continuous coaching training that exposes me to new perspectives, tools, and approaches; coaching supervision, which I consider essential for maintaining quality and self-awareness; and active engagement with my peer community, where we exchange ideas, challenge assumptions, and even engage in difficult conversations that push our thinking.

I maintain my own therapeutic work — the self-awareness that emerges from therapy is irreplaceable and fundamental to coaching at this level.

Additionally, I practice teaching, presenting, writing, and researching about coaching. This work keeps me rigorously current and intellectually engaged. When I commit to sharing knowledge with others, it forces me to examine what I truly understand versus what I merely think I know, and go beyond that.

I also remain curious about adjacent fields always looking for insights that can enrich my coaching practice without diluting its essence.

The credential was never meant to be a finish line. It's a commitment to perpetual growth, a promise that I will continue to be worthy of the trust my clients place in me, and a recognition that mastery itself is a practice, not a prize.

Q**What insight, inquiry or encouragement would you offer to someone aspiring to mastery in coaching?**

1. Have honest and courageous conversations with yourself. Mastery requires the willingness to see yourself clearly — your gifts and your growing edges, your patterns and your blind spots. This kind of self-honesty can be uncomfortable, but it's the foundation of authentic practice.
2. Continue to invest in building your knowledge. Coaching is both art and science. Stay curious about research, theory, new practices. Learn from adjacent disciplines, and never stop questioning what you think you know.
3. Build your village — it truly takes one. Surround yourself with mentors, supervisors, peers, and teachers who expand your thinking.
4. Practice with ethics and integrity. Remember that each of us represents the entire profession. How we coach, how we conduct ourselves, how we honor confidentiality, how we maintain boundaries — all of this matters beyond our individual practice. We are stewards of coaching's reputation and potential.
5. Learn thyself — do the inner work. Work with professionals who can help you develop the self-awareness essential to this practice. Your own growth and self-understanding directly impact the depth at which you can coach others.
6. Stay present and relevant to the world around you. Our clients live in a complex, rapidly changing world — politically, socially, technologically, environmentally. Coaching doesn't happen in a vacuum. Understand the contexts your clients navigate. Be informed, be culturally aware, be willing to acknowledge that the world shapes the challenges they bring to coaching.

DEBBIE HOGAN

ICF Master Certified Coach;
EMCC Master Practitioner

Singapore

Year in which you received this credential/accreditation/award(s): 2021 ICF MCC; 2022. EMCC MP

[LinkedIn Website](#)



Q How did your journey into coaching begin?

My journey into coaching began in 1993, when I was working as an EAP (Employee Assistance Program) provider and external consultant to several multinational companies. Much of my work involved supporting managers and leaders who sought guidance around management challenges and personal dilemmas in the workplace. As a psychotherapist, I quickly realized that these individuals were not looking for therapy—they needed a thinking space to process their management and leadership issues. Recognizing this distinction, I began exploring coach training programs to better serve corporate clients. At that time, however, coach training was virtually non-existent in Asia. The only options were an online course—which didn't fit my needs—and the first in-person coaching workshop held in Singapore, fell short of expectations.

This launched me into starting a coach training school in 2004, and we became the first to bring Solution Focused Coaching and certification to Asia. After earning my first global certification in coaching, I started to train, mentor and supervise other coaches. Later, I was introduced to Vikki Brock's Sourcebook of Coaching History (2012), which affirmed that my experience mirrored the early coaching landscape of that era: many organizations sent their leaders to psychologists or counselors for what was, in essence, coaching conversations. In 2007, I became a member of the International Coaching Federation (ICF), and in 2019, joined the European Mentoring and Coaching Council (EMCC)—earning the Master Certified Coach (MCC) and Master Practitioner (MP) designations in both organizations.

Q

How did your development unfold on the way to achieving your master-level credential / accreditation / award?

In 2016, when our coaching school became ICF-accredited, Program Directors were required to hold an MCC. At the time, I was a PCC with three years to earn MCC. With several peers in a similar situation, we formed an MCC learning group — a supportive community to challenge, encourage, and learn together.

There were no clear MCC guidelines or markers, so we explored what mastery might truly mean. We met weekly for over a year, observing coaching, analyzing recordings, and celebrating every success. As each member earned their MCC, the rest continued learning through collective reflection, feedback, and shared generosity.

Just before my submission deadline, I learned that ICF had removed the requirement for Program Directors to hold an MCC. I felt both relieved and unsettled. The goal had shifted from “I have to” to “I want to.” That realization marked the turning point — mastery had become an inner pursuit, not an external expectation.

Eventually, faced with renewing my PCC or applying for MCC, I took a leap of faith and submitted two recordings I had previously doubted were “good enough.” Three months later, both were approved, and I was awarded the MCC.

It was more than a credential; it was a journey of humility, courage, and community — a living reminder that mastery is less about some external ideal and more about the shared growth along the way. I realized that this journey cannot be taken alone. At times you need a guide. And other times, your inner being becomes the guide. Two essential parts that played together and struggled together. And the journey continues.

Q

What does ‘mastery in coaching’ mean to you?

Mastery is not a single moment in time or a destination. It’s an accumulation of refining your craft as a coach. With any skill you want to develop, there is a commitment to the practice, review, feedback and reflection on what you’ve done.

It’s recognizing when mastery already shows up. Partnering with others with whom you can feel safe, who provide honest feedback and humility to accept where you need to grow and develop. It’s having a community of trusted advisors, the wisdom people in your life, with whom you have taken the journey, alongside each other.

One does not achieve mastery on your own, nor can you rush or hurry this process.

It’s having trusted advisors recognize what they see as your unique way of demonstrating your mastery in your craft, as one often does not recognize it in oneself. Mastery is the continual, focused pursuit of developing a skill. It’s the way of life lived by those who choose to walk the path of mastery. Mastery is a path, a journey, rather than a place in which you arrive. Mastery involves a process of immersing yourself in the lifelong process of discovering, refining, and learning more

about the skill you choose to develop. The path of mastery takes patience and focus to steadily grind away at the fundamentals, build a solid base of basic skills, and choose to keep going. For those who walk this path, the reward is not only proficiency but transformation — the realization that the path itself is the point.



Q

In what ways do you recognize mastery in your own coaching now?

To identify mastery in our coaching can be awkward, if we focus just on our own performance as a coach. To be truly present and connected to our client means I'm not focused on my own performance. There are times when I sense there is a special shared moment, a shift, an insight, a revelation, a perception shifts, a new awakening, a new connection made – these are times when I recognize that something profound has occurred between us - me and in the client. When clients reveal a shift has been made, asking the questions that allow the client to savour the moment and celebrate the learning are precious moments.

Coaching, as a co-constructive process really facilitates the collaborative nature of two people creating and building a meaningful experience. Those moments when I realize my question, my observation, my reflection back to the client elevates their awareness or adds value to the client bring an immense sense of joy and meaning as a coach.

Having the privilege to walk beside another human being and contributing to their higher sense of self are skills that I cherish. If I try to 'be masterful' then I'm not fully attending to the client. Instead, my focus is on being curious about the other person and being willing to stay in the 'not-knowing' stance so I journey with the client fully, not directing, telling, informing, deciding, educating the client. Instead, holding the space, and enjoying the journey together. Mastery is having elegant tools and skills and knowing when to step in and when to step back, when to just hold the space and when to offer a question that stretches the world of the client. And sometimes mastery means taking a risk in the service of the client.

Q

How might others — clients, peers, or mentors — experience your coaching as masterful?

Others—whether clients, peers, or mentors—might experience my coaching as masterful through the quality of presence, listening, and inquiry that shapes each conversation. My questions would surface in response to what the client has said, versus thinking ahead of what to ask or say, with an elegance and flow that feels natural rather than deliberate, creating a sense of ease and transparency. Clients would feel the spaciousness of the coaching space, which helps them feel safe, understood, and free to explore what truly matters to them.

Mastery shows up not in performance, but in my comfort with not knowing—being willing to slow down, sit with ambiguity, or even be awkward when something isn't yet clear. This openness signals that coaching is a partnership, not a performance, and invites clients to take full ownership of their thinking, choices, and next steps.

Clients may also notice if I offer an astute observation—reflections that deepen their awareness of their strengths, patterns, and capabilities. These insights hopefully, would help them see themselves in new and empowering ways.

Ultimately, others may experience my coaching as masterful because it would be grounded in genuine curiosity, human connection, and respect for the client's resourcefulness. I am often inspired by the people I work with, and that inspiration becomes part of the coaching process—fueling a collaborative, generative, and deeply meaningful conversation.

Q**How do you continue developing after receiving your credential — personally and professionally?**

I engage in a wide range of activities to support my ongoing personal and professional growth. I regularly participate in ICF events, Communities of Practice, and ICF Town Halls for training providers, and I stay connected to new developments through EMCC events and professional networks.

My reflective practice includes meeting monthly with an MCC Peer Supervision Group and maintaining regular sessions with my individual Coach Supervisor. I also make use of various learning platforms, videos, and online resources to deepen my knowledge in areas of interest such as team coaching, leadership, and supervision.

Reading is an important part of my development. I explore book chapters, articles, and current research relevant to my work, and I keep up with global trends by reading daily updates from various sources. I have a stack of books on coaching, leadership, and team development that I work through steadily.

Community engagement is equally important to me. I stay connected through lunch meetings with fellow coaches and through several active WhatsApp groups focused on coaching and team coaching. I also organize monthly Coaching Circle events at my training school, inviting guest speakers to share new ideas.

Finally, my day-to-day work—teaching coaches, supervising practitioners, mentoring, delivering team coaching, and consulting for organizations—keeps me grounded, current, and continually learning from the practitioners and teams I support.

Q**What impact did receiving the official master-level recognition have on you?**

It was a huge surprise to receive the MCC confirmation in such a short time. It was a moment that I celebrated with deep gratitude, an intentional journey that took 6 years with various groups. I realized it was not the end of the journey but the beginning of a new phase. I found myself feeling humbled and honored by the title. It was a milestone in my professional life and one that I feel very proud to have made and continue to stay on the path of learning, growing and challenging myself.

Q**What insight, inquiry or encouragement would you offer to someone aspiring to mastery in coaching?**

Choose a team / group of trusted advisors / friends / mentors to walk with you through the journey. Continue to Record and review your coaching. There is always something to learn and grow by. Take risks and experiment, Learn your own style of mastery and development.

OLIVIA GADD

EMCC Master Practitioner
UK

Year in which you received this credential/accreditation/award(s):
2022.

[LinkedIn](#)



Q

How did your journey into coaching begin?

As an executive with a long CV, I was invited to join a corporately sponsored coach development programme in 2009. This felt a great opportunity and built on a reputation that I had as a good mentoring and coaching leader. Although what I learnt was that I had really not been a good coach, so much as dressing up coaching as giving my views and direction as a series of leading questions!

The move to a coaching style of leadership had a huge impact on me. Beyond having very different 121 and team meetings, I found that I changed my style in all interactions to a more question-led and 'generous' approach. By that, I mean that I'd allow others more airtime and be more curious about their thinking and the resulting solutions. I learned to let go more and trust others.



Q

How did your development unfold on the way to achieving your master-level credential / accreditation / award?

For the first few years, I was used as an internal coach (alongside my 'day job') and found that these sessions were often the happiest that I'd be in a given week or month. Through networking, peer supervision and attending CPD, I learned about a wider range of tools and techniques and started to enjoy trying new approaches.

I read a lot and generally have a coaching or psychology book on my nightstand alongside whatever fiction I'm reading.

A shift in my role meant that I started to teach coaching skills to others and this encouraged me to keep stretching my own knowledge and practice to be able to bring more depth to these learning sessions.

I was then given the opportunity to study to be a supervisor, which gave me a whole new perspective on coaching – my own and the variety of styles that people in coaching have.

There came a point where I really only wanted to be in the coaching environment, so I left my corporate role and set up on my own. This gave me the opportunity to really immerse myself in developing my skills and work with a much wider range of coachees, which in turn tested me in a very positive way.

I'd never had a destination in mind with my development, and was simply enjoying each opportunity to do more learning about a seemingly endless topic in order to help people.

Q

What does 'mastery in coaching' mean to you?

I believe that as we develop our coaching skills, we become able to hold the models, theories and thinking more lightly. Initially, a coach will often find their 'favourite' model and often look to bring it into the coaching room as they know it gets great results. I feel that mastery is found in being able to see the coachee through multiple lenses and hold a space where they can do the same.

Bringing a wide variety of tools/approaches/models to the table and being able to layer or merge them if necessary, so that there is a flexibility and responsiveness in the approach.

I also think that mastery comes from the confidence that you can hold a person and their thinking space through whatever they need to work through; balanced by the humility to know that there is no perfection and that none of us is for everyone, so if working with someone doesn't seem to be working well, we can accept that they might benefit from someone else's coaching more.

Q

In what ways do you recognize mastery in your own coaching now?

I feel that I have found an ease over time and when coach I don't pressurise myself as I initially did to 'get it right' so much as hold space for the coachee, lean into their thinking and also offer a mirror that highlights any patterns, assumptions or beliefs that could be important for them to see.

Q How might others — clients, peers, or mentors — experience your coaching as masterful?

Ach! That's a question! The feedback that I get is that I bring an aura of calm, connection and confidence... I challenge with care and kindness.

The sense of calmness seems to be something quite rare in many of my coachee's lives. The world and work feel hectic for most people that I meet. Feeling that they licence to slow down and dig deep is all too rare. So one aspect of my role that I take very seriously is simply protecting and honouring the need people have to stop and contemplate.

Q What impact did receiving the official master-level recognition have on you?

While it was not a goal in itself, it felt very gratifying to be recognised for the hard and consistent work that I have put in over the years. It was also humbling to join the ranks of people whom I've respected for a long time.



Q How do you continue developing after receiving your credential — personally and professionally?

As I said before, I did not set out with the credential as my goal. My love for learning; for seeking to deepen my understanding of people and how they work; for enabling people to enjoy self-determinism: these drive me. So, I have continued as I started: I listen to others, I read voraciously, and I seek out perspectives and approaches that are new. I challenge myself to keep up to date with academic thinking and with practical application of that thinking.

Q What insight, inquiry or encouragement would you offer to someone aspiring to mastery in coaching?

There is no perfection, and we develop in so many ways as humans that are not directly related to our coaching but benefit it hugely. I believe that, while the 'badge' is a lovely thing to attain, the joy of self-development is the real prize.

I know that the best way for me to learn and develop as a coach is to do so very intentionally:

- Work with a variety of people
- Experiment with my skills and approach
- Reflect carefully on what is happening in my practice and how I could make changes
- Set further experiments
- Reflect more and lean into supervision to bring insight
- Review the EMCC Global competencies to check in on the whole of my practice.

KARL VAN HOEY

ICF Master Certified Coach;
EMCC Master Practitioner

Belgium

Year in which you received this credential/accreditation/award(s):

MCC - 2019, Master Practitioner - 2022.

[LinkedIn](#)

[Website](#)



Q

How did your journey into coaching begin?

It started in one of my first employers, where I worked as a Human Resources Business Partner. People often came to my office to talk about anything on their mind, and I found myself listening deeply. That happened a lot. Over time, those informal conversations took more and more space in my days. A conversation with my boss made me realize that what I had been doing so naturally — listening and building trust — was in fact coaching, even if it wasn't called that yet. That insight proved crucial — it made the snowball roll.

In my next role, I became responsible as a Learning and Development Manager. There was something called a “coaching pool,” which immediately caught my attention. As a learning and development manager, I couldn't be part of that pool because it was reserved for specific people, but I had many conversations with those internal coaches. I learned that what they were doing was probably what I would want to do for the rest of my life. It wasn't fully clear yet, but even there, people would still come to me and say, “Can I have a chat with you?”

My next move was into a partnership organization, where I was officially a Senior HR Manager — at least on paper. In reality, around 70% of my time was spent coaching partners and leaders, though we never called it coaching. Many of those partners were quite lonely — the higher you go, the lonelier it becomes — and they needed a sparring partner. The rest of my time, about 30%, was hiring. But in those kinds of partnerships, there's often a big gap between your job title and what you actually do, and that was very true in that period.

It was at the end of that time that I decided for myself: Karl, you have to do something with coaching. It's inevitable. Everything in my body was pointing toward it — it was everywhere inside me. That's when I started my very first formal coaching course, not knowing then that it would eventually lead me to become a PCC.

Since 2014, I have followed my heart and worked full time as an independent executive coach. Over the years, I earned credentials including ICF MCC, EMCC Master Practitioner, and ICF Team Coaching certification. I lead my own practice and, during the pandemic, co-founded the Team Coaching Global Alliance with colleagues from the U.S. and Greece — an initiative that has grown into an ICF-accredited program supporting coaches worldwide.

Q

How did your development unfold on the way to achieving your master-level credential/accreditation/award?

This is becoming a really intimate story... I'm showing myself here in a very vulnerable way. I became PCC in 2010 and kept coaching intensively while still working in corporate roles. When I left my last company in 2014, I continued as an independent coach. Over the years, I noticed something changing in my practice. It took me less and less time for clients to reach their desired outcomes. I usually worked with six sessions, two weeks apart, but more often I saw that after two or three sessions, the client was already where they wanted to be. It felt almost embarrassing at times — I had a contract for six sessions, and sometimes I wondered what I would do next. Something was clearly evolving in how I coached.

Then came a very personal and defining moment. My father passed away in 2016. He had never really understood what coaching was — we joked about it — but in one of our last conversations he said, “Karl, I feel that there is still one last mountain you need to climb. I don't know what it is, but when you recognize it, please conquer it.” Half a year later, while climbing part of Mont Blanc with my family, I suddenly lost my breath completely — for almost a minute I couldn't breathe. When air finally came back, I felt in every bone of my body that the decision had already been made. That was the moment I knew I had to go for MCC.

When we reached the top, I called a Belgian MCC, Nadia, who would later become my mentor coach, and told her what had happened. She said, “It sounds like your body has taken the decision.” I later studied transformational presence with Alan Seal, did more advanced trainings, recorded my sessions, and in April 2019 I submitted my recordings to ICF. In August 2019, I received my MCC.

Q

What does ‘mastery in coaching’ mean to you?

For me, mastery in coaching means much more than mastery in coaching itself. It can be an ambition, an inspiration, or a driver. Once you have that MCC certificate on your door, it becomes an invitation to continually challenge yourself — to ask, “If I am called masterful in coaching, how far am I from being master over myself? Over my life? Over what truly matters to me?”

I may be a bit isolated in this view, but for me, what I do in coaching and who I am are completely integrated. There is no difference between the two. Being an MCC is not only about a professional title or a certificate — it is part of who I am.

Mastery — whether in coaching or in anything else — is a continuous desire to evolve, to grow, to develop myself, to transform myself. It means mastering not only the coaching craft, care for my clients, ethics, and our profession, but also my life, love, friendships, family, money, desire, and even the universe itself, for as far as I can understand it.

Mastery in coaching goes much further and deeper than coaching alone.



Q

In what ways do you recognize mastery in your own coaching now?

Mastery shows itself through evolution. At ACC level, you are learning the coaching core competencies. At PCC level, you are applying and practicing them. At MCC level, you are “forgetting” them — not losing them, but integrating them so deeply that they become part of your unconscious competence. What you forget represents fifteen years of hard labor.

That’s the change I notice in myself. It’s a movement from being a coach to simply being — being present, being together. From asking questions and listening actively to being curious. From communication to holding space. From transactional conversation to transformational connection. From questioning and answering to curiosity.

Q

How might others — clients, peers, or mentors — experience your coaching as masterful?

They might experience it through the depth of presence. When I hold space instead of directing it, something happens — a kind of energy field forms that allows the client to start coaching themselves. Some of the most powerful sessions I’ve ever done included five or ten minutes of silence. Nothing needed to be said, and yet everything was happening. Although, you wouldn’t probably send those recordings to ICF for assessment.

So, I think others experience my coaching as masterful not through what I do, but through who I am — in the silence, the connection, and the space we hold together.

Q

How do you continue developing after receiving your credential — personally and professionally?

That’s another beautiful question. Of course, there are the ICF and EMCC requirements that we have to fulfill, so there’s no escape from the 40 hours of continuing coach education for ICF, and EMCC has similar expectations. I also have regular supervision with someone who truly helps me reflect and grow.

Beyond that, I’ve been re-connecting with one of my old loves — philosophy. I originally studied law, but I always wanted to study philosophy as well. Life circumstances didn’t allow that at the time, but you don’t need a degree to be a philosopher. I read a lot — from ancient Greek and Latin philosophers to the Renaissance and even the so-called “grumpier” ones like Sartre or Schopenhauer. They can sound dark, but when you read them deeply, there’s much more nuance.

I believe philosophy and coaching are deeply connected. Socrates was probably the first coach — he was called a philosopher, but what he really did was ask questions. In those times, philosophy and what we now call coaching were much closer than they are today. That’s an area where I continue to grow.

I’m also committed to developing the profession itself. I’ve served in countless volunteer roles, working groups, and task forces — writing team coaching competencies, core competencies, and building on ethics. I’m currently a co-leader of the MCC Task Force and a member of the Independent Ethical Review Board. I guess this will continue for the rest of my life, because I simply love it.

Through my years of growth as a coach — especially the last eight or nine years — I’ve made a fundamental shift from growing and developing in a rather planned way to a more organic one. I still plan, but I’ve learned to integrate planning and organic growth. It has been healthy for me. If you had met me in my late thirties or early forties, you might not have liked me — I was very rigid back then. That has totally shifted.

Q What impact did receiving the official master-level recognition have on you?

It meant the universe to me. As I said earlier, being a masterful coach — and being recognized as one — is, for me, a matter of identity. But that recognition didn't need to come from my clients. It was Karl wanting to recognize Karl — to acknowledge for myself that I had become an MCC.

For my clients, honestly, it didn't change much. When I told them, "By the way, since a few months, I'm now an MCC instead of a PCC," they said, "Oh, is that some ICF thing again?" — "Yes, indeed." — "So the P has become an M?" — "Yes, indeed." — "But you still do what you do?" — "Yes, indeed." — "Okay, that's good." And that was it.

I had to become an MCC not for the market, not for branding, not even for clients — but for myself. And it meant a lot. I still remember the moment clearly: August 19, 2019, at 15:17, when the email from ICF arrived confirming that I had become an MCC.

I once read about Pavarotti, who wanted to be a football player but became a singer after an accident, and another artist who wanted to be a painter but became a famous singer instead. My immense luck is that my first dream — to be a coach — became reality. I didn't have to go to Plan B.

Q What insight, inquiry or encouragement would you offer to someone aspiring to mastery in coaching?

Imagine that you are on a faraway, isolated island — with no food, nothing around you, just one other person together with you. And imagine that all you can do in that moment comes down to two choices:

You can sit at opposite ends of the island and be very lonely, or you can start a conversation with each other. What would you desire to do? And if your desire is to have that conversation — what would it be about? Reflecting on those two questions has been a source of inspiration for me.

Start a journey.



DR JANE TUOMOLA

ICF Master Certified Coach
Singapore

Year in which you received this credential/accreditation/award(s):
2025.

[LinkedIn](#)



Q

How did your journey into coaching begin?

I originally trained as a Clinical Psychologist (2004) and then trained in solution focused therapy after moving to Singapore in 2009. Many clients I saw in private practice here either did not have or should not have developed a mental health problem. They were struggling with normal cultural adjustments and didn't yet feel confident and capable in their new environment. Coaching was a better fit for what they needed than therapy, and helped avoid the stigma of seeing a psychologist. My original mission and purpose as a psychologist was to reduce mental distress and help people develop mental wellness. Starting my journey as a coach felt that it fitted very well – I could offer people a safe space to normalise the impact of their transition, reflect on their hopes for a better future and partner with them in a guided process to maximise their personal and professional potential in their life abroad.





How did your development unfold on the way to achieving your master-level credential/accreditation/award?

I earned my PCC credential in 2016, initially building my coaching hours through life coaching—mainly to help expats thrive in their lives abroad. My coaching journey then paused as I had my second child, moved from Singapore to Finland, and took maternity leave. When I returned to work, I set up my own company. Working part time, I chose to prioritise developing my psychology practice first, returning to life coaching only gradually. At that stage, my focus wasn't on mastery but on maintaining a solid standard of coaching, supported by regular supervision and reflection.

In 2020, I moved back to Singapore, and as my career evolved, so did the clients I supported. My focus shifted to workplace wellbeing, executive coaching, and team coaching—broadening my skills and deepening my impact. Again, my emphasis remained on growth and enjoyment rather than formal mastery.

As my children grew older and I had more time for my own development, I decided to enroll in a Level 3 ICF-accredited course, initially viewing it as a necessary step toward my MCC credential. To my surprise, it became a powerful learning experience. Although I had engaged in regular supervision, I hadn't had anyone review my recorded sessions for several years.

Hearing my coaching anew highlighted many subtle areas where I could refine and elevate my practice. This renewed focus on feedback and continuous improvement reignited my commitment to truly developing mastery as a coach.

Q**What does ‘mastery in coaching’ mean to you?
(In what ways do you recognize mastery in your own coaching now?)**

This is a great question. In pursuing my MCC credential, I initially drew on the ICF’s definition of mastery. Key areas I identified for development included deepening my partnership with clients—not only around the content of coaching but also the process. This meant integrating the client’s own theory of change alongside my knowledge of what might support progress.

I also began to experiment more creatively, using metaphors and imagery. Previously, I would only explore a metaphor if the client introduced it. Through my training, my confidence grew to offer metaphors myself—lightly and without attachment—to see if they resonated. This expanded my flexibility and enriched the coaching dialogue.

For me, mastery is ultimately about flexibility and versatility. Offering a safe reflective space to be present with and attune to the client and to fully partner with each client in both the process and content of the conversation so that they can generate meaningful insights and sustainable change. It goes beyond technique or models but is more of a fluid dance in the moment.

One surprising insight from the MCC journey was realising that not every client seeks MCC-level coaching as defined by ICF. Some prefer a more transactional, goal-focused process with an accountability partner rather than deep self-reflection and transformation. This raises an interesting question: of whether a simpler, more pragmatic approach can also be masterful.

Alongside this, I am applying for my Master Practitioner (MP) with the EMCC, whose perspective on mastery differs. EMCC emphasises sustained self-reflection, lifelong development, and contribution to the profession. I find these two definitions complementary—ICF’s focuses more on how we coach, while EMCC’s highlights who we are as coaches and how we support the growth of others.



How might others — clients, peers, or mentors — experience your coaching as masterful?

Clients experience my coaching sessions as being a safe and reflective space. They notice I allow silence for their own thinking and insight, and that my questions are succinct, targeted, and well-timed, giving them room to explore deeply. Each session is tailored to their needs—whether that means shifting pace, style, or focus—and I adapt flexibly both within and across sessions to match their preferences and needs in the moment.

Clients often comment on the creativity in our work together. I introduce metaphors, imagery, or alternative ways of seeing a situation, always lightly offered and checked for resonance, so they feel invited rather than directed. My coaching is highly collaborative: I partner fully with clients on the process, honouring their own theory of change rather than imposing my expertise, which helps them feel empowered and confident in steering their own progress.

The overall experience is one of presence, attentiveness, and versatility. Clients sense the depth of my engagement and the genuine care I have for them. They appreciate that I tailor each intervention, to support them in making meaningful, sustainable change.



How do you continue developing after receiving your credential — personally and professionally?

In many ways, earning my MCC credential feels like the beginning of my mastery journey rather than the end. I love learning, and there are always new ways to grow and evolve as a coach. One of the biggest influences of my MCC journey has been on my supervision practice. I've been a coaching supervisor since 2018, and developing other coaches is one of my greatest passions. I also train coaches and coaching supervisors. Integrating what I learned from my MCC journey has enriched these supervision conversations—particularly around fully partnering with supervisees on both the process and content of supervision, and being more creative.

One of my greatest challenges in the journey to the MCC credential was unlearning established coaching habits that had become ingrained over time. Through supervision I now support coaches to focus on cultivating mastery earlier than I did. Supporting others to develop mastery through flexibility and versatility earlier in their journey benefits both them and their clients whether or not they decide to formally pursue the MCC credential. Recently, I spoke at an ICF Singapore event on developing mastery as part of a credentialing series. Sharing my story and key insights not only clarified my own learning but also offered tangible takeaways for others on their MCC journey.

As coaching is ultimately about having useful conversations that lead to meaningful change, the skills I've honed extend far beyond the coaching room. I don't "coach" my family, but being more intentional for example about partnering with my children when they face challenges has made our interactions more collaborative and gives them more sense of ownership over the outcome.

I always have areas I am keep on developing that don't necessarily relate to mastery in coaching. One of my current goals for example is to build confidence in using AI to support both my coaching business and my clients' growth.

Q

What impact did receiving the official master-level recognition have on you?

I was genuinely surprised by how much I enjoyed the MCC journey—and how much I learned along the way. That learning itself felt like a major achievement, even before I received the credential. When the email arrived confirming that I had passed both recordings on my first attempt, I was shocked. I had to double - and triple-check the ICF website to be sure it was real. It wasn't until I shared the news that the significance truly sank in—the outpouring of congratulations from colleagues, friends, and even strangers was humbling and deeply moving.

One of my motivations for pursuing the MCC credential, beyond personal growth, was to strengthen my credibility as a coach educator. Many of the coaches on the supervision programme I teach are already MCC-level coaches, and I wanted to demonstrate not only my experience as a supervisor but also my ability to model mastery in coaching itself. Receiving the credential reinforced my sense of being on equal footing with those I teach and mentor, deepening the mutual respect in those relationships.

Ultimately, the MCC journey gave me far more than a credential—it reignited my curiosity, expanded my awareness, and strengthened my confidence in how I can contribute to the coaching profession as both a practitioner and an educator.

Q

What insight, inquiry or encouragement would you offer to someone aspiring to mastery in coaching?

Since completing this journey, my biggest piece of advice to others is: start earlier. Unlearning ingrained habits becomes much harder the longer you've been using them. While MCC coaching builds on PCC-level skills, it also requires a distinct shift in mindset and presence—so exploring mastery sooner makes that transition far smoother.

Even if you're still some distance from meeting the MCC coaching-hour criteria, the learning itself is invaluable. It will make you a more flexible, attuned, and confident coach. Although it's possible to accumulate enough CPD hours through shorter or even free courses, I'd strongly recommend a Level 3 ICF-accredited programme focused specifically on developing mastery.

Participating in group mentor coaching—observing others coach, receiving feedback, and practising regularly with a peer group—accelerated my development more than anything else. And having a great individual mentor coach is essential. Working with more than one can be even more beneficial, as each will highlight different aspects of your coaching. Take time to explore their experience, approach, and fit with your learning style before committing.

Above all, focus on the journey, not just the credential. The process of learning, reflecting, and refining your craft will deepen your coaching long before the certificate arrives—and that growth is, in many ways, the real reward.

ZOLTÁN CSIGÁS

EMCC Master Practitioner

Hungary

Year in which you received this credential/accreditation/award(s):

2019.

[LinkedIn](#)

[Website](#)



Q

How did your journey into coaching begin?

I am a psychologist by education, so I have always been drawn to working with people. Early on, I specialized in work and organizational psychology, as I was more interested in teams, groups, and “lots of people” at the same time. My first workplace was a PR agency which, although interesting, did not allow me to use my knowledge in the way I had imagined. I then moved into HR consulting, where I realized that working with leaders individually might be my path. It allowed me to use my understanding of individuals, work in the context of development, and at the same time open the door to influencing the “lots of people.”

Of course, as a junior consultant I wasn’t allowed to work with senior leaders yet, so I was—well, more than a little—disappointed. Still, I found my way and started to learn. I enrolled in a Transactional Analysis for Coaches course, as I already found the concepts of TA inspiring and useful, and I began to seek opportunities to practice.

Q

How did your development unfold on the way to achieving your master-level credential / accreditation / award?

I see a number of parallel processes that helped me get to where I am now. One was my continuous curiosity and investment in learning. I kept reading, taking courses, and attending conferences. Truth be told, it was hectic, and at times I felt many of my inputs were worthless. But even those helped to shape the knowledge base I now rely on. They supported me in forming an opinion—or perhaps better said, a mental model—about how individuals function and how they can be supported.

I also had, and still have, great mentors and supervisors who generously shared their wisdom. They supported me not only by correcting my techniques, but by broadening my self-reflection and shaping my thinking. Thanks to them, I could let go of prejudices and deepen my curiosity. I have learned a great deal from Sari van Poelje, Péter Generál, Andrea Mezei, John Parr, Jerome Lefevre, and Stephen Murphy. What stands out most for me is how they gave me permission to question my earlier knowledge, integrate new ideas, and encouraged me—gently but firmly—to find what works for me. And through that process, to find more of myself.

Leaving the sole practitioner perspective also proved invaluable. I had opportunities to teach coaching at different levels, to participate in establishing and accrediting a coaching school, and to reflect on the profession as EMCC International's VP of Research. Teaching especially sharpened my clarity and my use of coaching "technology."

Standing on the shoulders of giants, I was able to create my own professional approach: a unique blend that is only mine—and one that carries me inside it.



What does ‘mastery in coaching’ mean to you?

Truth be told, I don’t really know. The word mastery suggests something “more,” but I am not aspiring to be “more” these days. I aspire to be myself in my coaching relationships.

From an institutional standpoint, being a master coach means there was a point when I could demonstrate meeting the highest competency expectations. Nowadays, I don’t think in competencies very often. Still, if I had to define it, mastery in coaching would mean a mix of the following:

Presence in the relationship: the ability to bring myself fully into the moment and have a real, complete conversation with the client.

Awareness: noticing what is happening and what invitations are being exchanged in the situation.

Boundary management: consciously choosing how to react, including managing professional and ethical boundaries.

Flexibility: allowing things to unfold naturally when needed, or bringing in an approach, a tool, or whatever else the moment requires—because not all conversations are purely self-reflective.

Humility: maintaining all of the above through continuous self-reflection, supervision, and personal development.



In what ways do you recognize mastery in your own coaching now?

I notice it in my curiosity and in not being afraid of what my clients bring. I trust that together we can find a way to use the process for their benefit.

From a technical perspective, I feel fluid and flexible in using the tools and techniques I have. Sometimes they are needed, sometimes not at all. I experience myself as more relaxed now. My attention is broad and adaptable—shifting from content to non-verbals, from my own thoughts and feelings to noticing what might be missing.

Most importantly, I rarely experience performance pressure anymore. I trust that the process will take us to a good place.

Q How might others — clients, peers, or mentors — experience your coaching as masterful?

We would need to ask them 😊. Hopefully, they would describe me as present, engaged, curious, and able to hold boundaries well. They might say I let the client steer the conversation, but that I also take initiative when needed to overcome blocks.

I hope my clients experience safety in my sessions, while also feeling energized to explore and go deeper into their topics. Ideally, they encounter a balance of challenge and comfort, which allows them to give themselves permission to think, feel, and act differently than before.

My supervisors, I hope, see a high level of self-reflection combined with curiosity and humility. Despite all my titles, I am still just a person who seeks further development.

And my peers? I hope for the same. We are all people. I may have knowledge or experience they don't, but I strive to be open to sharing, debating, and accepting different perspectives—so that together we can create better client experiences and strengthen our communities and profession.

Q How do you continue developing after receiving your credential — personally and professionally?

I didn't change my routine of learning and development after earning my master credential. I still love attending conferences, where I get a curated dose of new ideas to play with. I keep reading about topics that catch my interest, and I try out these ideas in my sessions. If something doesn't work as expected, I bring it to supervision.

The main change since the credential is that I now support other professionals more often. In my business, I train coaches in certain methodologies, and these engagements contribute to my growth as well. The questions of my trainees invite me to reflect, draw parallels with their dilemmas, and reconsider what I know. Passing on knowledge forces me to highlight what truly matters, sharpening my own focus. Writing articles and hosting podcast conversations have had a similar effect.

I also enjoy being involved in research projects. Whether as a participant, co-researcher, or coordinator of larger initiatives, research allows me to go beyond what is already known. Creating new knowledge is fun and inspiring.

To give some concrete examples: since receiving my master credential, I have completed a two-year university course, begun learning team coaching, certified in a new individual coaching method, and participated in a large maturity research project.

Q

What impact did receiving the official master-level recognition have on you?

At first, it was good for my ego. I felt proud and successful. But the boost soon faded, and I returned to my usual way of working. A credential, after all, is someone else's approval of your competence. For me, that approval helped me to accept that I am good enough at what I do. It allowed me to release some of my own performance expectations, which had sometimes been the real barrier to masterful conversations.

I also felt that there were no more milestones to chase. I could simply do what I do—for its own sake, for myself, and for my clients. The need to prove myself diminished significantly.

While working toward the credential, my focus had been quite narrow. Once I finished, I felt a new openness and started to seek out new learning opportunities. (This felt natural—after a period of focus and integration, opening up again.)

On a practical level, the credential also had positive effects on my business. It opened doors to new clients and higher-level corporate assignments. These brought fresh challenges and new learning opportunities—so in that sense, the credential set the stage for further growth.

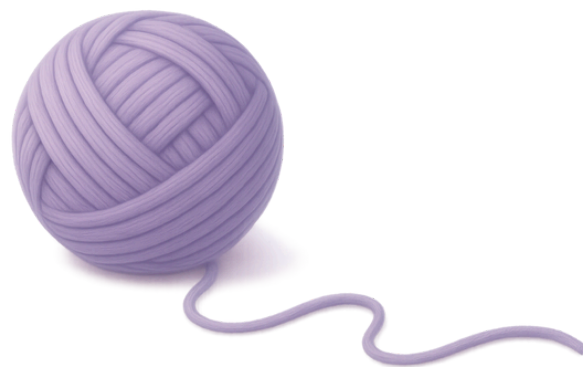
Q

What insight, inquiry or encouragement would you offer to someone aspiring to mastery in coaching?

It may sound strange as a starting point, but first ask yourself: do you really need this credential? If you see the benefit, and are willing to invest the time and effort in meeting these specific (and sometimes rather artificial) criteria, then go for it.

Make sure you have a guide—whether a mentor, supervisor, or group of peers—who supports you along the way. Stay open to their input, but never lose sight of yourself. The best supporters don't change you; they create space for you to shape yourself.

Getting the master credential often means letting go—of models, theories, and processes. Allow yourself to do that. It's not about reinventing the wheel. It's about integrating what you know and discovering your own highlights. No need to reinvent the wheel, just make sure your cart is rolling smoothly. 😊



HERU YUWONO LIEM

ICF Master Certified Coach
EMCC Master Practitioner
AC Master Executive Coach
Indonesia

Year in which you received this credential /accreditation/award(s):
2019-2021.

[LinkedIn](#)
[Website](#)



Q

How did your journey into coaching begin?

Well, I would say that I'm a people person. In my corporate career, I held different functions — finance, distribution, marketing, and sales — but what I liked most was always the people side, human resources. That's where I found my passion.

When I became a CEO, of course, I had to manage everything, not just HR, but even then, the people aspect was what gave me the greatest meaning. When I retired in 2011, I moved into what I would call the “people business.” This is where I found coaching.

Before that, I had learned coaching in a practical way — as a leader, HR director, and CEO — using it to lead and manage my people. It wasn't for certification; it was simply part of how I worked. But in 2011, I decided to pursue coaching professionally, to become certified, and from then on, it became my full-time work.



Q

How did your development unfold on the way to achieving your master-level credential/accreditation/award?

At first, I realized that motivation and heart — the “why” — were not enough. I needed to have good skills and strong competence. So I learned. I also noticed that everybody can call themselves a coach, but who can truly certify them?

For me, the journey began with motivation, then skill. My question to myself was: how can I fully test and prove my skill? The answer was international certification — not just from a local school, but from a global organization.

I started in 2011 with ICF training, moving through ACC, PCC, and eventually MCC. Along the way, I realized that in the coaching world there isn't only one peak — there are three great mountains: ICF, EMCC, and AC. So I decided to climb all three, to understand what coaching means from each perspective — the European style of EMCC, the approach of the Association for Coaching, and ICF's view.

I wanted to reach the top of all three mountains and see the scenery from there — to understand what each has to offer and what connects them at the summit.

Q

What does ‘mastery in coaching’ mean to you?

For me, motivation starts from the heart — from the inner drive to support others. It's not only about the “why,” but also about transforming that intention into skill and competence. True motivation is connected to purpose and calling. When we feel that purpose deeply, it becomes part of our being — not something external that pushes us, but something internal that moves through us.

Q

In what ways do you recognize mastery in your own coaching now?

To me, mastery is more than a word — it's a way of being. There are three parts: being, having, and doing.

Being means making the essence of coaching internal — it lives inside us. It's about becoming a valuable person who supports others and gives benefit beyond oneself. Having refers to credentials that validate our competence, and doing is the practical expression of coaching through our actions and skills.

All three are important, but the foundation is being. Do we really have a purpose and a calling to support others? That's where mastery lives — when coaching is part of who we are, not just something we do.

Q

How might others — clients, peers, or mentors — experience your coaching as masterful?

Maybe I would reflect in the same way — if they can feel transformation in their *being*, not only in their actions.

Of course, the being will manifest itself in the *doing*. When a client becomes aware of a blind spot, their actions naturally change. But the most impactful result happens when the coaching helps the client transform who they *are*, not just what they *do*.

That's how I believe others experience mastery in my coaching — when the process supports them in transforming their inner self, their being. Because once that happens, the doing follows, and the change becomes embodied and sustainable.

Q

How do you continue developing after receiving your credential — personally and professionally?

I keep coaching. That's my calling and where I find purpose, so ongoing practice remains my first teacher — over four, perhaps five thousand hours by now. Supporting others also grows me; when clients learn, I learn alongside them.

My other calling is to support aspiring coach to become professional coach with international certification. In March 2020 I founded my own coaching school, currently accredited by ICF for Level 1, Level 2, CCE, and AATC for Team Coaching.

So far, I have been mentoring and supporting hundreds of Coaches, which some have earned ICF Credentials : 66 ACC, 21 PCC and 6 ACTC.

Alongside that, I continue practising one-on-one and team coaching, also joining programs globally for my own development.

In short: keep serving clients, keep learning, and keep building the next generation of coaches — that's how my development continues.

Q

What impact did receiving the official master-level recognition have on you?

First, it was validation — confirmation that I'm coaching to an international standard. That matters to me because, in a helping profession, we have a responsibility to “do it right,” not drift into malpractice.

Second, it built trust. Students chose to learn with me — it helped when I opened my coaching school — and clients felt they were in good hands with a coach holding internationally recognized credentials.

In short: recognition affirmed my practice, deepened my sense of responsibility, and increased trust from both learners and the market.

Q

What insight, inquiry or encouragement would you offer to someone aspiring to mastery in coaching?

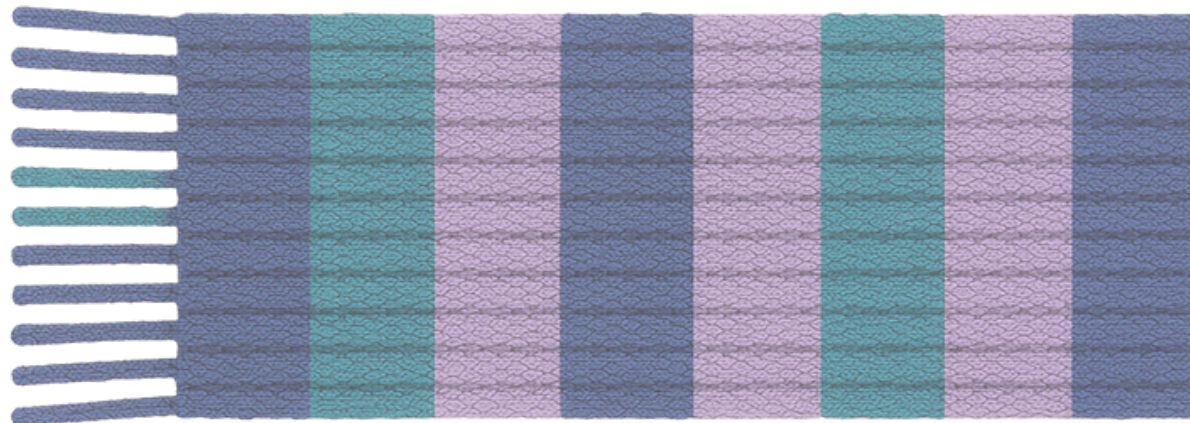
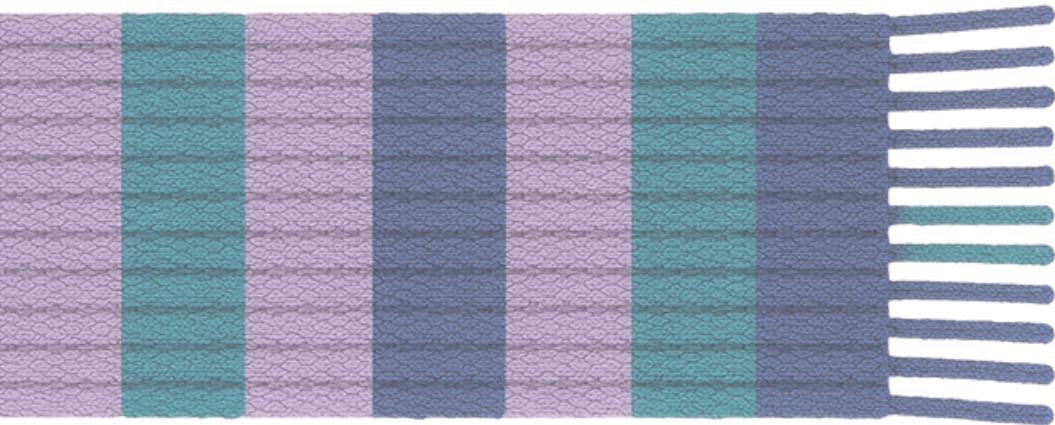
Coaching is a *noble profession* — something we do for the greater good, to support others and help them grow. It's not about the coach; it's about the client. Through coaching, we make our world a little better.

So my encouragement would be: start with your *why* — your intention, motivation, and calling to help others. But don't stop there. The willingness alone is not enough; you also need skill, competence, and validation.

Learn the *what* and *how*, and seek feedback and credentialing to understand where your coaching truly stands. It's not the mountain you conquer — it's yourself. Mastery is about continuous learning, deep humility, and remembering that at the end of the day, it's always about the person in front of you.

Emerging patterns and insights

Reflections and personal analyses





WHAT THIS COLLECTIVE VOICE REVEALS ABOUT MASTERY

When I began this little initiative — I wrote my intro intuitively, before reading a single interview.

I was still in the process of collecting, and I remember sitting outside while the weather was still good, under the lindens, letting the ideas form naturally. It was interesting to notice that *climbing a mountain* was mentioned in several conversations. Even more surprising — the metaphor of *weaving* appeared in one interview, where a colleague had worked on a project using that image many years before I ever began this.

As I went through the material, I started noticing certain patterns — in ideas, phrases, and perspectives.

**What follows is a selection of those threads
that caught my attention...**



Never-ending Journey

Almost all interviewed coaches shared a common understanding: coaching is a journey — continuous, evolving, and never a final destination. Some even expressed discomfort with the term “mastery,” precisely because it can suggest an end point, while their experience is one of constant development. Many connected this with continuous unlearning and re-learning. Challenging one’s own belief system was mentioned as part of that ongoing process. One of the coaches used the word *Knowmad*, which I loved — “a lifelong apprentice of human nature”. Staying curious, about others and about yourself, seems to be essential.

What is something you are still learning, unlearning or re-learning?

The personal side of professional development

At EMCC, I am part of the Centre for Excellence known as CPPD — Continuous Personal and Professional Development. The second “P” was added intentionally, to highlight how essential the personal is within the professional — a connection I often explore in my own reflections and writing. It was meaningful to notice how this perspective came through in many of the conversations. As one reflection beautifully put it, every life experience is a learning opportunity, if we remain attentive.

“It’s simple,” one coach said. “The more you grow as a person, the more powerful you become as a coach.”

I was particularly struck by how openly some shared the importance of showing vulnerability and including personal stories in their practice. Several coaches wrote about how reading and studying philosophy gives them a sense of personal fulfilment and growth.

There were many reflections on how earlier life experiences — both personal and professional — continue to shape who they are as coaches today.

One reflection stayed with me: “Your passion and integrity are just as vital as your skills. Let these be your compass as you walk the path toward coaching mastery.”

How does your personal story influence how you show up professionally?

Humility, presence and what emerges

Mastery, for most of the interviewed colleagues, is about stopping the need to “do it right” — and instead, being fully present with the client, openly and without agenda. Many described it as a capacity to dance with whatever shows up in the session, holding space with humility, without needing to control or direct.

“I am comfortable waiting while the client processes their thoughts,” one said — a simple sentence that captures the essence of this presence. They spoke about the quality of presence, and how it creates a state of simplicity and ease. For all of them, this presence becomes a way of being — a natural extension of who they are. “Sitting with complexity and uncertainty,” “comfort with not knowing,” and “being willing to slow down and sit with ambiguity” appeared often.

The ability to remain grounded while meeting the client in moments that are both challenging and supportive was seen as an expression of mastery. In that space, clients often feel both safe and stretched.

Humility was described as essential for this kind of presence. It is something that shaped how coaches related to their clients - through openness, curiosity, and a sense of being in service of the client. Letting go — of ego, of outcomes, and of the desire to influence — was mentioned repeatedly. For many, this was the shift from doing to being. One colleague expressed it in a way that stayed with me: “I’m offering myself in service of transformation.”

What supports your presence when things feel unclear or complex?

Reflective practice and supervision

Being a reflective practitioner was named by many as essential in supporting both personal and professional maturity, along with regular supervision — a foundation without which mastery cannot be achieved.

“Maturity of reflection” appeared more than once — pointing not only to the practice itself, but to the depth of presence and awareness it invites.

Although supervision and a demonstrated level of maturity in reflective practice are formal requirements for EMCC and AC accreditation — and while ICF emphasizes it as part of Core Competency 2, Embodying a Coaching Mindset, but does not require it for individual credential - most of the coaches, including those with only ICF credentials, shared that supervision and nurturing reflective practice remain extremely valuable. For many, these became even more important after receiving a master-level accreditation.

How do you nurture your reflective practice?

The role of togetherness and belonging

Belonging to communities came up in many conversations — as something that supports not only professional growth, but also a sense of connection and shared purpose.

Several coaches spoke about having a community of trusted advisors, people they turn to for reflection, challenge, and support. Some described how being part of a professional ecosystem helped expand and deepen their own visibility, awareness, and network.

What kind of community helps you feel connected, supported, and stretched?

Contributing to the profession, society, and the world

The idea of contribution came up in many conversations, as something that adds purpose to one's professional maturity. Several coaches shared how volunteering became a natural part of their journey, a way to give back to the profession they feel privileged to be part of.

The word “legacy” also appeared — as a genuine reflection on what remains behind our work. For me, it made sense that we, as coaches, are invited into that space - through how we show up and share what we've learned.

What I personally value in the EMCC Master Practitioner path is that contribution to the profession is encouraged and expected — through writing, research, facilitating events, promoting the profession, and volunteering.

As one colleague expressed: “The credential did not change who I am as a coach, but it amplified my ability to influence and serve at the highest level.”

Mastery was also linked to a sense of ethics — and to the responsibility to contribute not only to the profession, but to humanity, through mentoring, supervision, writing, or thought leadership. Some spoke from a holistic perspective — how their work helps them see wider systems at play, and how coaching can create ripple effects that reach beyond the individual client.

One beautifully captured this by saying we are each a small (or big!) but significant part of a larger, purposeful ecosystem that comes together to leverage the power and potential of coaching.

As one colleague said: “We make our world a little better.”

And another reminded us: “We are privileged to do this beautiful profession.”

In what ways are you contributing (would like to contribute) to the profession and the wider system?

Weaving it all together

INVITATION FOR FURTHER EXPLORATION

As I mentioned in the introduction, this process — of gathering, designing, writing, reading, and rewriting — became a learning journey of its own. A journey of letting go. Even at the end, as I was holding on to the idea of publishing on December 1st, I had to release that deadline and stop chasing for symbolism.

Throughout this experience, I also felt connection. I already knew some names, followed their work, read their books, watched webinars. I admired many, attended trainings with some, and even cooperated with a few.

But this initiative brought something different — a kind of connection I hadn't expected. Getting to know the work of those I had never seen or heard of before — asynchronously, through words, stories, reflections — gave me a sense of fulfillment I couldn't have planned for.

With every story I read, I kept confirming something I already believed — that this is an accumulation, and that the journey truly never ends.

When I received my MCC, my father asked me, “Is that finally it?” Now I know — even if (or when) I obtain the EMCC Master Practitioner, there is never going to be a final “it.”

The next idea is already forming — continuing this exploration by setting up a master coaches community.

(Maybe we'll meet there. 😊)


And let me close with a question one colleague left hanging in the air — a thread, perhaps, for you to keep weaving into your own reflection:

“Once you have that (master) certificate on your door, it becomes an invitation to continually challenge yourself — to ask, ***“If I am called masterful in coaching, how far am I from being master over myself? Over my life?”***”





The weave continues



**In your hands,
in your next conversation,
and in the ripple effect it creates across
lives, communities, and the world...**



ADRIJANA MILOSAVLJEVIC
COACHING