

The Coaching Podcast

The Complexities of Coaching with Jenna Sanders

Emma Love interviews Jenna Sanders

Emma Love 00:16

Jenna Sanders and I have known each other for quite a few years. I've been really fortunate to have had her support not only as a mentor and trainer, but more recently as my National Trainer, assessing my sign offs for a number of provider roles. So, I couldn't think of a better way to start my year as host for Paddle UK's The Coaching Podcast than to invite Jenna along for a chat! Huge welcome Jenna.

Jenna Sanders 00:37

Hello. It's really great to be here. Thank you for having me.

Emma Love 00:41

I'm very excited. Jenna, before we do start chatting, it would be really terrific if you could give us an overview of some of the really cool stuff I know you've been up to in the last couple of years.

Jenna Sanders 00:55

Yeah, so I guess since the last podcast I did, I've been mostly out coaching a lot. I've moved house, so I've moved over to Shropshire, which puts me a lot closer to North Wales and the really lovely environments that we can play with over there, and I've been running lots and lots of coach courses. I've been working with some Performance Coaches, which has been really exciting. And I have also been doing a Master's which I have just recently finished and that's been absolutely brilliant. So, I've been up at Leeds Beckett University working on a Masters in Coach Development. Really thinking hard and talking a lot and being encouraged to really clearly define what it is to me to be a Coach Developer and a Coach. And as part of that I've done a bit of research where I got an opportunity to talk to some really fantastic Coach Developers who are working within the Performance Coach system

and to find out what they think really good coaching and really good Coach development looks like.

Emma Love 02:21

Wow, that just sounds an amazing, amazing couple of years. So much packed into it! And I think a really opportune moment for us to have this discussion because one of the reasons I was really keen to invite you to come along to the podcast is that you and I have had over the years - because we've known each other quite a long time now, haven't we?

Jenna Sanders

Yes

Emma Love

And we have had lots of different types of coaching conversations and the more I've reflected on it and why those conversations have changed over these years is that because our roles have changed haven't they?

Jenna Sanders 02:59

Yes, absolutely and I think it's been really fascinating to reflect again. I've been reflecting as well on the conversations that we've had and the way those conversations have developed as both of us have developed as people and as paddlers and as Coaches.

Emma Love 03:17

I think this is why I've been really excited to read your bit of research as well, is that we're about to pivot again, aren't we, in our professional relationship. And our conversation is now going to be something else and it's still attached to what we did before, still underpinned, but you're now going to be my Performance Coach Developer. But I suppose one of the things that when I mention it to other people that I'm on this pathway and I mention the word 'performance' they suddenly think that I must be getting involved in competition and racing and all that stuff and there is a lot of confusion isn't there about this. So, I was wondering would you be happy to kind of untangle what it is that we are when we are in that Performance Coach headspace?

Jenna Sanders 04:10

Absolutely. Yeah. So, it's a really common worry of a lot of people that to be a Performance Coach, we have to be coaching performance paddlers but that's not the case at all. Maybe we should call it the 'Really Really Great Coach Award' and it's about being absolutely brilliant at the coaching that you do and if the coaching that you do is in sheltered water then with paddlers in the first couple of years of their paddling careers then we can be a Performance Coach. We can be really really great Coach at that. We don't have to paddling in the massive scary environments. And we don't have to be working with paddlers who are working and in competitive elements of the sport or at the top performance level of the sport. And it's great that there are loads of competitive coaches that are going through this program and it's brilliant for them, but it looks very different for them to how it might look for those of us who work in adventure and recreation paddle sport.

Emma Love 05:22

And then where - and I think that's a really fantastic way of explaining it, just 'great great coaching'. What does your role as that Coach Developer in that performance space, where do you come into that conversation?

Jenna Sanders 05:39

So, it's a really lovely role and it's my absolute favourite thing to do. When you join the Performance Coach program, you get lots of different ways of developing yourself and one of those ways might be around going on a Community Learning event or to go to webinar series and to develop your learning that way. One of those is having a mentor who really helps you to think about your coaching philosophy and how you live that. But I think the one that's least well understood is that of the Coach Developer. And I see my job there as to go and sit alongside somebody whilst they do their job and just notice what's happening. Ask some questions, maybe potentially throw a few ideas of my own in and just have those really deep reflective conversations with somebody about their practice as a Coach. And that's really really defined by what it is that Coach is doing and what they want from the day. Sometimes we've had days which have been really focused on just the technical and tactical elements of a particular bit of the sport and some days it's been really much more focused on the coaching decisions and the relational element of

coaching. So, every day is absolutely different. Every person that I support on this program is completely different. And I think it's where I can do my best work. It's where I absolutely love being sat alongside somebody, watching them do really great coaching and helping them to think more deeply about what they're doing.

Emma Love 07:32

What do you think makes a really good Coach stand out from the crowd? One that catches your eye?

Jenna Sanders 07:43

That's a brilliant question and I think it's going to take us quite a lot of time to answer that one. But I think if I had to put it into one sentence, they are technically really good. They really understand what their sport is and they really understand the environment they're working in and they really understand the human beings that they're working with.

Emma Love 08:09

Wow, it's a really really complex picture already, isn't it? Those three points that you mention there and I was struck actually I've watched you coach a number of times and I was at the Community of Learning event in Scotland in November for the Performance Coach Pathway and I had the absolute joy also of observing George Fell show us what great coaching looks like and I watched it and I've watched you and I've gone that's really simple. I can do that! And then I've gone away and I've tried it and I have been absolutely - I think how would I describe it? When I watch Jenna and George and it's 'really simple' goes out the window and I think my goodness what a wall of complexity is just, I am hitting and I was reflecting really hard on it and I kept thinking why is it so complex? And it was something that came up I think in bit of your writing was that you talked about how you 'model uncertainty' and that those two words just captured what I see when I observed you both and I think it would be lovely if we could unpack that in this conversation. Does that sound like a good place to go?

Jenna Sanders 09:41

Absolutely. And for me that's really important to me whenever I'm coaching kind of for somebody to observe. So, I frequently end up doing that on coach courses and I think it's absolutely essential that I don't give any impression that what I'm doing is easy or simple or perfect. And we all try stuff. We all get things wrong. We all have to try something again. The decisions that we are making, and we are making hundreds and hundreds of decisions all the time while we're coaching. Each of those decisions has an impact. But if we can expect every single one to go our way, they're not really decisions at all. So, of course things aren't going to happen how we expect them to happen and I think it's really important to understand that even with somebody who's a really experienced coach, there's a constant thought process going on of what should we do next? Is that the right thing to do? What else could I do? I think this is the way we should go right now. Let's give it a try.

Emma Love 10:49

It's interesting, isn't it? I mean, I think you and I have had that conversation as well. And something that I have at the forefront of my mind quite a lot at the moment is when I see that paddler in front of me, I keep reminding myself is that I can't see what they see, I can't feel what they are feeling, I can't hear what they're hearing. And I am not that person. And again, I think from what you're saying is, that it's almost a messiness, isn't there that we're talking about, isn't it? And as humans, we like to control things, to make things right. And then we're there, I mean, we've suddenly got this, things aren't going to work to plan, because I'm not that person. Would that be right?

Jenna Sanders 11:40

Yeah absolutely. We are dealing with human beings and human beings are incredibly complex. We are a human being and we're incredibly complex. The environments that we work in are complex. Learning, learning is difficult, learning should be difficult, but that makes it psychologically difficult, too. So, there are so many balls in the air that we're trying to juggle all the time whilst we're coaching. And it's massively complex.

Emma Love 12:14

So, we know and it strikes me and we keep touching upon this, is that technical and tactical understanding isn't it? And this is really underpinning through our discipline. Us as Coaches this is what we're about isn't it? Before we start getting into all the other stuff that we're managing and thinking about and that's really important but with the technical and tactical. Can we unpack that a little bit?

Jenna Sanders 12:44

Yeah, absolutely. So, I think it's really useful to think about the 'Who, What, How' model and I think it is really important that's not just Who What, How and Where, but it's also about our context that we work in and ourself as a Coach. And I guess our intention today is to dig quite a lot into that 'What' question. So, what are we actually coaching? What are the skills that makes somebody a great paddler? But I think it's really important that we don't ignore all the other aspects and I think we could happily have a podcast on maybe six podcasts on each of those to be honest. But we're going to dig a little bit more into some of that technical and tactical stuff a bit today I think. So, I think for me, what really defines a brilliant Coach in that technical element is that they are a really good paddler and I mean a really good paddler in the context in which they're working. So, that's really important, isn't it? It's not about necessarily being the best paddler in the history of the world. It's about being a really good paddler in the context that you're working in.

And from that really good paddling feeds some really good technical understanding of what's happening, why is it happening? And for me increasingly that really comes down to understanding the environment and the feelings that I'm getting. Am I finding pressure on my blade? Am I finding balance on my board, on my boat? Am I understanding what the environment's doing? Feeling that? And being able to respond to that? And really digging down into if I'm going to be successful at this move, what is it that I've got to be able to notice and act upon to be able to do that? And I think it's really interesting that we can get some amazing paddlers who really find it hard to understand as a coach what's going on and so it's definitely not an automatic thing. I think sometimes maybe the best paddlers and the people that don't think about it are the people that just feel and do. So, making the leap from that to being able to understand what's going on and to find those feelings and help other people to find those feelings is interesting. It's really interesting.

Emma Love 15:32

It is and I suppose that translation that we do, isn't it from and I think you're really right, I've watched some amazing I mean paddlers I would dream to be able to do what they can do. And then I've seen them trying to describe what they do and they do get absolutely flummoxed. So, then it raises that question, what is our job as that Coach?

Jenna Sanders 16:02

I guess our job when we're talking about that technical and tactical element is to really observe and to really notice everything that's going on in somebody's performance, to understand why things are happening and then to be able to design a really good intervention to do something. So, when we set up tasks to observe our paddlers then I think it's really important that we set it difficult enough because if everything's just happening and it's all great but there's nothing that we can work with but working on the assumption that we've made the task difficult enough that now we're highlighting something going on, let's see if we can dig down into what that is. And I don't think we're not on our own doing that. That's a really conversational co-created part of our coaching where we can go right, I've noticed this happening. Have you noticed that too? Where can we go with this? I think it might be X and I think I've got an idea for a task we can do. How do you feel about that? Does that feel like something that excites you? And we can have a really great conversation with our learner bringing them into the task design rather than being a real top-down approach of I've noticed this and this is what you need to do about it.

Emma Love 17:39

It's quite nuanced, isn't it?

Jenna Sanders 17:44

Yeah, absolutely and this is where all of the individual differences of human beings come in. So, whilst we have some, a lot of similarities you know. Physics is physics, water you know the way the hydrodynamics is what it is and the way the boat relates to that is what it is but different boat designs, different human builds and fitness's and strength and injuries and all of those things filter through to mean whilst we're all doing roughly the same thing, actually what works for me and my boat or on my

board might be a little bit different to what works for you and yours. And I think as we work towards becoming a really good coach, starting to get a really clear idea of what it is we think works? What do we think the universals are? So, for example, I might, talk about canoes and trim. I am pretty convinced that whatever your boat looks whatever you look like, if you trim it further forward, it will turn tighter than if you trim it further back. Unless we go to the very ends of the boat and start doing silly things. But within the realms of sensible paddling positioning, it will turn tighter when you trim it further forward. So, that's an absolute in my mind until somebody comes and challenges it or some evidence comes to challenge it. But how a person achieves that and how much they need to do in this boat in this environment to achieve that task, that starts to become where all the interesting stuff happens. So, can somebody trying to break into the flow out of an eddy can they feel what the water's doing to their boat? Know what they're trying to achieve in the turn? Are they trying to achieve a big wide turn across a wide river or they trying to get a really tight turn into a narrow flow? And can they change their trim to make their boat do what they want it to do? And I can't sit there and go, well you need to have that exact position. They've got to feel that. They've got to respond to it. So, I've got to help them to do that.

Emma Love 20:14

It's interesting you use that word co-curation. I just heard it kind of sneak in there and it's something that you hear paddler, sorry, you hear Coaches kind of throw about and I often wonder whether we use it without thinking about it?

Jenna Sanders 20:39

Yeah, absolutely. And I think it's a very easy thing to say and a really hard thing to do. And it's a really hard thing to do partly because of history, partly because of the way that we were coached probably and the way that a lot of people have been coached. There's almost hanging in the air this feeling of but you're the coach and you should and that's your job. My job is to do what I'm told. So, changing that atmosphere, changing that feeling to one of we're working together on this and it's your skills and your development and your learning and I'm here as a resource to help you with that. It's a very different way of working and it can feel very confronting almost for both Coach and learner if it's something that we're not used to. So again,

we're not going to get into all that relationship building and all those human skills, but I think that for me is really important. How do we take people along with us and do coaching with them? Rather than at them?

Emma Love 21:52

There's something that I'm quite often struck by when coaching and I'm very much at the beginning of this performance pathway. So, I don't know whether I have the right words or I've even worked out what words to describe what's going on. But sometimes I'm struck by something that happens and I've said it without thinking about it too carefully. It's been more intuitive. I think that might work. Or it's almost like there's a bit of magic happening. Is that something you experience and talk about?

Jenna Sanders 22:28

Yeah, absolutely. And that for me, I guess, is the joy of coaching. That's why I'm still doing it 25 years later as a career, because it would be so boring if we just did the same thing over and over and over again but those moments where I see something happening and I go to a learner, I've noticed this thing. I've got an idea. I've never tried this before. Should we give it a go? Just is what makes my job enjoyable. It's what makes my job worthwhile, what gets me out of bed in the morning on a rainy, windy, manky day to go and jump in the sea or in a lake - whatever it is. And the look on somebody's face when they get something and something changes in their paddling. Yeah, that's really cool. And it's kind of what I live for. And I think that's really easy to say just be creative and think up new tasks on the fly. It's really hard to do and it's really hard to get to a place in your coaching where you feel you can do that. So, I guess one of the things that sets a Performance Coach apart from maybe somebody who's just passed a Coach award is that enormous depth of experience and then we've got brain space. So, with the experience comes a lot of the decision making that at first is really difficult becomes easier and as that decision-making becomes easy, we open up the opportunity to start thinking about how can I be creative with this and I think that comes from a place of probably curiosity seeing somebody do something and not just going I've got a fix for that but I wonder what's going on there. I wonder where that's come from and being able to have that

conversation and then work from there to find a way to help a person, I think, is really cool.

Emma Love 24:38

I think that's such a lovely way of describing it, I mean the more I coach I've been struck by there is that something that having that conversation as you say it does that shift from that very top down, 'I'm the expert' into I'm just really curious why that's happening? Because we're not the same paddler. We are back to that again, aren't we?

Jenna Sanders 25:06

Absolutely. And I think sort of with that experience; we get what we might call sort of a 'skilled intentionality'. I've got a really good idea of where I think this is going to go because I've seen something like this a lot of times. Doesn't mean I'll always be right, but I've got a start point. I know where I'm going to focus my attention for a little while. I've got an idea of what I might be looking for. If I see X happening, I have a feeling it's probably got something to do with Y and that's what I'm going to look for. But also, it's being open, it is being open to perceiving all of what's going on and to noticing maybe the interesting things that you wouldn't deliberately focus on. And a lot of that comes out of a conversation. So, it might be that I see something happening and as somebody comes back to me for a chat, I've got a really good idea of what I think I'm going to talk about and they say something before I get a chance to. And I usually try and make that happen. And what they've said is far more interesting than what I was thinking about. So, great, we'll go down that line then. Let's do that. So, it's that experience to know what you think is the right thing, but also openness to go where it goes.

Emma Love 26:30

There was a lovely piece that I was listening to Dr. Alex Lascu the other day on a podcast and she talks about if she could give one bit of advice to Coaches, it would be the 10-second rule. And this, refers to the fact that as Coaches, we love sharing information. We are really enthused. I mean, you become a Coach, I think, because you're passionate about what you do. And so, we get very verbal. And so she says, if you can have that 10-second rule, it might be slightly less, it might be slightly more,

but you just go quiet and you're able to sit in that space and just wait. Do you have something similar that you use a mechanism to stop yourself getting too enthusiastic verbally?

Jenna Sanders 27:23

So yeah, for me it's kind of almost a little voice in my head going, 'Shut up Jenna, shut up Jenna', and planning really carefully when I am going to say something. I actually spend a bit of time just going through in my head, when they come back to me, this is the thing the question I think is worth asking. How am I going to ask that? So, I don't just end up kind of going nuts and talking too much. And I think it's something that's really hard to do. As you say, we're enthusiastic. We love what we do. We love helping people to be better and where we can see something. It's like, I know the answer to that and I can tell you that straight away. It's really hard not to and talking less. I think is a really important skill to have. Just letting people sit with the difficulty for a short while. Giving people space to explore and play and try stuff and come back to you when they're ready for input rather than constantly feeling the need to tell them stuff, correct stuff, change things every single time.

Emma Love 28:49

But of course, we've got to be really aware, we come with these, kind of, great shortcuts, but we might be just jumping the gun a wee bit too fast. How do you reconcile that in your own coaching?

Jenna Sanders 29:05

Again, it's really hard isn't it, to notice your own heuristics. The little devices that you use to make your life easy. and we do all do them and we all have to do them because if we didn't, we'd be paralyzed by thinking all the time but I think it's a really great reflective task to just think about what are the things that I always do? What are the things that I look for straight away? And then to ask yourself, is that helpful? What if I did something else? A task that I quite often sort of do myself, but also ask other coaches to do is to make their coaching decision, but then before you articulate it to your learner, just stop and think, okay, but what else could I do? And it's really interesting how for myself and for pretty much everybody else I work with at first the answer is I don't know. I just thought of this one and I'm going to do it. So yeah, just

taking that time to ask yourself what decisions am I throwing out by making this one?
I think is a really, really difficult task and a really, really interesting task.

Emma Love 30:30

I think that that's something I'm going to take away from this conversation today,
because I think again I'm just struck as you say it's difficult the complexity of that and
I think that needs quite a lot of thought, it really does.

Jenna Sanders 30:45

And it could be as simple as how do I phrase this? So, if I use this word versus that
one, how does that impact what happens as we move on?

Emma Love 31:02

It's a bit like writing, isn't it? You know, when you're constructing a paragraph and as
you know, I like writing and thinking quite hard about whether that word is the right
word is imperative, isn't it? To get the tone right, to get that rhythm of that sentence
rolling in the way you want, it to bring that understanding that that seems quite a
good....is that the right terminology when we think about what we are doing when we
are coaching?

Jenna Sanders 31:32

Absolutely, and I think the way - so there's two elements, I guess. There's the way
we use terminology, the way we use technical words to explain what we're trying to
explain, and can we make that really clear and simple and minimal words? But I
think there's also an element of how does that help our relationship with our learner
and are we using language that is cooperative language? Or are we using language
that is powerful controlling language? I'd like you to go and try X is very different to
how do you feel about going to try X?

Emma Love 32:16

It's huge, isn't it? And I think it's such a difficult leap to make, isn't it? When we think
about our own education that we come through from when we are very small, where
it's very much that 'you will go do' and then you starting to manoeuvre into that, 'have
we thought of? 'Shall we explore'? So, I think we've really... it's been quite really
interesting isn't it and I know we've only scratched the surface and as I say there's

been one of many conversations you and I will have and dig around a bit more about certain areas. But what advice would you give to coaches when they go, 'do you know what, I need to really get good at my understanding of technical and tactical'? What would be your top tips?

Jenna Sanders 33:12

I think one is just experience, experience, experience, experience! Do lots of coaching, do lots of thinking and talking about paddling and coaching as well. So, if we just keep doing the same thing, if we go to the same place and we do the same paddle and we don't challenge ourselves and we paddle with the same people and we just keep doing the same thing over and over again, we can have hundreds and hundreds of hours on the water without getting better. But if we think about what we're doing and we talk about what we're doing and we try to bring information into our lives that can change what we do, that's when we get better. I always love this phrase, 'that you don't know what you don't know'. And we can't know what we don't know and so we can't go looking for something if we don't know it exists. So, I guess the question then becomes whilst I'm doing all this paddling and all this coaching, how do I expose myself to the things that are out there that I don't know exist? And that I think is kind of the nub of how we get better.

So, we talk about reflective practice all the time. You don't get better unless you do reflective practice. But what does that mean? That sitting down on my own in front of a laptop with I don't know maybe an Excel spreadsheet in front of me because somebody told me I have to do a log book and I have to reflect. That's really hard and maybe my reflections aren't very interesting. Maybe its same thing happened as last week. So, if we're going to reflect in a way that's going to actually have an impact on what we do, we probably need to have some kind of a surprise. So, maybe we need to go out and find ourselves opportunities to get those surprises. And that might come from going somewhere new, going to a new environment and studying the forecasts and the river levels or the tides, studying the maps, having a think about how is the wind going to interact with this environment? What do I expect to see? And this is really important. It's that knowing what you expect because if you don't know that, you can't be surprised. So, I think we're going to go here to coach today and this is why I want to go there and this is what I think that this environment

is going to do with this forecast and these conditions. I have a really clear idea in my head of when I arrive at that venue what I'm expecting to see. And these days, nine times out of 10, I'm probably right because I've done it a lot. And even now sometimes I have definitely had surprises in the past and I still get surprises sometimes, you know sometimes, you know, things again, weather's complex right?

Emma Love 36:07

Yeah

Jenna Sanders 36:08

And it doesn't quite match up to what you expected and I guess part of that is a skill of being able to decide if you're still going or not and being able to make the call of actually it's not what we wanted today we'll go somewhere else. But also being able to manage what you get. So, an example might be we were really hoping that this place would get the best of the wind available today and we wanted more wind but we haven't got it. So, how do I manage that? How do I work with these paddlers to make best of what we've got? It might be I need to change my plan slightly so that we don't go into that scary place, but we stay in this nice friendly place, but if I know what I expect, then I know when I'm surprised, and when I am surprised, it's a real point of reflection for me. I update my model for next time. Okay, for you really try and work it out. And the sea is an amazing place for this because there is so much complexity going on with tides and the wind and the geography of a place and the underwater geography of the place. And so, if something's not doing what you expected it to do by looking at the tides and looking at the maps and looking at all the interesting stuff, then what I want to know is why? And quite often if I just sit and look and think, I can work it out. But if I can't, I almost certainly know somebody who can and it's sort of being able to phone somebody up and go like, 'So, this happened today. What's going on?' And usually, one of my excellent sea kayaking friends will go, 'Oh yeah, it's that'. So, it is – great! Now I've got more experience. I've got more information for next time.

And the same goes with technical skills and paddling. So, if we just paddle in one place all the time, we don't get those experiences. Let's paddle lots, but paddle lots in different places. Let's go explore and talk to other people as well. Let's paddle with different people. And if you see them doing something slightly different to what

you do, ask them why? Have a conversation. I've learned so much just by chatting to loads of different paddlers and Coaches about what works for them. And it doesn't have to be go and seek out the top Coaches in the country. I've had so many really powerful reflective conversations with people who are relatively new paddlers just saying something like, 'the one thing that made the difference for me was this'. And some of those conversations have changed my approach to coaching. I've changed some of the ways I think and talk about paddling. I think getting new input is really fascinating.

And there's a whole internet out there to do that now, isn't there? We could go and watch a video of somebody talking about what they think good looks like. And we might not agree with it, but it might just spark a thought. It might just give us an idea. It might just update our own model of 'good'. Or it might not. But even if it doesn't, it was almost certainly some really valuable thinking time because it forces you into that reflective practice. It forces you into that decision making about, if I don't like that, why don't I like it? What's wrong with it?

I think going to events, going to symposiums for example. Going to #ShePaddles events if you're a female paddler. Going to just different places to get out paddling and coaching with some different influences. And I'm a massive advocate of getting some coaching, going and getting somebody that you don't normally work with, spending a day with them, maybe a one-to-one, maybe a small group, and just enjoy being coached, enjoy developing your own paddling. But, as a Coach, be really happy to turn around and go, 'Why are you doing that? What's your thinking behind this task'? And I know that if I'm coaching a Coach, I love to have those conversations. I love to have that sort of Coach learner level conversation, but also going, also, let's have a Coach level conversation now. This is what's going on in my head. This is what I'm thinking about. This is why I think this task will really work for you. And again, we're back into that co-creative kind of environment and I think if you are a Coach or if you want to be a Coach, getting some coach development is so cool. It's something that I think in this sport perhaps we're maybe a little bit slow on the uptake of how powerful that can be. We tend to go on courses and courses are brilliant, don't get me wrong. I spend a lot of my life running coaching courses and I love doing it. But being able to sit in a space with somebody that's their space, not mine. And that is just open. There is no syllabus, there is no, 'here are the things

we have to talk about today'. It is just focused on where are you at with your coaching? And what do you want to achieve? And that doesn't even have to be on the water. I've had some amazing coach development conversations recently just an hour online chat about where somebody's at with their coaching. What's worrying them? What's stressing them? What are they finding difficult? Can we have some ideas? Can we throw some ways of thinking in that aren't there yet? And that can be really powerful, too. So, I guess investing time to get out there and to go and enjoy developing yourself. That will make a massive difference.

Emma Love 42:25

I feel all inspired now. One thing that just came to mind though, was that, and it's something that I have in my coaching practice is and you've talked a lot about getting out in the environment, thinking about technical, but going back to that reflective side, I look at other theory. I step outside of coaching theory, and it might be a bit of creative writing. It might be listening to a podcast, and I try very hard to listen to or I make myself listen to podcasts that I don't necessarily understand. So, that might be Marianne Davies, that might be Craig Morris, that might be Alex Lascu. There's this whole wealth, isn't there, of people talking about coaching from so many different angles and using words that I might not have heard of or some model that I've never come across. I find that really invaluable because I feel like it lifts my game of how do I, where will I go in terms of how I think about how I coach? So, I suppose is it easy? I don't know. Is it more abstract? More conceptual side of what we do? Do you find you have this same avenue of exploration you go on?

Jenna Sanders 43:56

So, I'll definitely listen to podcasts and I'll read papers and I think it's about finding the things that really work for you and your brain. I personally really struggle to watch videos. I've got a brain that gets fed up within about 20 seconds! But that doesn't mean that it's not a really, really useful thing for lots of other people to do. I think but I can listen to podcasts and but as long as I'm doing something else, as long as I've got at least six tasks going on at once, then I'm okay. But if I'm driving or if I'm cooking dinner or tidying up the house or something like that and listening to a podcast, that really helps. And yeah, I guess it's that exposing yourself to ideas that you hadn't thought about. So, one of the things I really like doing is just putting a

podcast series on autoplay and just listening to them all rather than going through and picking the ones that sound interesting, just having random things thrown at me actually is probably more interesting. It is more things that you know that I initially might have gone I'm not so sure about that suddenly start sparking ideas and to be honest even the same with just listening to the radio. I'm a bit of a just chuck Radio 4 on and listen to whatever it is and there are programs that I just absolutely would never have considered deciding to listen to that suddenly make me think and throw me off on different tangents and usually it comes back to coaching and coach development because that's how my brain works.

Emma Love 45:36

I love that. I love how we've come back full circle to that human side of inquisitiveness, isn't it? And interested in the world and how other people think and how that again brings that underpinning to, perhaps to understanding who we are and the person because I'm not just a coach, I'm a mum. I have all these other interests but that makes who I am. I mean, and I suppose there's that thing, isn't there, about us not leaving all of us at the door and just being a Coach. It's about bringing the whole, would you say?

Jenna Sanders 46:20

Yeah. I think bringing the right bits of you for today. and we're definitely sort of coming back more into that how do you understand yourself as a Coach rather than the technical and tactical stuff. But for me that's absolutely fascinating. What of myself do I bring to the coaching environment and how does that impact my work is a question that I've spent a lot of time thinking about over the last couple of years.

And sometimes we can be really deliberate about that. Today I'm going to bring the hyper-excitable crazy side of me because I think people might be a little bit nervous in this environment and I just want them to have a really great time and I'm going to choose language which is positive and inspiring rather than fear mongering and scary.

And sometimes I need to bring the more sensible side of me and the more calm and quiet side and so it is about choosing how we present ourselves but also just being genuinely us and who you and your genuine enthusiasm for what you do and your

love of the sport and your love of working with other human beings and finding out about them and exploring how to help them to get better at paddling. If that just shines through, then people will generally warm to you.

Emma Love 47:49

I think that's a great place for us to conclude our conversation today, isn't it?

Jenna Sanders 47:55

Sounds good to me.

Emma Love 47:58

Thank you, Jenna. I think that's been as always I come away inspired from our conversations and have more questions to ask you and little roads to go down and go off and search out myself and think about again really hard. Thank you so much and thank you for joining me on my very first podcast. You've been brilliant.

Jenna Sanders 48:21

It's been an absolute honour. Thank you so much for having me.

END.