



BONUS CONTENT!

How to gather Powerful Testimonials



Testimonials are win-win-win

There is nothing like the feeling of taking in a testimonial from a client you care deeply for. It shifts all over Human Resources' Key Performance Indicators!

And nobody can do a better job of describing the experience of coaching with you than your past clients. Your clients won't bother recommending you unless they experienced superb coaching from you.

This means your marketing is based on actual results and not hype. Testimonials can also strengthen your belief and they become a powerful source of reassurance for your future clients.

Your past clients have a conversation with your future clients about what it's like to coach with you.

Done well, testimonials are aces! So, this bonus guide is designed to help you maximise the power of testimonials:

- Three ways we can dilute the power of testimonials (and what to do instead).
- How to gather powerful testimonials that bring you clients
- Plus: The process I use (including a script you can make your own).

Three ways we dilute testimonials

I have absolutely done all of these! As I began to study how other people used testimonials, I found there are really cracking ways to maximise their impact and conversely, lots of ways that we can dilute their power.

Here are some ideas:

1. Don't mistake a character reference for a Testimonial

If you haven't had a coaching relationship with someone, I wouldn't use 'kind words' as a testimonial. Endorsements from colleagues or even Famous People You Know (seen it done!) can reduce the impact of whatever the words say.

I suspect they can alienate future clients who might feel that they are on the outer of a cool kids group. This is the exact opposite of what you want your testimonials to achieve.

2. Don't put your testimonials on a 'praise page'

Your website is precious real estate and every page needs to earn its keep. Having one page dedicated to testimonials offers no surprises to your readers and will largely be ignored.

Instead, treat your testimonials like gold; they represent the outcome of your coaching work. Weave them into all your site's pages, and into social media posts and newsletters.

3. Don't publish extraneous details

The best days of my coaching career include receiving a lovely long letter from a client! My noticeboard is covered in the handwritten notes and cards I've gathered over the years. It's the best kind of Employee Appraisal System I've ever seen.

But not every amazing thing your client says warrants inclusion in a testimonial; if the good stuff is hidden amongst lots of extraneous information, it will go unread. Brief is best.

Key aspects of powerful testimonials

It wasn't until I got really clear about the purpose of testimonials that they started working for me. The words of your past clients create a deeper sense of empathy with your future clients than you ever can.

Testimonials are not actually about the coach – they are about our client's experience of our coaching work together.

So when I am gathering a testimonial, I ask my client to imagine a good friend of hers is interested in coaching with me.

POWERFUL TESTIMONIALS HAVE SOME KEY FEATURES:

- Highlight the 'before' and the 'after' of coaching with you
- Celebrate your client's achievements.
- Address potential clients' hesitations and doubts.
- Are no longer than two or three sentences and include a full name and a photo.

Let's look at the elements of a powerful testimonial and why each is important:

1. Highlighting the 'before' and 'after' of coaching

This is the transformation that your prospective clients are considering investing in, so it's important to highlight the journey.

What was it like before coaching? What is possible after coaching?

2. Celebrate your client's achievements

I love celebrating the shifts and changes, often hard-won, that clients make. I want the people reading their words to see what's possible. Describing tangible results enables us to see the specific impact of coaching.

Your coaching work might focus on helping your client to 'think and feel better', but what does this mean in reality? What *actually* changed in her life?

3. Address hesitations and doubts

This might sound counter-intuitive (perhaps even British?), but if your testimonials are only positive, they can sound a bit 'too good to be true'.

A prospective client reading it will identify with any feelings of doubt and resistance and you can address these hesitations transparently.

Change is never a linear process, so what was it *really* like?

Coaching client will often say they 'saw themselves' reflected in the words of a past client.

How to gather powerful testimonials that bring new clients

Please feel free to edit my template so it feels comfortable and appropriate for you and your clients:

Dear [Client]

I am so thrilled that you have been able to [include details about what your client has achieved]. It really has been an honour to be a part of this process with you.

I would be so grateful if you wanted to offer a few words about what it was like to coach with me.

This testimonial would go on my site – it would be fabulous to use a photo but I'm so happy to respect whatever feels comfortable to you, so it can be as anonymous as you wish.

Feel free to write as much as you wish (I'll respond with what I'd like to publish, and you can of course make an edits).

Equally, I sometimes draw a blank when I'm asked to do this! so here are some ideas that might help – it might help to Imagine you are writing a note to a friend who is thinking about coaching with me.

- Before I started coaching with [Your name] I felt:
- I hesitated to book coaching because:
- Since we've worked together, I've been able to:
- The biggest positive change I've noticed is:
- Coaching with [Your name] is like:
- If you are thinking about working with [Your name], you need to know:
- Striding forward into the next part of my story, I feel:

Thanks so much!

[Your name]

HOW TO EDIT AND FORMAT TESTIMONIALS FOR MAXIMUM IMPACT

Print two copies of your client's full testimonial. Pin one copy to the wall above your desk and let yourself fully absorb their words.

This is a love letter of the highest order. You helped change someone's LIFE. I mean, seriously, does it get better than that?! Never forget that your coaching work really matters.

The other copy is going to be for your website and will probably require some editing.

Editing:

The testimonials that have the greatest impact are stories.

- They paint a picture of the process of coaching with you – life before coaching, the hesitations the client had, how it felt to be in the process of coaching, and the results they achieved.
- Read through the raw testimonial and highlight the aspects of the story that you want to share.
- We really want no more than three sentences for maximum impact. If there is just one line that really hits you in the feels – that can be ideal!
- You may want to change the order of sentences, but don't add or change words unless there's a typo. It's important that this is in your client's words.
- If you make radical changes you will want to check back with your client to make sure you didn't change their intention.

Formatting:

Testimonials need to stand out from, but not compete with, the text around them.

- Use a different font, or colour, or design feature for your testimonials.
- Bold important phrases within the testimonial.
- Add a full name and photo to the testimonial whenever possible. This adds immense credibility to the statement.

THINGS TO REMEMBER:

You can ask for Testimonial at any time!

I send an email as a coaching relationship is coming to an end - after the second to last, or the final session.

But you can also ask when you hear something fabulously testimonial-worthy! If your client says something relevant during a session or in an email, take note of it. Write it down and at an appropriate moment ask if it would be okay to use their words as a testimonial. This makes it easy for them.

Not everyone will want to offer a Testimonial

I've found some of my clients just prefer not to do this. For others there may be privacy or other concerns. Ask every client anyway and let them make that decision.

Share your Testimonials widely

I've included my clients' words on my website and in newsletters, social media posts and marketing emails.

Testimonials are powerful sources of 'social proof' – they demonstrate the impact of your coaching work – don't be shy with sharing them!