



Freedom Works UK: Case Studies



Freedom Works^{UK}
Personal, Professional & Business Coaching

Introduction

Freedom Works UK is a coaching and mentoring organisation set up by Kenneth Hettiarachi and Chris Hayes in January 2012. We established Freedom Works as a social enterprise right from the outset to do our work in the community where people needed it. Coaching and mentoring, the way we wanted to do it, wasn't available at the time unless people paid a very high fee. Back then, we were small, and our work was not widely understood.

We offered our work to individuals and organisations and built a small social enterprise with a great track record. Many of our clients achieved extraordinary results from our diligent work. We never measured our achievements or success in numbers but through the quality of our results.

Then in 2020, nearly ten years after starting, due to the catastrophic impact of the pandemic on communities, we made an application to the National Lottery Communities Fund to see if we could offer a leadership course to those affected in London and especially in Islington. To our amazement, we were successful. We have since continued our private work but are now noticing that many people are now out of work or on low incomes and cannot access our paid work again.

We approached Voluntary Action Islington to get support with applying for and securing a second grant to continue our valuable work. We were then introduced to a National Lottery advisor who encouraged us to carry out an in-depth case study of the work we had done since the beginning when we started to demonstrate the impact of our work. So, we conducted this study.

We spoke to clients from the time Ken started coaching in 2009 and from when Freedom Works UK was set up in January 2012 to now including the last National Lottery funded programme in November/December 2020, which was the first time we got funding. From each year, we selected a random sample of previous clients. Not all of them were contactable, but we managed to get the responses included in this study including, four from last year's course.

We asked everyone these questions:

Name:

Current Profession:

Age:

When did you first come for coaching from Ken/Freedom Works UK (FWUK started Jan 2012, Ken started coaching Nov 2009)?

Why did you want coaching then?

What was your experience of the coaching?

What did you achieve then?

How did your coaching/mentoring effect you long term (till now)?

What long term results you produced can you attribute to your training from FWUK?

What was different with FWUK training compared to other training/s you had since you started?

Below are some of the individual results we received. It has to be said, at the beginning, not everyone who attended our earliest workshops could be sure about the impact. But as we grew and developed our coaching and mentoring, they said the support has been life-changing. When we asked what was different with Freedom Works UK training compared to other training, many said they hadn't experienced coaching like that before or coaching at all. And everyone, even those who didn't remember how their training affected them in the long term, said they remembered that our workshop leaders were honest enough to show that they suffered from the same issues and followed the coaching we offered ourselves which they found inspirational.

Please see below 15 individual case studies which illustrate how our coaching and mentoring made a difference. To protect their identity, we have concealed their names and gender.

Current Profession: IT Securities Specialist

Age: 45

When did you first come for coaching from Ken/Freedom Works UK (fwuk started Jan 2012, Ken started coaching Nov 2009)

In 2010, but I am still getting coaching from Ken one-to-one.

Why did you want coaching then?

I needed support with some challenges I was going through and needed to start working through the issues I had. I came across Ken on a meetup group. I was feeling really anxious and needed support with working things out.

What was your experience of the coaching?

It worked really well for me. It helped me see things from a different perspective. I was able to start working through challenges and face them head on. It helped me to develop confidence in myself and push my comfort levels.

What did you achieve then?

I was able to work through having an anxious feeling and not let it stop me from pursuing my goals. I was able to develop my career successfully by making a plan and sticking to it. I was able to start resolving a long-standing personal issue. I was able to challenge my behaviours and improve, self-reflect and see things from different perspectives.

How did your coaching/mentoring affect you long term (till now)?

I developed more self-confidence and speaking up for myself. Taking more risks and putting myself out there to take on challenges fully.

What long term results you produced can you attribute to your training from FWUK?

I gained a lot of confidence in myself and my abilities. I am able to cope when challenges come up and not let them overwhelm me. I have learnt to accept uncomfortable feelings as being human and not let them stop me from progressing.

What was different with FWUK training compared to other training/s you had since you started?

Ken's approachability and commitment to helping me take charge of my life.

Current Profession: Teacher

Age: 41

When did you first come for coaching from Ken/Freedom Works UK (fwuk started Jan 2012, Ken started coaching Nov 2009)?

2010/11

Why did you want coaching then?

To deal with social anxiety

What was your experience of the coaching?

Very positive, useful and made life -long friends

What did you achieve then?

Accepted my anxiety, became more open about it which helped me and others, built my confidence, and learnt how to deal with it

How did your coaching/mentoring effect you long term (till now)?

Helped me overcome social anxiety until now

What long term results you produced can you attribute to your training from FWUK?

No longer feel the debilitating impact of the social anxiety I had been dealing with for years before

What was different with FWUK training compared to other training/s you had since you started?

Very personalised coaching to your situation and goals, having an assigned buddy for accountability calls was very useful, great opportunity to undertake self-development projects

Current Profession: Studying to become a teacher

Age: 38

When did you first come for coaching from Ken/Freedom Works UK (FWUK started Jan 2012, Ken started coaching Nov 2009)?

January 2011

Why did you want coaching then?

Because I was frightened of everything, mostly of other people

What was your experience of the coaching?

Positive, really pushed me out of my comfort zone.

What did you achieve then?

Made friends, started a hiking group, gained confidence, made progress with overcoming social anxiety.

How did your coaching/mentoring effect you long term (till now)?

Not sure.

What long term results you produced can you attribute to your training from FWUK?

Not sure.

What was different with FWUK training compared to other training/s you had since you started?

Ken had similar struggles and overcame them, he was easy to relate to and very inspiring.

Current Profession: Content Producer

Age: 38

When did you first come for coaching from Ken/Freedom Works UK (fwuk started Jan 2012, Ken started coaching Nov 2009)?

Summer 2011

Why did you want coaching then?

To overcome my social anxiety

What was your experience of the coaching?

The coaching and environment were perfect to start the process to deal with social anxiety and the issues that come from it. I found it comforting that the coach also suffered from social anxiety too.

What did you achieve then?

The coaching allowed me to take baby steps to a fuller life

How did your coaching/mentoring effect you long term (till now)?

I am married now, have a house and a great job

What long term results you produced can you attribute to your training from FWUK?

I no longer think too much about things or procrastinate

What was different with FWUK training compared to other training/s you had since you started?

It was very personalised and the other participants have become lifelong friends

Current Profession: Business Coach & Mentor

Age: 53

When did you first come for coaching from Ken/Freedom Works UK (fwuk started Jan 2012, Ken started coaching Nov 2009)?

I believe I first met Ken Hettiarachi circa March 2013, at a networking event. Soon after, I embarked on a coaching programme with Freedom Works circa May 2013, the Be Free - Be a Leader programme & Business works programme.

Why did you want coaching then?

The personal benefits of coaching are wide-ranging. I was at a crossroads in my life, professionally and personally. I was a 'nearly man'. So close yet so far in reaching my goals or aspirations. Although I didn't call them or recognise them as such then. I knew I was good at stuff but was never able to get over that final hurdle – for a variety of reasons. I knew I wanted to change, make changes and change for the better. I wanted to:

- Establish and take action towards achieving goals
- Become more self-reliant
- Gain more job and life satisfaction
- Take greater responsibility and accountability for actions and commitments
- Work more easily and productively with others (boss, direct reports, peers, friends and acquaintances alike)
- Communicate more effectively

I wanted to create my own invaluable space for personal development. Change can be difficult, even when it's what you want. I felt it was the right time to have someone who believes in me without judgement or rancour and who could help me make the most crucial choices as smoothly as possible. I also wanted more meaning in my life. I wanted to do what mattered to me.

What was your experience of the coaching?

The personal benefits of coaching proved to be wide ranging and positively impacted on my career, personal life, and where I find myself today.

I was given and realised an opportunity to define new/improved career goals in a realistic way; setting these goals and then actively work towards them. The immediate goals were achieved, however, the process and the immediate result opened up new pathways in my thinking, dreams and aspirations. I had worked in the same space for over 20-year, with relative success. I knew there was more in and about me. The Be Free - Be a Leader programme & Business works programme helped me explore and build new skill sets, my overall behaviour, mindset and fear of failure.

These were brought to the fore, analysed and strategies were put in place to better manage them and lead to greater freedom of expression, thought, goals and dreams...ultimately leading me to become a coach and mentor myself.

Using the safe place for encouragement and development through coaching proved to be very important. It allowed for a more in-depth learning and higher levels of comfort with a growing and changing skill and mind set. Once I became comfortable with my new found skills, I began to use them in more openly and productively in both my career and personal life.

Over a period of time, through building my personal awareness, I have been able to turn unknown weaknesses into marketable strengths (ongoing journey). This personal awareness has proved to be an important confidence booster for me in terms of personal development, deeper more meaningful learning and achieving my goals.

What did you achieve then?

Through coaching, I learned more about myself, found how I was perceived by others, and worked towards improving areas of my personality I was not previously satisfied with. The coaching pushed my learning to a level beyond remembering and understanding. Again, I was able to work develop my skills and apply them in new situations within a safe learning space. Application in various situations helped me solidify my skillsets making more personally aware of my blind spots too.

How did your coaching/mentoring effect you long term (till now)?

Having support for improving skills can be extremely beneficial. Simply knowing that someone is there specifically to help my goal(s) achievement is an important part of progress within the coaching process. Over the period of coaching, I have improved and gained a number of skills, these include communication, delegation, conflict management, team building, and persuasion, drive, emotional intelligence, political awareness and knowing of self

What long term results you produced can you attribute to your training from FWUK?

I become more focused, attentive, positive in engaging peers, colleagues' friends and family. It was during a long illness and ultimate death of my father in 2013, that the coaching helped me believe in myself and the goals and challenges ahead of me. Helping to become better engaged and ultimately contributing to me being more effective, productive, attentive and deliberate. Giving me a safe space to go and talk through sensitive issues. Allowing me to gain perspective without feeling intimidated by others at home or at work.

What was different with FWUK training compared to other training/s you had since you started?

Training seems to be something of a one-way exchange of knowledge, process. From being a at school in the classroom, to workshops, seminars and work-related training courses, they have had a particular method, where a trainer delivers specific information to trainees, me! If interested, I would absorb that information and if meant something even at a deeper level, I would try and demonstrate understanding and application.

Although not appearing all the time, it often felt that training activities although meant to enhance my learning and understanding did not really addressing my goals, behavioural patterns and relationships growing up.

Whereas working with Ken and his team was an immediate two-way exchange of knowledge and mutually acquired insight. I was not told what to do or be. Ken was much more nuanced and treated me like an individual, accepting and working with my pros and cons. Freedom Works did this by Coaches do not tell their clients what to do: that would imply that the coach has more knowledge examining my 'operating system' in order for me to acknowledge, understand, optimise and expand it – as and where I could/or wanted to. My choice. We worked together to break down existing 'things' in my life that I already had look to add to them, upgrade my whole being rather than simply adding information onto my existing me.

FreedomWorks helped me clarify my goals, change behavioural patterns, and strengthen leadership skills, emotional intelligence, and performance. FreedomWorks did not come up with the answers for me — instead through coaching I have become empowered to communicate, lead, and make my own decisions.

Current Profession: Strategy and Policy Officer

Age: 56

When did you first come for coaching from Ken/Freedom Works UK (fwuk started Jan 2012, Ken started coaching Nov 2009)?

I started in 2015

Why did you want coaching then?

I wanted a career move and I felt stuck in my job at the time but felt a lot of personal and work-related issues stood in my way.

What was your experience of the coaching?

The coaching was a game changer in many respects. It taught to coach and be coached. It allowed me an opportunity to address my own issues and free myself of anything that stopped me doing what I needed to do to progress with my life.

What did you achieve then?

I learnt a lot and was able to coach others freely. I gained a better understanding of confidentiality and working with others in a safe space to share valuable life experiences. As a result of the coaching I made some positive career moves including setting up a social enterprise and progress on my career path.

How did your coaching/mentoring effect you long term (till now)?

It has given me a positive outlook in life and an opportunity to address issues as they come and not burden myself unnecessarily.

What long term results you produced can you attribute to your training from FWUK?

I have been able to centre my life from the lessons and skills I achieved from FWUK which are life changing.

What was different with FWUK training compared to other training/s you had since you started?

Before my contact with FWUK, I had not done any coaching so this experience was a game changer.

Current Profession: Midwife

Age: 35

When did you first come for coaching from Ken/Freedom Works UK (fwuk started Jan 2012, Ken started coaching Nov 2009)?

May 2016

Why did you want coaching then?

Just arrived in London from France to study Midwifery in Watford General Hospital, was very anxious and confused away from home.

What was your experience of the coaching?

Amazing, was very comforting to know that there were people who cared for me while I was here. I was given the opportunity and support to face my fears with courage and communicate with my supervisor and colleagues.

What did you achieve then?

Completed my studies well, became very confident in my abilities and my communication with others. Also got clear in my commitment to get married to my boyfriend.

How did your coaching/mentoring effect you long term (till now)?

I got married and arranged my husband to get settled in France, registered as a midwife successfully and started working in my local area. Now have a successful career and I am a mother.

What long term results you produced can you attribute to your training from FWUK?

Successful career, became a mother and no more anxiety

What was different with FWUK training compared to other training/s you had since you started?

Never had coaching before and it was really good, having a small group of women in the course really helped all of us to open up and really talk about things. Ken's coaching was really good, he took a real interest in my results.

Current Profession: IT Professional

Age: 37

When did you first come for coaching from Ken/Freedom Works UK (fwuk started Jan 2012, Ken started coaching Nov 2009)?

April 2017

Why did you want coaching then?

Around that time, I had a lot of fear and anxiety, I was always thinking about the worst-case scenario, at the time I was working in a really toxic company and I got bullied a lot and I needed to find a solution to that.

What was your experience of the coaching?

I learnt a lot, my experience of the coaching was fantastic, I learn not to listen to my negative conversations in my head and learnt how to be mindful and take action. I also learnt to be open and talk to people about my feelings. I learnt to be a lot more confident in talking to people especially senior people at work and strangers.

What did you achieve then?

Found a new job I really love. I learnt how to help other people. I started volunteering for Crisis. My stand was to make a difference and last year at work I was nominated for an award at work for being helpful and I had a half day off as a result.

How did your coaching/mentoring effect you long term (till now)?

I knew a lot more in terms of being aware, being in the present moment. I do mindfulness meditation and tai chi. I am in a senior position at work now where people really like me and treat me respectfully.

What long term results you produced can you attribute to your training from FWUK?

My ability to be at ease in life. And I feel a lot happier inside and that really helps to deal with everything that comes my way.

What was different with FWUK training compared to other training/s you had since you started?

The difference is that I had no direct experience of coaching, I had watched videos and things like Anthony Robbins but that made no difference to me. With Ken, I was pushed out of my comfort zone to make results happen and solve my own problems. That made a big difference.

Current Profession: Business Analyst

Age: 34

When did you first come for coaching from Ken/Freedom Works UK (fwuk started Jan 2012, Ken started coaching Nov 2009)?

January 2018

Why did you want coaching then?

Anxiety mainly work related, lack of self-esteem, self-doubt

What was your experience of the coaching?

Great, amazing likeminded people in the group so felt comfortable opening up about the issues with no one judging you.

What did you achieve then?

Helped me to realise that I am enough, I am self-worthy, boost my confidence

How did your coaching/mentoring effect you long term (till now)?

I still apply the coaching techniques. I still have bad days but difference is now I know how I can manage them, what I need to do which is a tremendous thing in itself.

What long term results you produced can you attribute to your training from FWUK?

Still in a job and haven't been unemployed since then which is HUGE for me.

What was different with FWUK training compared to other training/s you had since you started?

Felt like a safe place, like a family, I looked forward to the sessions every week!

Current Profession: IT Technician

Age: 41

When did you first come for coaching from Ken/Freedom Works UK (fwuk started Jan 2012, Ken started coaching Nov 2009)?

April 2018

Why did you want coaching then?

I wanted to find the purpose in my life and more clarity to pursue my dreams.

What was your experience of the coaching?

Challenging because I had to facing my flaws and bad habits but that inspired what is possible for me.

What did you achieve then?

Gained clarity on what I want in life and what is very important for me, especially how I perceive the world and create so many meanings. It totally changed my outlook and what I thought was possible for me.

How did your coaching/mentoring affect you long term (till now)?

Changed on how I view the world around me. Gave me clear direction on what I want to do in my life. Especially regarding my dreams.

What long term results you produced can you attribute to your training from FWUK?

Finally gained “courage” to leave the UK after 15 years of living and move to a tropical country (Thailand) as it was my dream since I was a boy. Also, to become financially free and working for myself.

What was different with FWUK training compared to other training/s you had since you started?

It was a more “in-depth” course only for people who are really “hungry for change”,

Current Profession: Counsellor

Age: 38

When did you first come for coaching from Ken/Freedom Works UK (fwuk started Jan 2012, Ken started coaching Nov 2009)?

June 2018

Why did you want coaching then?

I was stressed, anxious and depressed while working as a supply teacher in London.

What was your experience of the coaching?

Challenging but very rewarding, began to apply it straight away and also had a great buddy in the class which made it fun and enjoyable although challenging.

What did you achieve then?

Lost weight, learnt to ride a bicycle for the first time, got control of my life over depression made the decision to move to Manchester, started a meetup group to help men tackle depression, enrolled in a counselling course.

How did your coaching/mentoring effect you long term (till now)?

Proposed to my girlfriend and got married, kept my weight loss going. My meetup went from strength to strength and just this year qualified as a counsellor.

What long term results you produced can you attribute to your training from FWUK?

It was a catalyst for all of my results, I was at such a low ebb when I came across Ken in 2018, all this was unthinkable.

What was different with FWUK training compared to other training/s you had since you started?

Ken was very attentive and uncompromising in his coaching in helping me to resolve my issues by myself. He took a great deal of interest in my results and also, he was a very strong character himself who had dealt with similar issues to me which I found really helpful.

Current Profession: Founder of Black Women's Link

Age: 58

When did you first come for coaching from Ken/Freedom Works UK (fwuk started Jan 2012, Ken started coaching Nov 2009)?

November 2020

Why did you want coaching then?

I needed to develop self-confidence and find the authentic myself and to be able to do something for myself

What was your experience of the coaching?

At first, I didn't understand it all but through perseverance I was able to apply the principle to be able to develop myself.

What did you achieve then?

First, it helped me to develop my personal growth, self-confidence. I was able to take care of my health and also to focus on what I wanted to do. I was able to approach people if I needed help, before it was difficult for me to ask for help. It helped to begin to setup my Black women's link to support black women who was feeling lonely and social isolation in the community.

How did your coaching/mentoring effect you long term (till now)?

I managed to get help from Islington Council to set up my group, I got a starter grant and set up my organisation and we have held meetings and we even had women joining from USA on Zoom.

What long term results you produced can you attribute to your training from FWUK?

Through that training I am now part of a community organisation called "Cally Connect Us" and I also volunteer for "Help On Door Step".

What was different with FWUK training compared to other training/s you had since you started?

This training has really changed me and improved my self-confidence and to be a part of the community and be a part of the conversations to help people, and my hope is may be one day I can be part of a national conversation for combating loneliness.

Current Profession: Director (self employed)

Age: 41

When did you first come for coaching from Ken/Freedom Works UK (fwuk started Jan 2012, Ken started coaching Nov 2009)?

November 2020

Why did you want coaching then?

Managing my business

What was your experience of the coaching?

Was a very nice experience and very helpful. Brought out things of my character that had been hiding from the hard rout of life.

What did you achieve then?

I am much more confident and have the courage to take the risk of decisions at my business.

How did your coaching/mentoring effect you long term (till now)?

Realised things that I would have been unsure and scared to do.

What long term results you produced can you attribute to your training from FWUK?

Totally boosted my Self-esteem and confidence so that I am free to make big decisions in business and a new ability to make sure I get to do what I set out to do in business.

What was different with FWUK training compared to other training/s you had since you started?

I did not have any training like this before...but after this I found my strong old me again.

Current Profession: Wellbeing facilitator /carer

Age: 43

When did you first come for coaching from Ken/Freedom Works UK (fwuk started Jan 2012, Ken started coaching Nov 2009)?

November 2020

Why did you want coaching then?

Because I felt stuck and knew I needed to make steps forward in my life.

What was your experience of the coaching?

Brilliant. I really enjoyed and appreciated everything that was gained through the coaching.

What did you achieve then?

I finally finished an outstanding course which was extremely important to my career plans. I started and completed several courses that I had always wanted to do, but just never got around to doing, due to not believing I could do it. I achieved what I wanted which was choice, freedom and greatness

How did your coaching/mentoring effect you long term (till now)?

It still has an effect and I often refer to my what is at stake exercise, and the many potentials that I possess. Long term it has given me the confidence to do better and be better.

What long term results you produced can you attribute to your training from FWUK?

Completing my course level 3 in teaching adults, which I almost gave up on, which has been the most beneficial course I needed to prove my worth.

There are so many results, confidence, more of a drive to be who I can be.

What was different with FWUK training compared to other training/s you had since you started?

I've never had coaching before, but compared to courses I have done in the past, FWUK really gives you the confidence to better oneself. The exercises, the whole structure of the training and what I managed to achieve, I have to say it was achieved because of the training. I needed to find myself, and the training brought this out.

Current Profession: Coach/Mentor schools

Age: 43

When did you first come for coaching from Ken/Freedom Works UK (fwuk started Jan 2012, Ken started coaching Nov 2009)?

I participated in the Freedom Works program in November 2020

Why did you want coaching then?

I came across an advertisement in the Islington bulletin, where the title "Freedom works and be free" really spoke to me. I was intrigued and inquired more about it. I got in touch with Ken, he explained more about the program, but also mentioned that the course is full but that there will be another one possibly running in Feb 2021. Two weeks later, I got in touch again and was told that there is a space now. Hence, I was able to be part of it.

I wasn't looking for coaching but when I came across the name "Freedom works/be free" I was drawn to find out more. Since I was on a crossroad in my life it was the perfect fit.

What was your experience of the coaching?

Each week we had a group coaching session where we learned about different very practical ways to apply a distinction in life. We always got homework where we were encouraged to apply what we have learned during the session. During the week Ken would also offer a 1:1 coaching session to clarify anything that needed clarification from the lesson and to get feedback on how the daily application of the homework is making a difference in my life.

For me the course came at the right time. I mentioned before I was on a crossroad and by doing the course and thinking and looking at certain aspects from a different perspective helped me to move confidently forward into the direction I felt led to be going.

What did you achieve then?

I became very clear about what I wanted to do and what next steps I wanted to take. I created a well-being program for teachers. I carried out more one to one coaching sessions and also offered some group sessions of "soul spa" via zoom. I got in touch with the school that I was working with and shared my vision with them. At the end they created a position for me in the school where I am doing exactly what I am passionate about - I am coaching and mentoring teachers to excel in their profession but also to look after their well-being. e.g. work-life balance.

How did your coaching/mentoring effect you long term (till now)?

I have done many courses and am continues learning and doing different self-studies, so for me, different principals and ideas I have learned during the course, I see them as tools in my tool kits and are merging in my day to day work as and when needed.

What long term results you produced can you attribute to your training from FWUK?

I am someone that is constantly learning and working on self-educating myself. As I said I believe that FWUK was a part of my journey forward and certain principles that I have learned I believe are tools that I am using subconsciously now. Change only happens when one works on oneself on a daily basis and I am someone that is highly committed to work on myself continuously in order to help others along my journey.

What was different with FWUK training compared to other training/s you had since you started?

I think the group dynamic was definitely different to any trainings that I have done before. The majority of the group were stay at home mothers with children, which definitely came out in group discussions that their world was very different to mine and often I could not relate. Due to lockdown we had to do the training via zoom which was for certain exercises not so beneficial. From the individual modules often, the content was not new for me but the delivery style and the different examples brought a new twist to it. I am a visual learner so anytime I see something demonstrated or drawn visually it will stay with me which was a big part of Ken's delivery style.



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