

Claire Whitlock

Coach for people who build software · ICF PCC

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Eleven years as an engineering manager at two software companies, then a coaching credential and seven years of six-session blocks with senior engineers, new managers and founders. Plain-spoken, structured, unhurried. Twelve clients at a time, a paper notebook for each.

Experience

2019-03 – Present

Coach, own practice

Claire Whitlock Coaching · Seattle, WA

One-to-one coaching for engineers, managers and founders in six-session blocks; a team lead circle of six twice a year; decision sessions for people with an offer and a deadline. 214 clients, 1,340 sessions, one notebook each.

2015-01 – 2019-02

Director of Engineering

Halyard Software · Seattle, WA

Ran platform and payments, forty-one engineers across five teams. Introduced the written role description for every senior engineer and cut the on-call rota from nine days a quarter to four.

2012-06 – 2014-12

Engineering Manager

Halyard Software · Seattle, WA

First management role; eleven reports on the payments team. Learned what the good weeks look like and how quietly the bad ones arrive, which is most of what I coach now.

2008-02 – 2012-05

Senior Software Engineer

Brightline Systems · Portland, OR

Billing and ledger services in a company of two hundred. Wrote the release notes for four years because nobody else wanted to, and found out I liked saying clearly what changed.

2005-07 – 2008-01

Software Engineer

Meridian Logic · Portland, OR

First job out of university, on a scheduling product for clinics. Shipped, broke and fixed things in roughly equal measure.

Education

- 2018-03 – 2019-02

Professional Coach Certification

Coach Training Institute · Seattle, WA

A year of training to stop giving advice. The credential is the least useful thing I took from it.
- 2001-09 – 2005-06

BSc Computer Science

University of Washington · Seattle, WA

Compilers, databases and a minor in philosophy that turned out to matter more.

Credentials

- 2021-05

Professional Certified Coach (PCC)

International Coaching Federation
- 2019-02

Certified Professional Co-Active Coach

Coach Training Institute
- 2023-09

Mental Health First Aid

National Council for Mental Wellbeing

What I coach

Stay-or-leave decisions	●●●●●	Burnout and the shape of a week	●●●●●
First-time management	●●●●●	Founders after a round or an exit	●●●●○
Performance conversations	●●●●○	Small-group facilitation	●●●○○

Languages

English	5	Spanish	3
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Talks and writing

- 2025

The week is the unit

Lead Dev Seattle, talk

Why every conversation about burnout should start with a calendar and a calculator, and what to do with the number.
- 2021 to now

Notes from the notebook

Monthly newsletter

One pattern from the sessions, one question, and what I am reading. About 900 readers.

2023

Release notes for a life

Essay

On writing down what changed, in the plain style I learned from four years of shipping software.