

WORK-LIFE BALANCE

GURU: JEZ CARTWRIGHT

BY CHARLOTTE ROSS

THE COACH: Jez Cartwright, 36, runs Akindred coaching consultancy.

CLIENTS: As a performance coach Jez has worked with major sports stars, including the England cricket team. Now he caters to top performers in business at companies such as JP Morgan and Deloitte.

USP: Total honesty. This is good when Jez says: "Do you know how good you are?" Less comfortable are questions such as: "Why do you think you are always right?" The approach pays off, with some businesses crediting him with multi-million-pound increases in turnover.

TRAINING AND APPROACH: "All top-level athletes use a coach to achieve excellence. Why should you be any different?" is one of Jez's key mottos. His "no-nonsense" approach comes from his knowledge of sports psychology. The basic idea is to create awareness by holding up a mirror to yourself, which shows you how others see you, warts and all, with the crucial added factor of Jez's round-the-clock support.

PROGRAMME: Whatever you do, don't sign up for a course with Jez lightly. He takes your personal development extremely seriously, and if you don't match his level of commitment, he will probably dump you. If you take his advice, I predict you will start to notice changes — and fast. You can see Jez for up to eight sessions, but after just four my life was evolving at an exhilarating pace.

When I first met Jez, I told him that work had taken over my waking hours. Could he help me find a work-life balance? "First, let's get you a life," he said bluntly. "Then we can see where work fits in." An hour-and-a-half later, he'd heard my whole story, spotted the tricky areas

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in my past, and given me a piece of homework — writing myself a brutally honest letter.

A week later, having avoided writing the letter, I met Jez for another chat. I thought nothing had happened in the interim, yet soon it emerged strange things were afoot: I was feeling lighter, more confident, a lot less apologetic. And I was speaking my mind. What it had to do with work/life balance I wasn't sure.

Two weeks later I saw him again, this time after finally submitting my homework — everything between you and Jez is confidential. This was the hardball meeting. In order to answer his questions about the content of my letter, I had to admit things I'd spent most of my life bottling up. Tears were spilt. Then we worked on a tricky professional situation using a flipchart and diagrams.

By looking at it from a neutral perspective I suddenly saw the scenario with great clarity and have since resolved it. In the days following this meeting I had a series of revelations about family, friends and work. And also about me. It became increasingly apparent how



Firm but fair: Jez Cartwright

little I sometimes take care of myself. This process is what Jez refers to as the "eureka point", where clients suddenly realise how attitudes and beliefs have been holding them back.

By the final time I saw Jez, I felt

fundamentally different. I no longer carried with me a constant sense of anxiety and guilt. I was happier, more assured and freer to speak my mind — and was consequently enjoying life, and work, much more.

By making me address some difficult emotions, Jez has enabled me to re-engage with life in a much more effective, and fun way. I've started thinking of myself as a person again, instead of a profession. And that, I would say is the key to work-life balance.

WHY IT WORKS: With Jez, you can run but you can't hide. A process of inscrutable honesty means that you have to stop kidding yourself that it's all someone else's fault.

RULE FOR LIFE: "Take personal responsibility for your life and every step that you take from this day forwards."

CONTACT AND COST:

www.Akindred.com or email Jez on jc@Akindred.com (07958 225 349).

From £2,000 for a tailor-made package. The Handbook for Exceptional People by Jez Cartwright is published by Rodale this month (£7.99).