

## Ep #5: The Importance of Awareness



### Full Episode Transcript

With Your Host

**Lindsay Dotzlaf**

## Ep #5: The Importance of Awareness

Hi, I'm Lindsay Dotzlaf and you are listening to *Mastering Coaching Skills*, episode five.

To really compete in the coaching industry, you have to be great at coaching. That's why every week, I will be answering your questions, sharing my stories, and offering tips and advice so you can be the best at what you do. Let's get to work.

Hey, coaches. How are you today? I hope you had an amazing holiday week by the time this comes out. And if you're listening, this will be, I think, the week after Thanksgiving.

And we will have just been home, celebrating ourselves with my family. When I say my family, I mean my husband and two kids. Definitely missing the rest of our family that we usually would be with for Thanksgiving.

And 2020 has been kind of the strangest year, right? Whenever I think about all the hard parts of this year and all the crazy things we've dealt with as a country, my belief in coaching and how powerful it is truly just grows and grows.

I have literally never been so, so thankful to have these tools. And if you guys think about that, the same is true for your clients and or your future clients. Like, thank goodness they have you and they have coaching to help support their emotional health, to just deal with all the crazy things going on.

So, I'm pretty excited for today. I want to dive into how I define coaching, how I think about all the different ways that coaching can be used and the different aspects of coaching, and our self-coaching, and while obviously coaching clients.

So, I'll actually be exploring this over the next few episodes. And this is something I teach in depth in my mastermind. So, as far as the podcast, I want to just dive in and give you just a little taste of how I teach it and, of

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course give you guys some small exercises you can take away and use right away, because it's my favorite.

So, first I'm going to tell you my definition of coaching. And if you haven't spent time really thinking about this for yourself, your definition of coaching, what it is, I would encourage you to just do this after you finish listening. Kind of like in episode one when I asked you to think about what is the method of coaching that you use.

The same goes for how do you think about coaching, what is your definition of coaching, I think the better and better you can be at actually explaining that, the better coach you will be.

So, over the next couple of episodes, I'm going to break down all the different aspects of coaching, all the things that go into coaching, and how you as a coach may or may not use them in your own coaching and with your clients.

I talk about the different parts of coaching as awareness, goals or creating your future, math, decisions, questions, and strategy. And a lot of these pieces obviously sometimes can overlap. A lot of times, they do overlap. But I just love to kind of consider them all separately just for the sake of really exploring all of the options when we're coaching.

And one reason I really like to do this, I see so many coaches that get specific certifications or have been taught to coach using one method. And sometimes, they just get a little stuck on the one piece. Like, you maybe have learned one thing, one method, and then you use it with your clients.

And then I just see this come up for my clients a lot, where they're just like, "Okay, now what?" And I'm like, "No, not now what, there are so many other options." So, that's part of what I'm going to show you over the next few episodes.

I think it can be very useful to think about coaching as a process that has a little bit of nuance and exploration, instead of really thinking that it is this

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strict linear process, especially if you have a brain that's like mine, very analytical. I love to have things wrapped up nicely in a pretty little package with a pretty little bow on top.

And coaching just isn't always like that. Which is why I really started doing this work for myself, to kind of show myself, what are all the different ways that we can coach our clients, what are all the different ways that we can think about it?

So, today, let's start with awareness. And awareness just means where you are right now. It's the thoughts and the feelings that you're experiencing right now in this moment that are creating whatever results you already have.

And I know a lot of you love to skip this part or to kind of rush through it. And I think that maybe a piece of that is it's not really as sexy or as fun as thinking about the future and thinking about big goals, and particularly when you're working with your clients and your clients might have these huge goals, and it is exciting and it is so fun to just dive in and run as quickly as you can towards them.

But when you skip this piece of awareness, I'm going to show you how it might not be as useful for your clients. So, this is going to kind of be my argument for why awareness is most likely the place you always want to start. And here's the example I love to use to talk about it.

So, let's say you're walking into a mall. You're going in to buy a present for your best friend. And you've actually never been to this particular mall, but you know they have the store that you're looking for, you already know what you want to get. And you know that the store is in the mall.

So, you walk in the door and you have two choices. You can either start wandering around kind of aimlessly, walking up and down the different sections of the mall, hoping you're just going to get lucky and find the store.

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Eventually, this may work. It just might take a while. Or option two, you can take a minute and find a map. You can find the map that kind of sits up in the middle of the mall by most of the entrances and you walk up to it, and you're going to look for two things.

You look for the store's location, the store where you want to go, and you find the little icon that says, "You are here." This might take an extra minute up front, but it will save you so much time searching and kind of wandering around just looking for the store.

And coaching awareness is that, "You are here," symbol. It's the thing that points to, this is where you are right now. This is where you're starting. There doesn't need to be any judgment about it. This is just where you are. It's showing yourself where you're starting. It's helping you orient yourself to where you want to go. And it really makes it easier to figure out how to get there, how to get to where you want to go.

Finding awareness can take so many different forms. And especially depending on how you learn to coach or where you learn to coach – I happen to be certified through the Life Coach School. So, one of my favorite methods of creating awareness is by using something called the unintentional model, which is really just looking at the thoughts you are having right now, the emotions that are being created from that thought, and then what actions you take when you feel this emotion, ultimately leading to the results you're creating.

But if you did not go to the Life Coach School, there are so many other methods that you can use just to create awareness. A few of them might be thought downloads. Actually, the first couple of steps of *The Work* by Byron Katie, looking for limiting beliefs and identifying current habits, journaling, meditation, movement and body awareness, breathwork, and sometimes even prayer. I have a few clients who include prayer in their coaching and in finding awareness.

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I'm sure there are so many others also that I have never heard of. And there's no right or wrong here. They kind of – all those paths kind of lead to the same place, which is just identifying what's happening in your brain and what you are feeling in your body.

And then, depending on what type of coach you are you may even have specific awareness tools that you use with your clients. So, a couple of examples of those might be, you know, some health coaches, maybe you have your clients keep a food or workout journal for a week before you start making any changes, just to kind of see, what are they eating now? How much are they moving their body now? And just finding the awareness in it before making a bunch of changes.

Or a career coach might do an assessment of how their client feels about the job they have right now before really starting to explore the promotion or the new job that they're dreaming of. Or maybe a business coach has their clients do evaluations on what is currently working and what's not working.

These are all processes of just, like, let's explore our brain, let's explore how we're feeling about what is in our brain and kind of getting it all out there to, again, kind of show you that little icon of this is where we're starting, and now we know a better path to get to where we want to go.

There are two main things that I kind of see coaches get wrong when it comes to awareness. The first one is skipping it altogether, so kind of what I already said. It's like walking into the mall and not looking at the map.

The second one is finding the awareness and then just living there, parking your car, getting out, deciding you're staying there forever, which would be like looking at the map at the mall and then standing there for hours kind of memorizing it, planning all the ways that you may get lost, planning all the backup plans for what happens if you do get lost. It's like never actually going to find the store and just staying there looking at the map.

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I'll give you a couple of examples of what this might actually look like in coaching. So, the main thing that happens when you skip awareness, when you skip it altogether, there might just be a belief in there that is super counterproductive to the goal that you're working towards, or obviously that your clients are working towards. You can use this in your own self-coaching and with your clients.

When those underlying thoughts are unexamined, they're in there like subconscious beliefs and they'll kind of just keep getting in the way and holding you back, a lot of times without you even knowing that it's happening.

So, let's just say your client is working on a promotion at work. This is why she hired you. And you're helping her get this promotion but she has this underlying belief that a promotion means less time with her family, it makes her a terrible mom. And so outwardly she's telling you she wants a promotion, it seems like she's kind of working towards it. But if this underlying belief is left completely unexamined, literally her insides will be screaming danger the whole time she's working towards this goal. And it's just not going to work.

Whereas, if you discover the thoughts and you bring them up to the surface, then you can work through them before sending her on her way to work on this goal.

One way I often see this showing up with a lot of coaches is when they believe – you, as a coach, when you have this underlying belief that to make real money as a coach, you have to be helping your clients make money. Which, by the way, is 100% not true. I will do an entire episode on it, I promise.

But it is just interesting, seeing that I can be coaching, I can be working with a client for quite a while before we discover that they have this underlying belief. And it's just so important to bring it up and really examine it and say, "No, this isn't true at all."

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Because when you go all in on being the kind of coach that you want to be and coaching the clients that you love working with, that you feel so connected to, only to have this belief under the surface that's like, "I'll never make money doing this," it's just not useful.

Another example I will give you is a more personal experience that I had. So, when I very first hired a coach and I started working with her – this was before I was a coach and I just hired a life coach – I was experiencing a lot of anxiety. And I also just had this belief that anxiety was bad and that every time I experienced it, I had to get out of it as quickly as possible.

So, what would happen is I would have just lots of anxiety and I would be in a huge rush to not be feeling it because I didn't like feeling it. And I would start having all these thoughts like, "Oh my gosh, this is so bad. I need it to stop. I need it to go away." And, of course, those would just create more and more and more anxiety.

So, the first thing I had to learn before I could just handle the anxiety, before I could move out of it, the very first thing I had to learn was to slow my mind down and to just sit in the feeling of anxiety, to just be in the awareness of this is what anxiety feels like. It's not actually going to hurt me. It's just a feeling I have in my body.

And I would really just sit down, I would put my hand on my chest, I would take a few deep breaths, and I would just talk myself through the anxiety without trying to get out of it. This is what it feels like. This is what it feels like in my body. And just describe it.

And just that process of awareness would take so much power out of the anxiety. And then, over time, I would start addressing the thoughts that were creating it or that maybe we were multiplying it if it was the type of anxiety that started in my body, without the distraction of all of that panic that I was adding on the top.



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Now, on the other side of this, sometimes awareness can get a bit indulgent. So, it's like there's this happy medium where you do want to explore awareness. You just don't want to live there.

So, the opposite of skipping it altogether is spending so much time finding it or sitting in the awareness that you never actually move towards the goal or that your client doesn't move towards the goal.

So, one example of this would be if you think about the example I just used of myself learning how to just feel anxiety. Sitting in the awareness was so useful and it was exactly what I needed at the time. But ultimately, I didn't want to just be the person that knew how to feel anxiety. I wanted to – like, my goal of how I wanted to feel in the future was I wanted to decrease it and be a thriving, functioning human in society.

So, after I learned to experience it and after I really learned just the awareness of, "This is what anxiety is," then I started introducing methods to lessen it and work towards other goals that I had set without letting the anxiety take over.

So, for example, this coaching business that I have today, working through my anxiety was literally the first step to getting here. And so, to do that, I had to create the awareness, and then I had to kind of create processes to work through it.

And don't get me wrong, I still experience anxiety. It certainly isn't gone. It just doesn't take over like it used to. Now I just experience it on, I think what I would call just a normal human level. We all have anxiety. Maybe it's a little higher than that, but it is certainly manageable.

So, here's what this might look like when you're working with your clients. If you are a coach that skips this step, if you don't help your clients find awareness, or if they want to skip this step, they might just keep coming back to you with the same thing; the same thing to coach on over and over and over. Usually, there's something that you've missed that's maybe before this process of moving them towards their goal.

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So, in the example of myself learning to feel the anxiety, it's like, I could have worked towards my goal. But in that case, the anxiety, I think, my guess would be that it would just have gotten worse and worse. The harder I pushed myself, the harder I worked towards this thing that I wanted, the more anxiety I would have had, the more I would have kept coming back with just the same experience over and over.

And on the other side of that, if you have a client that just loves to sit in the awareness, how that might show up is a client who is super – almost indulging in self-love or worthiness. So, that definitely is a piece of working towards a goal. And it's something that you can work through. But it shouldn't be something that a client has to work through for months and years.

There is a certain point where you just get to deem your client worthy. You are worthy, now you get to move forward and work towards your goal. Sometimes, sitting in the awareness can feel really cozy. So, you might have to be onto your clients if they're not wanting to venture out of it.

Here are some questions you can ask yourself to kind of explore how you create awareness for yourself and for your clients. But there's one little tip I want to give you first. If you use more of a general process to create awareness, like thought downloads or journaling, it is very useful, I find, to do the exercise on a certain topic.

So, for example, when I'm coaching myself, what I discovered is that if I just sit down and do a thought download or just start journaling, my mind will be everywhere. My thoughts will be all over the place. I'll have thoughts about my business, maybe thoughts about my hair, thoughts about the weather, the grocery list and what our plans are for the week my kids. I'll just go everywhere.

Versus if I give myself something specific to focus on, for example my thoughts about my podcast, I can really get in there and create some

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amazing awareness over what I'm thinking right now, about that specific thing. It just allows me to go a lot deeper.

So, here are some questions you can start thinking about. What is your process for finding awareness? This might be super clear to you because it might be something you already do and you already love doing.

How do you use it for yourself and for your clients? Now, if you are a coach that is very action-focused – which is fine, I do think strategy is a huge piece of coaching and I'll be talking about that in a couple of episodes – just explore this a little bit.

Like, how could awareness be really useful for you and for your clients? How could digging in there and finding some of those thoughts before taking the actions, how could they be really useful? That's actually the next question. How could it be useful for you?

Can you think of some examples of when awareness has played a big part in your coaching? Or when it maybe could have been useful? And then the last question is, how will you know – so this could be you in your own coaching or you working with a client – how do you think you know when you're ready to move on from awareness?

These are just things I want you guys to think about. Just spend time thinking about them. And I think it's what makes a really powerful coach, is to come with their own thoughts of, "I've really been exploring this topic on how my coaching can be so much more effective and here's what I've come up with."

So, I hope you have an incredible week. I will be back next Tuesday to dive a little deeper into some of the other aspects of coaching that I mentioned earlier. Talk to you then.

If you enjoyed today's show and don't want to miss an episode, you can subscribe on Apple Podcasts, or wherever you usually listen. If you haven't already, I would really appreciate it if you would leave a rating and review

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