

## Ep #49: Separating Out the Drama



### Full Episode Transcript

With Your Host

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## Ep #49: Separating Out the Drama

Hey, this is Lindsay Dotzlaf and you are listening to *Mastering Coaching Skills*, episode 49.

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, hey friends. So, I have been working on something, super secret project over here that I'm going to let you in on today. Okay, it's not really a secret, I just haven't talked about it on the podcast yet.

So, as you know, because I've mentioned it on here before, I have a mastermind where I help my clients with their coaching skills, just like on this podcast. With their processes, with their programs, the results that they offer their clients, knowing what they can and can't guarantee when it comes to their results. Just in general being an amazing coach, the best at what they do, and really being a coach that's in high integrity.

One thing that I have learned while selling this mastermind over the last two years is that there are a lot of you, many coaches who want access to some of this work but aren't quite ready for the mastermind level yet. So one thing that I do for my mastermind currently is I have an application that everyone fills out and I just love to be sure that people are qualified to be in there.

I have a rule that I don't let my clients spend tons of money in their business kind of buffering with more learning when they're not yet making much money. So part of my application process is just asking questions. How many clients have you had? Tell me about your business.

And so one of the kind of qualifications to be in there is that you have clients, you have a business that's already working, whatever that means. You already have money, spending the money on the mastermind isn't going to totally freak out your brain and shut you down, because we don't

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specifically focus on making tons of money in the mastermind. I don't want people coming in there thinking, "I need to make money quickly to be here."

So, one thing that I've decided to do that I really see a need for, that feels so fun is to create a program for those of you that are maybe newer coaches that don't quite qualify to be in the mastermind yet or who just don't want to be, who want to do this work in a different way.

And it's going to be a little more geared towards, not necessarily newer coaches but it will totally be appropriate for newer coaches. And one of the things that I'm doing right now is I am making lists of all the things I want to teach and then kind of separating it into different categories.

So there's the actual coaching skills that I teach. One of the categories is, I don't know exactly what it's going to be called, but it's something like the things to look out for on coaching calls. Or the things to notice when your clients do them in sessions. The things that when your clients do these things that might feel a little confusing to you, I'm going to tell you exactly how to solve for them.

And the reason I'm sharing this is not to sell you on the thing, but to tell you as I was going through that today and really thinking and working through what are the different categories and what are all the things I want to teach, I thought of something that to me feels like one of the most useful things I realized a while ago in working with my clients. And instead of making you wait until my program comes out, I'm just going to share it today.

And I might not be as in depth as I do in my program, obviously you're not going to have the opportunity to get coached on it or to get help specifically for you on this podcast. But I think just me sharing it will be so useful, you'll be able to start to see it when your clients do it. And I'm just going to tell you exactly how to solve it.

So, one thing that I noticed, especially when I was a one on one coach, and it happens everywhere. It happens in my mastermind, it happens in all the places that I coach, but it's just easier to see and easier to see when you

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get tripped up on it in one on one coaching because it's such a kind of intimate space.

So, one thing that happens, I'm sure you have experienced this, even if you've never had a paid client, you've only coached free clients, you've only done peer coaching, whatever it is. You've only coached maybe your brain, you have probably seen this with someone else, with yourself, with whoever.

When a client comes and they just dive into a story, they start telling you a whole story and it has lots of layers and all the layers are kind of overlapping and interlocking. And as the coach in your mind you're a little bit like, "Oh my gosh, where do I start? What do I do? This feels so big." Whatever your thoughts are about it.

I call this the bucket of drama. It's like one big bucket and your client has thrown in 10 different things and like shaken the bucket up and now it's just like a bucket of just mixed up drama. Maybe a better name is like a drama milkshake. It's just like all the things that could possibly go wrong in one bucket, in one milkshake glass, whatever, all mixed together.

And sometimes that's hard to see. You're just listening to the client tell this story. It sounds like just a life story to you, it sounds like, yeah, this is just what's going on with them. And the most useful thing you can do as the coach is recognize that there might be five different things to coach on within this one story that they're telling you.

So instead of trying to coach from this place where it's like everything is all mixed together, it's all just very just clumped up, it's all just stuck to each other, you want to really take time to just separate the pieces. I'm going to give you some examples.

Before I do though, I want to tell you I have a client, a past client, her name is Emily Cline, she's amazing, go find her. And she's on Instagram for sure, also on Facebook. But she took this example and she turned it into, like in her brain she was like, "Oh, I love to think of this as necklaces."

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My daughter does this to me all the time, my now 9 year old because she's so unorganized and she just throws everything in one drawer and whatever. So she'll come to me holding one necklace string and there will be like five to ten necklaces all tangled together. And it's like, well, how do you get those things untangled?

You have to start undoing the knots, and you have to slowly figure out which strand goes to which necklace and it's a process of separating it out. And I love that visual, Emily, thank you for that. And I'm sure we can come up with 100 different ways to think about this, but basically, it's just a bunch of thoughts that kind of need to be separated out before we can solve for them.

There are a couple reasons that it makes it really useful to see this. One, because sometimes there's only one real problem, I'm saying problem in quotes. And then everything else is just stuff that's just attached to the problem and if we solve the one problem we'll solve it all.

Or maybe there's only one real problem and then there are a few unmade decisions thrown in there. And if we just make some of the decisions then it will solve the problem or it will be clear like, "Okay, here's the actual thing I want to work on, now I want coaching on this." Or, "Let's coach on this."

The other reason it's good to notice is because sometimes there are multiple things to coach on, there are multiple things going on that are really important to see. Like, "Here are my thoughts about this thing, here are my thoughts about this thing, here are my thoughts about this thing." And they're all separate. But when you put them all together and mix up the bucket or tangle the necklaces it gets really confusing on where do I start? This feels so big, this is overwhelming.

And what I want to offer you is this is just what our normal brains do. I'm going to give you some examples and I'm going to start with one that probably most of you can relate to because I know most of you listening are

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coaches, a lot of you have your own businesses, or you have coached people on this thing.

So, this used to happen to me, I would see something that I wanted to invest in in my business. So maybe I wanted to hire my business coach again, or I wanted to join this mastermind, or buy a program, or whatever it was. And my thought would be, “Okay, I really want to pay for this thing.”

And then immediately, I’m just making it up as I go, but maybe immediately my next thought is, “I don’t have the money to pay for it. Okay, where am I going to find the money to pay for it? Well, I need to sell more of my own coaching? Well, how am I going to sell my own coaching? Do I have a niche? Is it the right niche? Am I charging the right price?” And my brain just takes off down this road of 20 problems because of the first thought that I had.

The first thought was, “I want to invest in this thing, do I have the money to do it?” So that’s one thing, and then my brain goes to, “Okay, no I don’t have the money to do it, where will I find the money? I need to make more money in my business.” That’s another thing, how do I make money in my business?

And then immediately my brain leads me to, “Do I have the right niche? Why am I not making money?” So I try to start to solve for that. Is my niche wrong? Am I selling it wrong? Am I charging too much? Why are people not buying? All of those things.

So those are all separate, and then let’s say my thought goes to like, “Oh my gosh, if I spend more money on my business my husband is going to kill me. This is terrible, there’s no way, he’s never going to support me spending more money. He just doesn’t understand this, he doesn’t understand my business.”

Obviously, none of these are things I’m thinking now, currently. But I remember when I used to have this drama. So now we’ve gone from, “I want to invest money” which we could just stop there and say, “Okay, do I

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have money to invest? If not, do I want to find it? Yes or no? If yes, where am I going to find it? How am I going to invest this money in my business?" That's one thing, we could just stop there.

The next thing is, I'm not making the money I want to in my business. Okay, let's solve for that. How do we fix that? Why am I not making the money I want to? Why is it not selling? What are my thoughts about selling coaching? There's coaching on that. Then there's coaching on is it the wrong niche, am I selling it at the wrong price? All of those questions, those can all be separated out.

Now, in this example, if my client came to me with this I wouldn't necessarily coach them on every single one of these. Sometimes the value is just showing your client, "Okay, look, stop." Because a lot of times when clients get into this space it's coming out of their mouth very quickly and you can tell that their brain is just leading them down this path.

It's like the path of doom. I think I've used that term on here before, but that's what I call it. It's just like the path of doom, nothing good is going to come from this path, at least not at the end of it. You need to go back to the beginning and work through it step by step.

But, sometimes when our client's brains take off down this path we don't actually need to coach on every single thing, we just need to bring them back to the beginning and say, "Hold on, notice what just happened. These are 20 different things, and you have put them all in one giant bucket and mixed it all together. And now your brain is trying to solve this huge problem instead of solving for just the actual first thing that you thought of, or maybe the first couple."

I'll give you another example that's something very specific that I recently had coaching on. So this even happens in my brain, and I don't notice it. So I was recently in Mexico, I was getting coached by my coach. What I presented her was this problem that I was having.

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I thought it was this big problem. And the way I presented it, this isn't word for word, but it was something along the lines of, "Well, I can't decide when to launch my program. And also—" Okay, up until this point, just for reference, I have not had ads in my business. I've never done ads, Facebook ads, any kind of ads, whatever.

So I'm telling her, "I'm creating my program, I can't decide when I should launch it. And I've decided I need ads to sell the program, but I am scared that ads are going to be a huge waste of money. And so it's like a chicken or an egg thing. It's like do I start the ads first? Do I create the program first?" And it was much more detailed than this, and I went on and on.

And she, of course, coached me on it beautifully. And what I realized afterwards is that I was doing this thing, exactly what I'm telling you right now. I had kind of thrown all this stuff in a bucket and mixed it around. Whereas the truth was there was the program that I'm creating and the creation of it and what that will take.

There's the selling of the program and what that will take, the thoughts I need to have about that. Like the thoughts I'm currently having about it, all of that. Then there are Facebook ads, which is something totally different. What are my thoughts about that? How do I want to start them? When do I want to start them?

And she really helped me separate them out and say like, "Okay, well, let's go through these things one at a time. And then it became so clear. It was like, "Oh, well, here's what I'm actually afraid of, I'm afraid no one's going to buy the thing."

I promise you, my friends, it doesn't matter how much money you've made in your business, anytime you're creating something new, a new offer, a new anything, you're still going to have thoughts that no one's going to buy the thing. No matter how good you think it's going to be. I just need you to hear that, it always happens.



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Okay. So, it was so useful, like, okay, separate them all out. What are my thoughts about all the different things? Let's just make some decisions. When do I want to sell the program? How many do I think I can sell without ads? That was a really useful question that she asked me. When do I want to start ads? Am I willing to do them for a while without them working while figuring it out?

Of course they're going to work, I'm not just going to throw money. The way I was thinking about it, what we discovered is that in my mind I'm like, "I'm just going to be throwing all the money in a trash can. That sounds fun." Of course, I don't want to do ads when my thought is I'm throwing all of my money in a trash can.

So we separated it all out and then I could see, and then I could make decisions. And doesn't mean that some of the pieces don't still feel scary. But now I just have a plan, I just have to follow the plan and then work through whatever comes up.

Another example of this, I'll give you something completely not business related, I'll just make something up. Maybe you're a dating coach, someone comes to you with, "I don't know where I'm going to find my person. I just don't know where to find them. And when I think about it, I think about all the dates I'm going to have to go on and how they're going to be awful. And I'm going to have to use the apps and I really don't want to use the apps." And just this whole story, everything piled on top of each other, everything mixed together in the bucket, the bucket of drama.

And as a coach, it's so useful to see, right? Because when you can separate them all out you can see your client has thoughts about dating in general. Your client has thoughts about wanting to find someone quickly. One of the other things your client is thinking about is dating apps. Another piece of it is going on the actual dates and how that will feel.

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I think this is on my mind because my husband and I are watching Ted Lasso, which happens to be one of our favorite shows. If you haven't watched it, please go do it immediately. It's so good.

But one of the characters on there is dating and she is going through the apps and going on dates, and I just happened to work with a lot of relationship coaches so I hear about this a lot. And so it's just top of mind. Makes me think like, "Whew, so glad I'm not dating right now." Some days, and then some days, I'm like, "Wouldn't that be fun?" Not that I want to, my husband's amazing. Love you babe.

Okay, but you see what I'm saying, right? When you can notice that your clients are doing this, your coaching can be infinitely better. Because if you can separate them all out, like I said at the beginning, you can either see the one thing that's like, if we coach on this thing, all the other things are going to be solved. Where it's like that's the real thing that's coming up for them, the real drama. Or you can see like, "Okay, here are all these separate things, we might need to work through all of them. But where do you want to start?"

So here's how I do this with clients in a coaching session. If I'm working with clients one on one, even if I'm coaching them in a program or in a group, I think there are two options. You can either not explain this concept and just start doing it, like, "Okay, what I hear you saying is there's just lots of stuff here, let's separate it out first."

I actually love to give my clients the visual. And this might just depend on your client, but I love to give the visual of like, stop them, right, like, "Okay, stop. Hold on. Let's think about this for a second. I want you to imagine there's a bucket, you have this big bucket. And then you have all of this stuff going on in your life that you just told me about. And to you it's all very connected.

And what you've done is you've taken all of this stuff, all of your thoughts, your feelings, your reactions, your everything about all of these things,

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you've put them all in one bucket. And then you've mixed them up. You like put a lid on the bucket, you shook it up. Now everything is tangled, and it's a mess. I want you to envision like this is what we're going to do.”

This is still me pretending like in a coaching session, right? “This is what we're going to do, we're going to take the bucket, we're going to clear off your desk. Take the bucket, we're just going to dump it all out. And then together, we're going to look through the contents. We're going to decide how to separate it. Which things in this bucket are actually important?

Some of them we're just going to throw away. Some of them are not important at all, they just feel important because you've attached them to some of these other things that are actually important to you right now. So we're going to separate them out. And then we're going to look through them and decide where do we want to start? Which thing do we want to start coaching on? Which thing do we want to just examine first?”

So if you go back to the dating example, you can keep using it. We're going to dump the bucket out and we're going to see you have thoughts about dating in general, you have thoughts about finding your person, you have thoughts about apps. And right now you're mixing them all together and it's creating this feeling that's big, maybe overwhelming.

Let's separate them out and you can see some of them might not be that big of a deal. Some of them might actually feel fun when you just think about that thing by itself. And then some of them might feel a lot bigger, a lot heavier, a lot scarier, that's where we're going to start. We're going to work through those.

I hope this was so helpful for everyone listening. A lot of you might be doing this already, but I just love to paint this really clear picture and to give you words to use with your clients when you're actually in the moment and you see this happening.

Or if you haven't noticed when this is happening, but you do notice that you're feeling overwhelmed with where to start with your clients sometimes,

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I would think about this. Is there more than one thing going on here? Have they jumbled up a bunch of stuff in one big bucket? How can we separate them out?

Happy Tuesday, or whatever day it is that you're listening. I hope that you are back next week. Next week is my 50th podcast. I just said that like it was my birthday. It's my 50th birthday. It is not. It's my 50th podcast. I don't know, okay, I know that 52 is a year. But 50 feels so fun and exciting and I am doing a really special episode, where I asked you guys for questions. A lot of you have sent in questions.

If you haven't, go ahead and you can still send them in. They won't make it onto the 50th episode. But you can still send them. I actually have so many questions that I might do more than one anyway. So send them in if you have questions, questions about me, they can be personal questions, they can be questions about my business. They can be questions about everything that I cover on here. I am an open book, I will tell you almost anything, and I can't wait. So I will see you back here next week for the 50th episode. Bye.

Thanks for listening to this episode of *Mastering Coaching Skills*. If you want to learn more about my work, come visit me at [lindsaydotzlafoaching.com](http://lindsaydotzlafoaching.com). That's Lindsay with an A, D-O-T-Z-L-A-F.com. see you next week.