

## Ep #94: Shooting with Confidence with Teresa Earnest



### Full Episode Transcript

With Your Host

**Lindsay Dotzlaf**

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Hey, this is Lindsay Dotzlaf, and you are listening to *Mastering Coaching Skills*, episode 94.

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 coach, today I have something so fun for you. But I do want to remind you first, click into the show notes and find the link where you can submit your questions for episode 100. That is coming up, we are on episode 94 right now, which means in the next few weeks I will be recording the episode 100 where I will answer any question that you ask me.

You can ask them anonymously if you would like. And the link is just there for you in the show notes. So don't forget to do that, it's one of my favorite things and last time I ended up turning it into two episodes for episode 50. I think it was episode 50 and 51, I'm pretty sure, because there were so many questions. So let's do that again because it was so great. And I can't wait to read what you are going to send in.

Today we are in for such a fun treat. I am talking to a good friend of mine and a photographer, Teresa Earnest. She is actually the photographer I had join us in Palm Springs when I took some of my clients there recently.

And we're going to talk about just confidence and taking photos, how to hire a photographer if that is something on your list, and just any tips and tricks that she has. She is quite sassy and unedited and I love it so much about her. And I hope you do too. Here she is.

Lindsay: All right, hello. I am so glad to have you here today. Can you just introduce yourself, tell everybody who you are and what you do.

Teresa: Yes, I am Teresa Earnest and I am a photographer. I mostly photograph food and females. So that's it in a nutshell. I specialize in

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content for branding for high performing entrepreneurs, a lot of coaches, and a couple of food clients that I've kept on.

Lindsay: I love that. It cracks me up every time I see your Instagram because it literally just says like food and females, I think. And I'm like, that's so clear. That's so clear what you do.

Teresa: Yeah, I said it for so many years that I was finally like, okay, that's good. So I changed my website to that and it works.

Lindsay: Love it. So I wanted to have you on today because I have recorded a couple podcasts, which people have probably heard by now, about the week that we had in Palm Springs. And you were the photographer that was there taking the amazing photos of everyone.

And I just thought it would be so fun to have you on and to kind of talk about, not so much that week or that experience, but just photography in general. It's a very hot topic for most coaches. And we're going to give them some tips today.

Teresa: Well thank you, and thank you for having me to the retreat. I always feel so lucky because I'm there working and I'm also like soaking up all of the amazingness. And then sometimes I'm like jotting notes down in my phone, you know, I might have some personal growth from it or something that I take away for my business. But I feel so, I kind of feel like I'm double dipping a little bit.

But it was an incredible experience and I met some amazing women, a few that I had met before. And I mean, you can't go wrong going to Palm Springs, so thank you.

Lindsay: Oh my goodness. Well, it was also your second time in Palm Springs doing that similar thing with me, which was so fun. When I was thinking about booking in Palm Springs, of course, your name just came right to mind because I always have so much fun with you.

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Teresa: Well it was a blast.

Lindsay: I'm so grateful you could be there. And you fit right in, which I always think about that. That's something I guess I should mention maybe that I didn't talk about on one of the podcasts. But anytime I'm planning something like that, I'm always thinking about the people that I'm hiring and bringing into be in the experience. I really want to be sure that they're not kind of detracting from the experience, that they're going to fit right in and it's going to be comfortable for everyone. So that was you.

Teresa: Well good, that makes me feel better. There's been times where I'm at events and I just feel like maybe I'm talking too much, or I'm interjecting too much. My personality is sometimes something just comes out of my mouth and I'm like, you could have kept that to yourself.

Fortunately, probably, for you all I had lost my voice so it wasn't as much of a problem.

Lindsay: I forgot about that. Yes, you showed up the next day, was it the first day or the second day you showed up and you couldn't talk?

Teresa: It progressively got worse. So it probably was a little bit on the first day. It actually was a good challenge for me because I had to get a little bit creative and a little more intimate in my conversations versus just blabbering out some directions. So it worked out well.

Lindsay: I love it. Okay, so let's talk about right before we started recording we were kind of talking about what would be helpful for coaches who are listening. And a couple things we came up with were just having confidence in taking photos, right? Like just showing up for photos with confidence.

So let's just start there and dive into that a little bit because I do think that it's something that you are incredible at. I've worked with you now a few times, and every time my experience is even though I'm uncomfortable because I just always am every time I take photos, it's getting better each

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time. But I just always feel a little awkward, but you make it so fun and it just is always the best experience.

So how do you think, like how do you create that? Maybe let's start there.

Teresa: That's a really good question. And it's not something I necessarily think of or am very intentional about. I am very careful about who I work with, and so I think I'm always very comfortable with the people that I work with. And so it's like being with a girlfriend or a best friend. And, you know, you want them to feel their best.

I myself am very uncomfortable in front of the camera and very awkward. So whenever someone's like, let me get your photo, I'm like, no, I'm good, it's okay. So it's so much easier for me to tell someone else to be confident.

But I think it's just such a personal thing. I think we all see ourselves in a certain way. And we have that, my husband calls it that mirror look. Like when you go to put your mascara on or your makeup, you've got like that blue steel, kind of serious look, or whatever your look might be.

And I think that, as women, we tend to think that's how we look best being photographed. And it probably is, but then there's so many other looks and sides of your personality that can be shown, especially depending on what you specialize in in your business. So if you coach, you know, if you're a sex coach, I just said that word on a podcast.

Lindsay: I love it.

Teresa: Then you might want to look a little more like, I don't want to say sexy, but just like really outgoing and a little sassy or spicy. But also you want it to look, a few photos to look like you can be trusted and someone might want to lean in and have an intimate, quiet conversation with you.

So I think that meeting each person I'm photographing and finding out what it is that they do. And then, going back I was a wedding photographer for almost 18 years. And when you're working 10 or 12 hours with, sometimes

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in the south, 24 bridesmaids or something insane, you have to make so many people comfortable knowing that your bride is the most important person and you want her to be the most comfortable.

So I think that experience of being able to wear so many different hats and almost just changing my own personality for each person that I was photographing in that moment, whether it was an hour or five minutes, I think helps me for what I do now.

My sessions are a little unique in that we work really quickly. And it's almost like a flowing conversation while you're shooting. So I think that that can maybe help someone feel at ease and a little more confident. But I think the most important thing that I do or that I try to do to help a woman feel confident or someone feel confident in front of the camera is showing them.

You know, immediately being able to just turn the camera around after five or six frames and say look at this. And that is the greatest, most, like I get chills thinking about it because you just see this shift, you see this transition from tense and nervous to like, oh my God, I am hot, let's keep going. And I've had that moment with you.

Lindsay: Yeah, I've had that experience with you. And what's funny, I had not thought of this until you just said it, when you very first took my pictures a couple years ago now I guess, you did that. You showed me the photos and I was like, oh, okay, I'm not terrible at this. Some of these are okay.

And I took that with me, because I've worked with a bunch of different photographers, loved them all for different reasons. But more locally, I've worked with people where I am trying to get photos maybe last minute or something like that. So I've just worked with people and I haven't known them that well. And I have used that and I've asked them like, okay, hey, can I see it?

And I think in the past I would have been so scared to do that because I think I would have thought like, oh, they probably look terrible, I just don't even want to see them. But I think it's actually really helpful.

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Teresa: I think so too. And that also keeps me accountable as a photographer because I can't just depend on the editing to make the photos good. I need them to be really good in camera so that I can flip the camera around and show you and not be nervous. I want you to have a good reaction, so it makes me kind of step my game up a little bit.

I think that instant gratification, we have that with social media, with iPhones, you know, sometimes my iPhone takes better photos for whatever reason in the moment. I'll look at a photo and I'm like, "That is so good." If I got my camera out I don't think I could repeat it, you know?

So we're used to that instant gratification of being able to take a selfie in the light that we know we're good in, and the pose that we, you know, our mirror face as my husband would say. And so it makes you kind of step up your game a little bit so that I can then, like I said, give you that instant gratification.

And then I think too, like with your event it was two days. And so turning around the images fairly quickly, there was times during the day where you all would be talking or having a session and so I would use that time to edit. And then that way I could show the girls their photos.

And I think that just took, first of all, I think what it did is it made them want more because they got so excited. And then that made them think oh, well, okay, well let me do this outfit and this outfit. And you just see, it's such a change from the initial shoot. It's just so different. And so then the next day they were really into it and they were coming with ideas. And that just makes me so happy.

Lindsay: I love it. That was one of my favorite things actually, just having you there all day and available for when someone felt ready to take photos, right? Like, okay, I'm in the energy, here I am, let's do it.

Teresa: Exactly.

Lindsay: And then you were just there to capture it.

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Teresa: And they would be inspired by each other too, I think.

Lindsay: Yes.

Teresa: Sometimes they would watch the other session and cheer them on, and a couple of times would step in and help me out and move a hair that was out of place or whatever. So it was fun to have the group there.

Typically on a one on one session I do half day sessions and full day sessions. And the reason I do that is because with content these days, it's so disposable almost, which is unfortunate because there's such an investment in it.

But you really do need like a cache or like this bank of content that you can go to to pull from for whatever it is. For podcast art, or your website, or social media if you're posting regularly. And so my half or full day sessions allow for that. And basically what it is, it just allows for more outfit changes.

Depending on the client, I have a client I work with regularly and travel with her and we'll try to go through up to 20 looks in a day. And that sounds so overwhelming, and I think initially for someone at their first shoot that's a full day or even a half day that can be very overwhelming because it sounds like such an undertaking.

You don't have to do that many, you don't have to have hair and makeup there, of course. But when you can change your look, even if it's 10 minutes after another look, then that just is another day of content you have that looks like it was taken in a different place. I mean, this is the age where we post a picture of our dinner and you don't know if it was last night or six months ago. So same with the content, we want it to be able to be repurposed and used in different ways.

And I really want my clients to get the most out of that investment. So it's kind of a whirlwind, but it is a lot like, it kind of reminds me of when I was 13, 14 and my best friend and I would get dressed up. And we had a Polaroid and it was like change outfits and then do a few more photos.



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Because we only had like 10 in the pack. You know, you could only do 10 photos in a Polaroid pack so we'd change.

Lindsay: That's so good change.

Teresa: It's kind of that same thing, but just costs a lot more and a lot more photos. A lot more photos. But it's a lot of fun too.

Lindsay: One thing I love that you do, I just had this memory of some pictures that you took of me and one thing I love that you do is that you don't only send me the perfectly put together, me looking at the camera making a normal face whatever photos. You also include some that are a little maybe silly or just with different faces.

And I used to think like what would I ever use these for? And it's so funny because I do actually use them quite often.

Teresa: That's good.

Lindsay: But I have a memory of, do you remember those pictures that you took of me on a stool? The very first time you took my pictures there was a stool and I was sitting on it and it was like the most awkward thing. The pictures were not good, I looked so awkward.

But I think just that moment and seeing those photos and being able to really laugh at them, and I actually used one of them for something that I was talking about where it's like sometimes things just don't work. But I think just realizing in that moment like there's nothing wrong with me in this photo, just the photo just didn't work, right? The stool didn't work.

Teresa: and typically right after that I'll say, okay, that was not good. Like I try to be really honest about it.

Lindsay: I remember you telling me and you saying like, yeah, this isn't working. Which was great by me because I felt very awkward and I didn't think it was working. And I'm sure the face I was making was probably ridiculous.

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Teresa: Well the good thing about those moments is we would both typically end up laughing, which then just relaxes you even more. So maybe it's all part of my master plan. Or I just had a bad idea. That's probably more what it was.

Lindsay: Well I saw some other people do the same pictures and they looked fine, so I don't think it was a bad idea. I think I just didn't, the stool and I just didn't get along. I did not execute very well.

Teresa: Yeah, I was going to say we didn't execute it properly.

Lindsay: But it was fun.

Teresa: Going back to when I was a wedding photographer, the last wedding I shot was in 2015, and I didn't have one for a year before that. This one just happened to be scheduled way, way, way out. But I made it a habit of, you know, I felt like they're not my photos. I've never felt like any photos are mine and so I don't feel like it's my place to decide what someone looks best as, unless it's just like obviously you've got one eye rolled back in your head. Unless it's funny, then I'm going to send it.

But I just pretty much would send them all. And I've never had a problem with that, I do have one client that's just like, please, it's so many. Just like hold them down. So what I do is I put all of the photos in an album and then I send her the best of those.

And then from there, you know, we go from there. But she always knows she has access to all those others just in case because sometimes the outtakes are, you know, they're just fun. And they might be fun to share with your spouse or your partner or whatever. But I'm glad to know that you like that.

Lindsay: I love it. And I mean, I definitely create a separate folder and then I move all the ones that I really like into that so that my assistant doesn't use one that I'm like, why would you use that? My face is crazy.

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Teresa: I was sitting on a stool, yeah.

Lindsay: But I do love having them, I think it really has changed the way I think about photos. And I can't remember if it was you that told me this, but someone, I learned this from a photographer at some point. Someone told me like we look at the photos and we criticize or judge ourselves in every single photo. But really, we're just looking for like what are like the five photos out of all of these that we love? I don't remember what the number is, but I've just really over time learned to look at it so differently.

Teresa: Yeah. And I think also, as a photographer, I've learned that, like I said earlier, I see myself in one certain way that would be "presentable," or what I would want to show as my best foot forward. When other people look at me, they're looking at me when I've got my eyes back in my head or I've got all the chins. And they're not judging me for that, why am I so critical to myself?

So I think that photo confidence, I think if anyone's listening that has an interest in it, I think there's such a need for a photo confidence coach. I'm not that girl. I thought at one point I would be, but I really think that there's a place for that because it's such a mind game. I think there's so much psychology involved in it and thought work as you all would say.

And I definitely think there's a need for that. And I love that the clients that I do work with that I can see, either over time I've seen that transformation of being more confident, or I don't know, as they've grown into it and how they use the content. I love to see how content is used. That's exciting.

I've been seeing some stories of yours recently that you've got all different photos from different shoots together. And I love that because I feel like that shows so many sides of you because every photographer is going to capture you just a little bit differently, whether it's visually or your personality. So I think it's great to see how the content is used as well.

Lindsay: I love that, that's so fun to think. I never have considered that from your perspective, like seeing, "Oh, I was there, I remember this. I took

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these photos.” And then just seeing how we use all the different photos is probably really fun.

Teresa: It is. It's a lot like, I don't always remember everyone's names, but I can spot one of my photos kind of like spotting your child in a crowd. And I don't know how that is. And obviously there's a lot, I mean, one session might have 1000 images depending on how long we shoot. So there's been a few that I've taken over the years, but I can definitely spot one a mile away.

Lindsay: I love that. That's interesting to think about. Okay, so let's talk about, so if someone is listening, and they're like, okay, she's convincing me I should probably hire a photographer, maybe I won't hate it. What are your tips? And we've kind of talked about this before, you're not taking a lot of new clients right now, so they can't all come hire you.

But if they wanted to hire a photographer, just what are your tips? What would you say, like what do they look for? I didn't know what to ask because I don't know enough about the topic, I don't think.

Teresa: Well, I think a lot, like in your case, asking for references. Looking at someone who you admire and who's maybe social media account or website you think looks like something you could relate to, and then asking them who does their photography. Hopefully it's not like a babysitter where you don't want to share them. Everyone can kind of share around who they use.

And then from there, researching that person and then I don't think it's good to go cold into a session without meeting or talking on the phone, or even Zooming. I do think it's such a personal, intimate experience that it's good to know that person and to kind of get a feel for that person.

So you might ask to see more of a complete portfolio than what is necessarily on their website or their social media. I think it's easy to kind of have a highlight reel, but you want to make sure that they consistently give you the quality that you're looking for.

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But then, most importantly, obviously, I guess the most important thing is that you kind of mesh and you get along. But finding someone who either shoots in a style that you like, and you may not even know what that style is, you can give examples. So you could say, you know, I really like Lindsay's Instagram, and they show that and then that person says, okay, I can do that style.

Or you might find one that's light and airy and has more of an ethereal quality. You know, if you're a yoga coach and you're very outdoorsy, you want a photographer that isn't using a lot of flash and shooting indoors a lot. So find someone that resonates with your style, with the style of your brand. And then also just kind of with your personality so that you can mesh.

And then typically I think someone would say, oh, the first thing you need to do is know what your budget is. I mean, that's probably good advice, but some people aren't going to have a large amount to invest in photography. I would encourage them to find someone they like and then reach out and get the information, or find a few photographers they like and reach out and get that pricing information.

But also, you know, if you don't have it to invest right now, if you don't have, sometimes it can be thousands of dollars for a photographer. If you don't have that to invest, then start out with your own content and creating your own content. Don't be afraid of that if you want to save up for the best. Or hire someone locally that you may not see yourself working with long-term, but you really do want to get some content out.

Don't be afraid to, I think we don't always have to put out perfection. You know, is it like present over perfect or whatever, you just kind of want to show up. So it might be content that you're capturing or that you start sort of small. And I don't mean that like against startup photographers or smaller photographers. Some are very talented and maybe they just need a coach to help them charge more.

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Lindsay: Yep, this is true.

Teresa: Maybe that's what they need.

Lindsay: Before I did what I do now, before I kind of niched into this I was a general life coach and I worked with a lot of, a lot of people that came to me were entrepreneurs because I was an entrepreneur at the time, before I was a coach. And I worked with a couple photographers and we talked a lot about pricing and money all of the time.

Teresa: Well it's so hard because when you have an eye for photography, or if it's something you just have a knack for it, you might not necessarily see the value of it because it's just something you can do. I didn't have any professional training.

I have no professional training whatsoever. I'm completely self-taught. So it took probably 10 to 12 years before I got to where I would charge even what I would consider not to be my competition was charging, you know? Like not the same quality of work. And so that took a long time. I could have used a life coach a long time ago. It might be a different situation now.

Then I have a client who, I don't want to name any names because I'm not sure that she would want me to. But she said I should be charging \$10,000 a day. And I looked at her and I'm like, "So you do realize that you're saying you're going to pay \$10,000 a day?" But I haven't done that and I have no intentions of doing that.

But it's nice to hear something like that when you've gone from, you know, the very first photos I took, someone gave me \$20 for. And I thought that was the most amazing thing ever, that someone would pay me for photo.

Anyways, I got out there a little bit. But yeah, there's a lot of thought work that goes into that. And so you don't have to necessarily start at the top. And it's not always the case where you pay someone a lot and you get what you were expecting.

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So it's a little bit of research, perhaps a lot of research. You know, it's kind of like dating, you don't want to necessarily just pick the first one that comes along. But once you find that one then hopefully you know they're in their budget and you can have that conversation.

But going back to capturing your own content, I think there's nothing wrong with that. Some people I follow, they're creating reels. And it was so fun to see y'all creating reels at the event in Palm Springs and kind of watching.

Lindsay: Well let's be clear, hold on. I don't know that it was you all, I think it was not me. I get messages all the time, "When are you going to do reels?" I don't know. Maybe never. Maybe I'll think about it.

Teresa: It's frustrating how important something like that is now, to show up on reels because of algorithms and the way you get punished if you're not using video and reels. But there's a little bit of a learning curve. But just going on Instagram stories or live or something and kind of just showing up as you, I think it serves a couple of purposes.

It saves money that you could save up for a bigger shoot, maybe like an annual shoot. But also it shows everyone that you're a real person and you're not always dressed to the nines or have your hair and makeup done. You're more relatable.

I think that's really important to come across as relatable in everything that we do. Unless maybe you're, I mean, I don't know, if you're like a big time money coach, maybe you don't want people to see you in your holy socks and stuff.

Lindsay: But maybe.

Teresa: Maybe.

Lindsay: Maybe that's why they love you.

Teresa: But I don't think there's anything wrong with just creating your own content or having, you know, maybe you have another coach that you are

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buddies with, you're in a mastermind together, you get together and take some photos of one another. There's so many things you can do now. I mean, the phones themselves are amazing, but you can buy these ring lights that are like 80, \$90 on Amazon. That's a little bit of a, I mean, they're not big, but it's not like a small thing.

You can also now get these lights that just clip right around your phone that give great light. Or you can just go close to a window or outside, like under an overhang where it's natural light coming in on you. And if you have like a bright sunny room in your house, maybe you have some sheer curtains you can close to kind of diffuse the light a little bit.

And then you just kind of play around with it and see what looks best and maybe edit a little bit. But it's really, I don't think it's as challenging as people think. And then you do kind of feel silly, I took my own head shots one day on my front porch. We have a Dutch door that opens top half and the bottom half. And so I was going to take my photo standing behind the Dutch door with it open looking out.

And so I had my tripod set up and I had a remote in my hand. Well, the door is so big that it comes up to like my chest. So I then had to get on a stool or like kneel, I was like on a chair. I had to kneel on a chair and then the awkward thing of taking your own photo, I was like, "Ha, ha, ha. Ha, ha, ha." Trying to like fake laugh.

Well, then the garbage men came by and I'm like so ridiculous. I'm like waving at them. I ended up getting one, but it made me realize how incredibly uncomfortable it is to be in front of the camera. But I think you could do the same kind of thing with your phone, a self-timer on your phone. But honestly selfies are just as good, there's nothing wrong with having that arm in the photo.

Lindsay: I had forgotten this, but some of my very first photos that I used for my business when I just needed some photos, I had my kids take them, my daughter. At the time I think she was pretty young, like six maybe. And I



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just, you know, it was like just take 100. Like just keep taking them, I'm just going to move around, you keep taking the pictures. Surely we'll get at least one or two. And it worked. It was great. And she loved it. She had so much.

Teresa: Yeah, you might have a budding photographer there. No, I think that's a great idea.

Lindsay: Yeah, she still loves it. She'll say like, can I take your picture again? I'm like, I don't really need them now, but I guess.

Teresa: Yeah, sure. Yeah, I think that and you can end up with some really fun outtakes and you're helping her create memories. But just in general, in fact, to that point I think that young teenagers and teenagers in general are probably the ones to help us make TikToks and reels. So you might have a little summer job there for them if you need some reels.

Lindsay: That's true. I know, I think just watch some teenagers, they will teach you how to do all the things. My daughter's aren't quite old enough for that yet, they don't have social media or anything. But they definitely love to, they know all about the selfies and all of that already.

Teresa: Of course. Of course. My daughter loves to tell the story that when she was probably 12 or 13 she got like her first phone and she was taking selfies. And being the, you know, I've learned now, so I've come a long way. But I told her, I said you shouldn't, this was like way early in the selfie age. I was like you really shouldn't go around taking a lot of photos of yourself, it makes you look very vain.

And she tells that story now that like a month later I was taking selfies after selfie and like take a selfie with me.

Lindsay: This is amazing.

Teresa: I felt so bad. And she's like, "Mom, you don't even know what that did to me." It makes me feel horrible now, but I've learned so much as a

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woman about confidence and if that made her feel confident, then I should have run with it. We talk about that a lot now. She likes to bring it up all the time.

Lindsay: Of course she does.

Teresa: She's almost 24 now, so she was around early on in the selfie age. So in terms of technology, she and I grew up together and they both, my son is 20, he'll be 21 soon. And they both taught me a lot about social media and I've had them take photos of me. But that always ends up in either tears or laughter on someone's part.

I'm not so naive to think, it is very stressful being photographed. I totally get that. It really is, whether you're just doing a few at home by yourself or whether you're having a professional shoot, then you might really feel like the pressure is on. I've had clients in the past say like, is it okay if I have a glass of wine first? I'm like you do you, whatever it takes to help you relax, that's great.

But hopefully, like we were talking about earlier, just within a few minutes of a session you can kind of start to relax and enjoy it more and not stress over it.

Lindsay: I will say if anybody heard that and they're like, "Oh, I should probably have a glass of wine before I take my photos." One thing I will share, which is kind of a funny just story about myself is that I used to do that because I would be so nervous.

And so maybe I'd have like a glass of champagne or maybe I'd be there with a girlfriend and we would both have a glass of champagne or whatever. And one thing I've noticed now, and one reason I don't do this anymore, is because when I do I get a little droopy eye, just on one side.

Teresa: Oh no.

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Lindsay: And it might be mostly only I notice it, but I can definitely notice it. And so I had to stop doing that, I just can't drink before I have photos because I just get a weird eye.

Teresa: Yeah, less Photoshop.

Lindsay: So just be sure if you're doing that, just check the photos, see what they look like. Make sure you don't have a droopy eye.

Teresa: And I mentioned Photoshop just then and it made me think of something, you know, we are at the age of body positivity and confidence. And we're really learning, as women, to come into our own and feel confident in the skin that we're in. That I could not agree with more.

That said, I do feel like sometimes to say the camera adds 10 pounds is, I think, an understatement sometimes, depending on the angles, and maybe an outfit that you chose, or a blouse that you look back later and you're like, that's just not me. It's not a matter of I want to look thinner, or I want this or that, it's maybe just not you. And that's not something that necessarily I would see looking through the camera, not knowing you, not being in your head.

But I have absolutely no issue whatsoever if clients come back and ask for touch ups. There's no judgment there. I'm sure that's maybe a touchy subject. I know with magazine covers it's kind of misleading. I would never want a client to be Photoshopped to the point where they don't look like themselves. But sometimes there's just small things and it can be just like whitening your teeth or things like that.

Personally, I have no problem with that. That's always included in my sessions. Not very many people take me up on it, which is good. That means the photos are quality enough that they're happy with them. But from time to time they will and there's no judgment whatsoever. Not at all.

In fact, one year for Christmas we just did this silly Christmas card. We did this like National Lampoon's Christmas card. And my husband was cousin

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Eddie and he had on like the Dickey and the tight sweater, the tight white sweater and his hair slicked back. And I've got a moo moo on and my hair in rollers.

And so my husband, at the time, had a little bit of a belly. And so one night, we're sitting in bed that night after the session and I'm like, I Photoshopped his stomach a lot. And so I turned the computer to him and I'm like, "What do you think? Isn't this a good one?" He goes, "You better Photoshop my stomach." And so I just hit undo and his stomach got like four times as big. And he's like, "Oh, sorry".

So I didn't take his stomach off completely because people would look at it and go, this is so fake, right? He's since lost weight and gotten in shape. But at the time it would have been so obvious. Not that we weren't sending out the silly card already, but I guess that's kind of the point, is that there are sometimes just a couple of slight modifications that might help you put your best foot forward. And I don't have a problem with that.

Lindsay: That's funny. That is a funny story about your husband. And as you were talking, one thing that I thought of is that this is sometimes how you are at photo shoots and you just talk. And I think that that is part of what puts me at so much ease, of just like we're just hanging out, we're just talking.

Teresa: You forget what you're doing.

Lindsay: I do, I forget what I'm doing. Just like right now, I'm like, oh wait, we're recording a podcast, like get back to the questions.

Teresa: It's intentional.

Lindsay: But I think that this is like a gift that you have truly, like during photo shoots where you just show up as 100% you. And I think that that makes it easier for me at least, for your clients that just show up as like, oh yeah, we're just here. We're just like being us, this is just what we're doing. And it does feel very different.

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Teresa: Not that I'm a coach by any means, but I just think that's such a lesson in general about being in business, is showing up as yourself, whoever that is. You know, your crazy self or your chatty self. I just don't think it could ever hurt.

So I appreciate you saying that because there were so many years that I tried to show up in the way that I thought a professional photographer should act. And then it occurred to me one day, I'm like, I don't really know what that is.

Lindsay: This is so much work I do with my clients, so we're just like coming around full circle because so much of what I do with my clients is like, listen, your clients just want you to be you. You don't need to show up trying to coach like someone else, trying to look like someone else. We're just going to be you and be the best coach that you are, right? In your way, for your people.

Teresa: Absolutely. I did play the wedding photographer in the Miley Cyrus movie, *The Last Song* with Greg Kinnear. It was filmed in Savannah and I was the wedding photographer in that one. And so I remember thinking, how does a wedding photographer look?

Lindsay: Wait, you were in a movie?

Teresa: I was, well my ponytail was. So my kids were extras, actually you can see them in the movie. It's Miley Cyrus and Liam, not Liam Neeson what's the Liam guy? Liam Hemsworth, that one? Definitely not Liam Neeson.

So there's a scene where they're walking up the steps of this house, it's called *The Last Song*. It's a Nicholas Sparks book. And so my kids are extras in it and you can see them a couple times. And my daughter is in like a wedding dancing scene at the reception. So I was the wedding photographer, that's actually how my kids got involved, was they needed a wedding photographer as an extra.

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So I went and I am the only person ever that has noticed my ponytail in the wedding because I see like a blip of my ponytail from the back. No one else agrees with me, they're like you're seeing things. So I'm 100, well I'm like 99.9% not in the movie, but they were like just act like a wedding photographer. And I remember going, well how does the wedding photographer act? Even though I was a wedding photographer.

And I kind of panicked a little bit and so I just walked around and took pictures, because what do you do other than that as a wedding photographer? But yeah, I remember having that moment where I was just like, how does a wedding photographer act? Because I finally, you know, a few years into shooting weddings and events and things just started just to be myself.

And that's when I really felt like I hit my stride. And it's actually when I felt like I could charge what I thought I was worth too, for some reason. Whereas you would think showing up as a zany southern girl, that you need to kind of give them a discount, but not so much.

Lindsay: And one thing we were talking about before we started recording is how you do show up sometimes. And sometimes you can be a little, you said, your words were you can be a little bossy.

Teresa: Yes, bossy.

Lindsay: And I said, I actually think that puts me at so much ease because it feels, to me it just feels like you've got this. Like you're in control, you know what's going on. I don't have to worry about what to do, you're going to tell me don't look that way, put your head that way, put your hand down, whatever. And you don't say it like that, you say it very differently. But my experience of it is, oh, I don't have to worry about this at all.

And what I think is really interesting is this is also exactly what I teach my clients, is how to not necessarily be bossy, but just to show up as who they are and just really own it. Because it does help your clients feel that like, okay, they've got this, right? I don't have to be in charge. I don't have to

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think about anything except just showing up and being present in this moment.

Teresa: Well that is very true.

Lindsay: Yeah. Do you do that on purpose? Is it like something you've learned over time?

Teresa: Well, I think, not for the longest, but initially in my business, especially when I switched over to commercial photography I probably did a lot of fake it till you make it. I know that's not a popular phrase. But I didn't feel confident to go in and be like, "Okay, do this, do this, look this way." So I just sort of, again, what do I think this is supposed to look like?

But then like five minutes in I come out and I'm just like, "Oh, but you look so great like this, and let's move this way." And sometimes I have to repeat myself because I talk so fast, especially if I'm not in the south. I need a translator sometimes. But I definitely think it's not intentional, but then it is. Like it became intentional because I saw how much at ease it put my clients and that's what they're hiring me for. So why wouldn't I?

And sometimes towards a part of the session where I realize this person is comfortable with me I'll make jokes and I'll tease a little bit. Always though, what I think their comfort level is, I have one client who the second she makes any kind of steamy face I say I have the uh-oh feeling. She gives me the uh-oh feeling. And I hope she listens to this.

But it's hilarious because that's when she's hit her stride in a session, is when she gives me the uh-oh feeling. We know that we're at the pinnacle, and it's probably going to be time for a nap soon, because she likes to take breaks.

Lindsay: That is amazing. That's so good. What I love about that is I think generally I'm a pretty funny person. I'm like a fun, friendly person, but get me in front of a camera and I will make all the serious faces.

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So that's one thing that I really love about you, is that when you do make jokes when you are just like, okay, we have to like loosen this up a little bit. It really, like those photos that I see of myself are like, oh, this is the me that I think I am. Whereas when I have worked with photographers in the past who don't necessarily do that, the pictures are still fine. I just get back a bunch of like very serious photos.

Teresa: Yeah.

Lindsay: It's me, but it's like not me.

Teresa: Sometimes I do the opposite. Sometimes if I have someone that's getting into like a certain smile pattern, and that's like the nicest way I can say that they aren't changing their expression at all. Then I'll ask them to give me a serious look and then I might sort of make fun of that serious look. And I know it sounds awful to say it that way.

Lindsay: No, that's exactly what you do.

Teresa: But I do that 100% so that they'll laugh. And then after they laugh, that's when we capture what their real smile is or maybe a different variation of their smile.

Going back to being a wedding photographer, I mean, I photographed every size, shape, color, you name it. And sometimes I would get a bride who had it and she was very attractive and she had in her mind that this was the one way she could smile.

Lindsay: The one angle, yep.

Teresa: And you know, you see someone and you think, oh, she's 10, or she's so gorgeous, that that would be the dream bride. And I always, and in terms of clients now, and I want the client who doesn't think that they're photogenic so that I can show them that they're photogenic. And then have that aha moment that we spoke about earlier.



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But also they're a lot easier to sort of mold and shape in terms of posing, versus someone who has that one like chin down, hand on shoulder, or hand on the hip. Gosh, hand on the shoulder would look a little awkward. But hand on the hip, chin down, you know what I mean? Like the kind of winky eye or whatever it is.

I love the challenge of getting someone who thinks that they're not photogenic, but then they really, really are. I mean, we all are in some capacity.

I kind of freak my family out when we go places because I like study a person like at the table next to us. I'm like, "Y'all, that person is so photogenic." And they're like, what are you talking about? I'm like, "No, just look. Look at their eyes and look at their skin." And so I really study people and I think it kind of creeps my family out. And it probably creeps people out too. But I do really think that we're all in our own way photogenic. Now, if this camera was on right now I might not say that.

Lindsay: Stop. That just made me think, it's so interesting how many parallels there are. I keep saying this, but how many parallels there are between what we do because that is my favorite type of coach as well, the coach that's like, I don't think I'm very good at what I do. I need your help. And I'm like, oh, no, I just have to show you that you're already amazing. And like, yes, we're going to take it up a few notches, but you're already a great coach.

Teresa: It really is very similar. So then you just coach them up, and then we'll do a retreat and do photos and then they'll see all the things come together.

Lindsay: I love it.

Teresa: That was a really fun part of the retreat, was to kind of stand back off to the side, maybe while I was editing, and listen to the conversations and to these like aha moments. It was really fun. Sometimes it was funny, because you were just like, hello, I've been saying this for, you know,

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however long. And then this huge, I could like almost see the light bulb across the room myself go off on someone's head because it was just fun to see those moments.

And then like I said earlier, just then that transitioning into their photos, the confidence that they gained from the experience there in Palm Springs that week. And then those last photos we did on the street still just give me chills.

Lindsay: Oh, my favorite.

Teresa: When I see someone post one they just give me chills because it really was this culmination of such an incredible few days, at least couple days for me, for y'all several days. And to kind of see it all come together, it was pretty perfect.

Lindsay: I love that. It felt perfect in the moment. I wish I could recreate that every day, although it might be a little too much every day, but it was pretty great.

All right, what else? What haven't we talked about? Is there anything else that you want to share that would be helpful for coaches thinking about photos?

Teresa: I'm trying to think of stuff people ask me sometimes, like the coolest thing I've ever photographed.

Lindsay: What's the coolest thing you've ever photographed? I would never think of that question, but now that you said it I need to know.

Teresa: Well and I say that and then I don't even really know the answer because to me the coolest thing I've ever photographed is probably like a bug on a flower or something. You know, I'm just a nerd.

My husband thinks the coolest thing I ever photographed, I had a liquor distributor that I was doing some national brands, like bottles, photos of bottles. And there was a photo in Times Square. And so he said one day to

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someone that was like the greatest thing ever. And I'm like, it was okay. And he's like, you don't think that was the greatest thing you've ever done? I'm like, absolutely not. I don't think that's the greatest thing I've ever done. But it's it was fun to see in Times Square.

But I photographed an album cover that was kind of cool and in sort of an interesting way for Gregg Allman from the Allman Brothers.

Lindsay: Oh, that's fun.

Teresa: That was really special to do. It was his posthumous album. I met him before he passed and did some photography. And then after he passed, his team asked me to photograph album cover. So he recorded the album right up until he passed away. And so that was a really cool experience. I think my mom was in that era, and she grew up in that southern rock era. So it was nice to be able, I actually took her with me out to the shoot and it was really cool to be able to impress her.

But I don't really know that there's like the coolest thing. I just, each shoot I do, I typically take something away from that shoot that's like the best from that shoot. And then I really do just kind of move on. I try to edit everything the same day that you've seen, if not the next so that I can kind of move on to the next thing.

Because it's not that my attention span is short, it's just creatively I'm ready for the next thing. Like I'm ready to get immersed in that next thing. And you don't want to go back a week later and you're looking back. A week feels like a long time ago in terms of photos for me.

But I really do think, not to sound cliché, but I think that each person I photograph, because like that's my personality, like this is the greatest thing I've ever done. And then the next time, oh my God, it doesn't get any better than this. So I think it's each time, definitely.

Lindsay: I completely get that because sometimes people ask me like, oh, you have favorite clients, right? Like, do you have favorite clients? Of

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course you do, who are they? And my thought is always like, of course I'm closer to some clients because just naturally we're just more like each other or would be friends in real life. But my real answer is, truly all of my clients are my favorite for totally different reasons.

Teresa: Absolutely. Well it's like asking which kid is your favorite? How in the world would you choose?

Lindsay: Right. Yeah, and I think sometimes it's like the clients that are a little more quiet or a little more reserved that people might think like, oh, you probably aren't that close with those clients. Those sometimes are my favorite because it's like watching them like pulling out of them, right? Like pulling out their personality and watching them grow. And then other clients are my favorite for totally different reasons.

Teresa: I have a client that I'm kind of like that, like you're closer to some, that I feel close to. I don't know that she would feel the same way. She might be creeped out listening to this. But she happens, I'm just going to say it, she happens to look just like my dead sister. And when I say just like my dead sister, I'm talking like her identical twin. And so at least once a shoot I look at her and she's like, oh shit, here it comes. Excuse me, I hope that was okay.

Lindsay: Totally fine.

Teresa: She's like, oh, here it comes. And if there's someone new with us, she'll explain. And I'll take the photo out, and she agrees. She agrees she looks just like her. So it's something will happen and you just get this moment of like she'll laugh or something. And I'm just like, it'll give me chill bumps everywhere. And so it's kind of a joke with us.

Lindsay: That is fascinating.

Teresa: Yes, it's a little bit of a joke with us. But it's hard not to have favorites, like you said, I really, really do like the ones that don't think that they are good being photographed or that they're conventionally attractive

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or whatever. They think that and I like to show them otherwise. So everybody's my favorite.

Lindsay: So it doesn't bother you when I show up and say I'm so bad at this?

Teresa: No, I want you to so I can like, watch this.

Lindsay: You're like, yes, let's do it.

Teresa: Let me just get you to lay there on that bed in your fancy outfit.

Lindsay: Seriously, yeah. So I showed my husband those pictures and he was like, okay, those are good ones. He's like, are you going to use those for marketing, laying in a bed? I said probably.

Teresa: Well, I will say you did not give me the uh-oh feeling then, but we were getting close.

Lindsay: I'm not great at the, we always just end up laughing when you tell me to make whatever. I forget what, like blue steel or whatever you tell me to do. I just can't help it, I laugh every time and then it's laughing photos in a bed. So that's fine.

Teresa: Blue steel is very challenging. Yeah, you either like really nail blue steel or you look constipated. There's like nothing in the middle for that look. I think Tyra Banks called it smizing, smiling with your eyes.

Lindsay: Yes.

Teresa: So that was a lot of fun to master.

Lindsay: Well we all know that Brig Johnson, we'll just shout her out right now, nails it.

Teresa: Oh, good lord, yes.

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Lindsay: Not only does she nail it, she has like 10 blue steel faces. They're all different, they're all amazing and perfect.

Teresa: Yeah, it was really hard when photographing her because she is like in that moment. I mean, she's making love to that camera. And it's just like, I'm like, do I just keep shooting or ask her to go change an outfit? Like, do I smoke a cigarette? What am I doing right now? And I don't smoke.

Lindsay: That's so good.

Teresa: She's awesome.

Lindsay: So funny. I'm sure she will hear this and it will make her laugh. All right, well, I am so grateful that we did this today. And I had no idea that you are a movie star and that you are the photographer for the stars and all the things.

Teresa: Just my ponytail is. But my kids are definitely there.

Lindsay: I learned so much.

Teresa: Well, thank you for letting me do this. You know, being in kind of an early retirement I do feel a little bit, I don't know, like out of the loop and I don't feel quite as professional as I used to sometimes. So when you asked me to do this, I was like, this is nice, look how fancy I am going on a podcast.

Lindsay: Super fancy, that's how we do it around here. You know. You know me, super fancy.

Teresa: Absolutely.

Lindsay: All right, well, is there anything else you would like to say? And if not, tell them where they can find you if they want to follow you.

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Teresa: So my website is [foodandfemales.com](http://foodandfemales.com). And you can always check that out for some posing ideas or outfit ideas because I have a lot of photos of clients there.

Lindsay: That's a good idea.

Teresa: And you can also send me an email through the website if you ever have any questions. I'm not taking new clients right now, but if you have any questions in general about the process, or you need tips, or you might need a photographer recommendation, mostly I would know them in the southeast. Don't ever hesitate to reach out to me through my website or you can find me @teresaearnestsocial on Instagram. I mean, I guess we can just write that somewhere.

Lindsay: We'll link it up, yep. It'll all be in the show notes

Teresa: Because no matter how many times I spell my name nobody gets it right.

Lindsay: Listen, my last name is Dotzlaf, I get it.

Teresa: You win that one. Yeah, for sure.

Lindsay: Perfect. Thank you so much. We will link that all in the show notes so they can find it there. And thank you so much.

Teresa: Thank you. I hope to see you again soon.

Lindsay: Yes.

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