

Ep #98: Secret Fears: What Are You Avoiding?



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 98.

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, before we get started today I want to direct you to the show notes to sign up for Coach Week immediately because it's going to be so fun. It is September 19th through 23rd. We are going to be talking about everything getting in between you and your coaching brilliance.

If you've ever wondered what it would be like to work with me or to be in any of my communities or my spaces, this is going to be an opportunity to just get like a preview for free because it's going to be a full week training. There's going to be a private community. And I have been planning out the content over the last couple of weeks, really, and I am just so excited about it.

It's the first time I've done a week long training like this, where I'm just offering all this goodness for free to all of the coaches. And if you're wondering if it's for you, we're going to be covering all kinds of topics from coaching skills for newer coaches, coaching skills for more established coaches, creating safety in your communities and in your spaces in your coaching. Coach panels where we talk to a bunch of coaches, you'll get to ask them questions.

We're going to be debunking a bunch of coaching myths. So things that you may have heard before about what coaching is or about the coaching industry that might be getting in the way of you showing up for your coaching brilliance. The difference between coaching and teaching and consulting and all of the things and so much more. Those are just the things at the top of my mind. These are all going to be interactive trainings and workshops.

Ep #98: Secret Fears: What Are You Avoiding?

When you register you will get a full list of the schedule that you can immediately add to your calendar. And you can kind of pick and choose which ones you want to come to live, which ones you want to catch on the replays. Because yes, replays will be offered. But when you come live, you do get the opportunity to be coached by me.

All of these are going to be run by me, I can't wait to do them. I can't wait to dive into all of the goodness, all of the coaching, and just geek out over coaching for the whole week, because it's what I love to do. So that's it, go sign up right now.

It's for all the coaches. It doesn't matter what kind of coach you are, there will be something in there that is useful for you, I promise. You'll also get an opportunity at the very end, of course, I'll be talking about The Coach Lab. This is kind of an intro to The Coach Lab. It's a little taste of what it would be like to be in The Coach Lab.

So if you've ever wondered what that's like, come join Coach Week and you'll get to see. And then at the end you'll have the opportunity to ask me any questions about myself, about coaching, about The Coach Lab, about any of it. So come join us, it's going to be a lot of fun and you have to be there.

All right, today I want to dive into something that has been showing up a lot. But specifically, I coached someone in my mastermind, Coaching Masters, on this a couple days ago and I wanted to address it because I think it's so important to talk about. I see it happening for so many of you, so many coaches, and it's something I call secret fears.

And I think this is something that takes up so much of our brain space. And again, just like I always talk about for all my episodes, I want you to listen through the lens of how does this apply to you? Because I'm positive that it does in some way. But also how does it apply to your clients and how can you help them with their secret fears? But I'm going to be talking about it through the lens right now of how I see it showing up for coaches. All right?

Ep #98: Secret Fears: What Are You Avoiding?

So, again, this came up in my mastermind and I just thought, oh my gosh, I immediately need to record a podcast episode about this because it must be talked about. So when I say secret fears, what I mean by that is something that you, as a coach, are afraid of happening or afraid might happen.

And it's not in your subconscious, it's not that you don't know it's there. You kind of know it's there, but you're never addressing it, you're never looking at it, you're never examining it. And you're never saying like, "Okay, what if this did actually happen? What would I do? How would I handle it? What if this was true? How would I solve for it?"

So it's kind of like the, what, the metaphor or analogy? I think it's a metaphor, the elephant in the room, right? So if you don't know what that means, it means like if you're a group full of people and you're talking, and there's something that's like a little awkward that you're purposefully avoiding, we call that the elephant in the room. Right?

It's like there's this awkward thing, we're all avoiding it even though we know it's there. We're pretending like it's not there. And so this is like the elephant in the room, except it's in your brain. And what happens is it takes up so much brain space, you are continually trying to solve for how to avoid it instead of solving for the actual issue.

And this can show up in lots of different ways. So I'm going to give you some examples, but after this episode I want you to also think about how am I doing this? Where am I doing this? Guaranteed you are somewhere because we all do it. I do it. It's like part of the genius of coaching, is bringing these things up to the surface and just saying like, "Hey, let's look at them."

So I'm going to tell you how it came up in my mastermind the other day and I'm also going to give you some other examples. So one of my clients, and by the way, this could be any client. So this is not going to give away anything about who the client was because it really doesn't matter. But this

Ep #98: Secret Fears: What Are You Avoiding?

could be any of you, right? I've had this come up so often, which is why I knew I had to talk about it.

So one of my clients was talking about like what does she call herself, what kind of coach is she? And she was going back and forth between a business coach and a life coach or something else more specific. But for now, for purposes of this we'll just say business coach or life coach. And I remember having this exact kind of conundrum for myself in my business.

And so we started talking about it and I was coaching her and coaching her. And what it came down to was her fear was I'm afraid to call myself a business coach because what if I don't know how to get my clients business results?

Like I see them creating all these other results, but in order to call myself a business coach I have to show up in a certain way that means my clients are creating this very specific result. Which in this case was like a money result, right? Which usually if you're a business coach there's some sort of money involved, money result involved in your coaching.

And this is so, so common. A lot of you are probably even nodding along right now like, "Oh my gosh, this is me. Am I a business coach? Or am I a life coach?" And this could be true for like am I a marriage coach or am I a life coach? Am I a weight loss coach or am I a life coach? And there's a good chance I'll be recording a totally separate episode on kind of naming yourself and how you decide what to call yourself. That's not the purpose of today's episode.

I'm using this example because what happens when you're thinking this, right? When you're like, "Oh no, I'm afraid to call myself this thing because of what it means. It means I'm going to have to help my clients create these specific results and I don't know if I know how to do that."

Notice the difference between avoiding that and then trying to solve for, like what my client was trying to solve for is like how do I change what I call myself so that I can avoid this topic altogether? Which, by the way, who

Ep #98: Secret Fears: What Are You Avoiding?

cares what you call yourself? Just pick something. Although I do have opinions about what is a business coach and what isn't. Again, that'll be in another episode.

But she was trying to solve for that because she was avoiding addressing the actual thing. The actual secret fear, the fear that was there taking up all of her brain space, consuming so much time, consuming so much of her effort trying to avoid it. Instead of deciding, actually, most of my clients do hire me for business results, how do I help them create that, right?

So you can either put your time into avoiding the thing and avoiding like solving for how can I avoid this more? How can I avoid this better? Or how can I just solve the problem? How can I own it and say I am a business coach, this is what I love to coach my clients on. How do I help them create the results that they're looking for? How can I guarantee these results? Or even what results can I guarantee? What results do I want to guarantee?

So here are some more examples that I see come up a lot of these like secret fears, right? I am afraid of what someone will think. I coach people so often on this, especially in The Coach Lab. Okay, what do you mean, right? It's like, well, I'm usually afraid of what people will think if I even just say I'm a coach. Or if I say I'm this kind of coach versus this other kind of coach. Or if I tell my family I'm a coach, or whatever, fill in the blank, right?

So instead of, what I see a lot of people doing is avoiding it like, okay, well, I'm going to avoid this. And by avoiding it, what that means is I'm going to take these other actions, so I just won't talk about it at all. I will hide it from my family or like make sure they can't see my social media posts. I will, you know, just kind of hide and make myself smaller and more quiet so I don't have to address this fear of what will people think.

The next one is I'm afraid someone won't understand. So when I tell them I'm a coach and I describe what that is, again, these are like a lot of Coach Lab things, a lot of things that we talk about in The Coach Lab. I'm afraid that someone won't understand when I tell them what coaching is.

Ep #98: Secret Fears: What Are You Avoiding?

So then a lot of times what happens is, instead of solving for that, okay, well, how will I describe it? What are 100 ways? You've heard me talk about that before, right? I had someone from The Coach Lab come on and she talked about all the ways that she decided she could describe coaching and exactly what it is and how she helps her clients. That's so much more useful than, I'm just not going to tell anyone.

Here's a big one that I coach on a lot in Coaching Masters, in my mastermind, I'm afraid my process doesn't work. Which is very similar to the example I gave in the beginning, right, that created this whole idea for this podcast. I'm afraid my process doesn't work.

So instead of really digging in and saying, what would create an amazing process? How can I create a process that really helps my clients get results? I'm just going to avoid it altogether. I see this showing up a lot, lot, lot. And the ways I usually see it is people come to me and say, "Well, I don't know, we get like halfway through, we get halfway through the package or even we get all the way to the end of the package and I'm not really sure what results my clients have created."

Usually, that's because instead of solving for this thing, does my process work, is the coaching working, you're avoiding it for like the whole time. I don't want to check back in because I don't really know if it's working. Or it might show up of like constantly changing your process without just evaluating is it working? Or constantly thinking, I need a process or like I'm afraid that I don't really have a process. And focusing on that instead of, oh, let me just create one.

Which by the way, is work we do in Coaching Masters. So if that's you, be on the lookout for the next launch which is coming in November. Just, you know, drop that there. So that is work that we do.

But just notice the difference between saying, I'm afraid I don't have this, so I'm going to avoid it altogether and then it becomes the elephant in my brain, right? It's like the secret fear that isn't actually secret at all. Or, oh, I

Ep #98: Secret Fears: What Are You Avoiding?

don't know if I have a process, let me really dig in here. Let me see, does my process work? Does my coaching work? Let me check in with my clients and see how it's going.

Related to this is the like I'm afraid my clients aren't getting results. I'm always surprised by how often this comes up for coaches. And I will ask them like, well, okay, are they? And they look at me like a deer in headlights. Listen, it's okay, nothing has gone wrong. And also, let's dig in, are your clients getting results? How do you know? How do you want to know. How do you want to measure it?

One that comes up that I notice happens for me sometimes is I'm afraid someone might disagree. So the way this shows up for me and the way I see it showing up for some coaches is when I'm afraid someone might disagree, then I just don't say the thing. I'll keep it to myself, I'll just assume people know, that they can read my mind. Instead of me being very vocal about it and talking about it here on my podcast or wherever, on social media, on my website, wherever.

I see this come up a lot for some of my clients too, right? Like I'm afraid this is the wrong process or that my clients will disagree with the way I'm doing something. And then instead of solving for that, like okay, well, what part am I afraid they'll disagree with? Which part am I afraid I'm doing wrong? Instead of solving for that, and just really noticing it, they just avoid it altogether.

So what I would encourage you to do, whether this is with you, for you, or for your clients, just notice these things, right? Like dig in when you notice yourself avoiding or just like that fleeting thought of like, "Ooh, don't look over there." Which isn't the exact thought that I have, but it's something along the lines of like, "Not today, we're not going to focus there right now." Or, you know, we'll think about this later.

Anytime you just notice that coming up, I would just encourage you to take the spotlight in your brain and shine it on the thing. This is so much of the

Ep #98: Secret Fears: What Are You Avoiding?

work we can do as coaches and it's so much of the work that I find myself doing over and over and over. It like takes the fear out of it, right?

I love, I think it's Brig Johnson, who you've heard here on my podcast, who's a good friend of mine, a colleague. And she says it's like you hear, by the way, I have no idea if she came up with this or if it was someone else.

But she's like you hear like a noise, a scary noise in the closet, right? You have two choices, you can either pretend like it's not there, but then that fear keeps building, right? Like what is that? What's in there? What's over there in the corner? And just, oh, let's not look. Oh my gosh, that's so scary.

Or you can take the spotlight, open the closet, the flashlight, and shine it in. Turn on the light in there, right, and say what is it? Oh, it's just this thing that fell over and it made a clang or, you know, whatever it is, right? I don't know how the analogy really works from there, but it's taking the spotlight and shining it on the fear and just removing the power from it, right? Totally removing the fear.

I'm afraid of what people will think. Okay, perfect, what are they going to think? Let's talk through all the things. Let's just pull them all out, right? It's like all the things hanging in the closet, let's pull out every single one and examine it. See if it's true, see if it's not true. If it does feel true, let's solve for it. How are we going to fix this? How are we going to not be afraid of this?

I'm afraid someone won't understand me or might disagree with me. Okay, and then what happens? Right, let's say someone does disagree. This is where I take my brain all the time. Yep, someone's probably going to disagree. Someone listening right now, one of you might be like, "Oh, this is terrible. I hate this, I disagree with everything she's saying." I mean, I hope not. But you might be.

Ep #98: Secret Fears: What Are You Avoiding?

So then I could just say, “Okay, what am I afraid they're going to disagree with? What's going to happen if they do disagree? What's the real thing I'm afraid of?”

And then one of my favorites, of course, that I already mentioned is I'm afraid my clients aren't getting results or I'm afraid this isn't working. Think about that for a minute. If that is the elephant in your brain, if that is the thing that's taking up a lot of space for you, or I'm afraid my new offer isn't working. I'm afraid, fill in the blank, right? Anything that comes to your coaching or your process.

How do you show up for your coaching? What is the difference it makes with every single client you work with? I know it for me. I can see it so clearly because I used to be that person. I used to do that, which is why I created the containers I did, right? Because I'm like, I have to help people that are experiencing this. I don't want anyone to think that what they're doing isn't working or that they don't know what they're doing.

Sometimes newer coaches will say to me, “I'm just afraid I don't know what I'm doing.” And I say, “You might not, and that's okay, you're learning.” Right? Like let's learn, let me help you.” That's exactly why I created The Coach Lab. Let me help you, come in, join us.

It's so different to face the fear head on and say, “Oh, I see this. Let's unpack it, let's examine it, let's solve it,” than it is to just keep pushing it away, keep pushing it away because it's just going to keep showing up over, and over, and over until you solve it.

I hope this was helpful for you. If you are doing this and if you can figure out like what is it, what is the fear, you're going to be so much better and helping your clients do it too. Have an amazing week. Don't forget to sign up for Coach Week in the show notes or on my website and I will see you there. I can't wait.

Thanks for listening to this episode of *Mastering Coaching Skills*. If you want to learn more about my work, come visit me at

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Ep #98: Secret Fears: What Are You Avoiding?

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see you next week.