

# Ep #110: Taking Time Off from Your Coaching Business



**Full Episode Transcript**

With Your Host

**Lindsay Dotzlaf**

## Ep #110: Taking Time Off from Your Coaching Business

Hi, this is Lindsay Dotzlaf and you are listening to *Mastering Coaching Skills*, episode 110.

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, I am so glad you're here today. We are doing something a little different around here for the next month. So before I get started on this podcast, if you're listening in real time I want to go ahead and set this up for you so you can get excited and get in on the fun with us.

So for the month of December – So just to set this up a little bit, my birthday is in December, it's December 14th. And my daughter's birthday is also in December, it is December 24th. And then we celebrate Christmas, and then there's New Year's Eve. And just in general, there is a lot of celebrating that we do around my house in December.

And if I'm honest, sometimes it feels a little bit like we spend a month celebrating that starts right around when I'm recording this, around Thanksgiving. And then it lasts through January, very beginning of January. And then we spend a couple months just being a little quiet, a little like just waiting for it to warm up. And, you know, a little bit of hibernating.

So this is like the party before the calm. And I was thinking about this, and I've been thinking of ways just in my coaching business in general, what are things that just sound really fun to me? What are some ideas that I've never tried before? What are some things that I think you might like? And so this is one of those things.

So this month, for the entire month, so for the four podcasts that I'm recording, which there are four Tuesday's, that's the day the podcast comes out. There are four Tuesdays in December. And every one of them is going to be somehow based on the theme of celebrating. Celebration,

## **Ep #110: Taking Time Off from Your Coaching Business**

celebrating in our lives, celebrating in our businesses, and kind of all things that have to do with that. And that's going to start today. So I'll tell you in a second what today's topic is going to be.

But I also want you to mark your calendars because the week of my birthday, so my birthday is December 14th. So that week, which I believe is the 12th through the 16th, that's the Monday through Friday, there will be a brand new podcast episode every single day that week because I'm having a podcast party, is what I'm calling it. And I want you to come. You are invited.

And what that's going to look like is I have actually invited a handful of guests to come do interviews with me. And some of them are coaches, but some of them are not. And we're going to talk about, we're just going to mix things up a little bit. It's not going to be quite as serious as sometimes my podcasts are.

And, of course, there will still be lots of learning. But there will also just be lots of fun and lots of talking about celebrating, how they celebrate, how I celebrate. And just some really fun things that I've never done before on the podcast. You're going to get a little glimpse into maybe even my personal life, because not all the guests, like I said, are coaches.

Some of them are just personal friends, maybe even some family, so stay tuned for that because it's going to be really fun. And I just can't wait. So stay tuned, pay attention. And if you're listening to this in the future, just go ahead and binge. You get a whole binge of a month's worth of talking about celebrations and not necessarily celebrating me or my accomplishments or anything like that, but just talking about in general how do we celebrate, right?

I know I started by saying it's my birthday month and all of that. But this isn't so much about me, it's just thinking about just as humans how we

## Ep #110: Taking Time Off from Your Coaching Business

celebrate, as coaches how do we celebrate? And just looking at all the different ways.

I really was thoughtful about picking the guests who are coming on because they are going to kind of probably be all over the board as far as how they celebrate, how they think about celebrating themselves and celebrating accomplishments and anything like that in their lives. So it's going to be a month full of fun and I hope that you are here for it and that you have so much fun. Come to my party.

All right, so today what I want to talk about we're going to like ease in to the party celebrations and talk a little bit about something that comes up a lot, lot, lot in my spaces, in the Coach Lab, with my clients, and even sometimes in my mastermind, in Coaching Masters. And that is taking time off, taking vacations, spending time with your family.

And I want to be really careful that you don't think what I'm saying is you only take time off when you're celebrating or as a reward. I am very resistant to any kind of really reward or punishment system when it comes to coaching in your business, but just in your life in general.

I do not like that. To me it reminds me of like, well I'm going to get this workout in so I can eat that cupcake, or Thanksgiving meal, or whatever it is. I'm just not a fan. I think that, for me at least, any type of system like that, you know, then it's like if you're not hitting the goal, if you're not doing the thing, then you have to put off the resting, or put off the celebration, or put off the, you know, whatever it is that you've told yourself you can have at the end.

And I've just never been motivated by that. And I think that coaching has, you know, when I first hired my own coach, that was something that I really learned, was learning that about myself and seeing like this does not motivate me. And honestly, I don't think it's a great way to motivate other people or to motivate our clients.

## Ep #110: Taking Time Off from Your Coaching Business

So I did just want to get that out of the way, be sure that we weren't linking those two things, right? Thinking that we only get time to rest or to take time off when we have hit a goal or when we really think we have something to celebrate.

And for those of you that are listening that are brand new coaches and thinking, you know, I know a lot of coaches think this because I hear you say it. Like, "Yeah, but it'll be easier, like I'll take time off later. Right now I'm just really focused on building my business, and as I make more money, as I have more time, that will kind of work itself out."

And I just want to offer sorry, maybe even you have a full load of one-on-one clients, and you think, "Okay, but I just have to get through this part, and then when I no longer have one-on-one clients it'll be easier to take weeks off, it'll be easier to vacation, to spend time with my family and friends."

And I just want to offer very similarly to the episode that I recorded last week where I mentioned this about money. Whatever you put in place now and the way that you're thinking about it now, you're just going to take that with you through your business, through your coaching. And I would just recommend that you start thinking about it now.

I know you think it will be easier later, but it's actually easier now. Especially if you're a brand new coach and you don't have a full schedule, just consider that figuring out how to take a little bit of time off, how to spend time outside of coaching, outside of your business is easier when you don't already have a full schedule.

I will also tell you that you are in good hands right now because I am speaking from so much experience. This is not something I'm teaching you from like, "Oh yeah, I've always known how to do this." This is something that I have really had to work on as I've grown my business. And I will tell you, as I'm recording this podcast, it is the Monday after Thanksgiving

## Ep #110: Taking Time Off from Your Coaching Business

weekend, which was a long weekend. I took Wednesday through Sunday off. I don't work on the weekends normally.

So I took Wednesday, Thursday, Friday off. We hosted Thanksgiving at my house and we had, well we were supposed to have about 20 people for the day. A couple of people ended up getting sick and couldn't come, but we had people here all weekend. And today, this morning, I got up, I got ready, I sat down at my desk, or let's be honest, I put my laptop on my lap on the couch and pulled up my email.

And I realized, oh, I really took those days off. I didn't respond to emails. I didn't even check my work emails. I didn't coach in my groups. I didn't talk with clients. I really took the time off. And I took a moment to let that sink in because it's such a difference than what I used to do, and I'll share a little bit more of that. But it was just such a, really a contrast for me of, oh, this is what it's like.

And of course I've done that, I've gotten much better at it as the time has gone because it's something that I have purposefully worked on. But I just was really able to see it this morning and I was so grateful. And, honestly, I wasn't on social media. I barely even picked up my phone. And the only drawback to this, the thing that is a little bit, I guess kind of funny, but a little bit sad, is I didn't take one picture.

I texted a couple people that were here on Thanksgiving and I said, "We did not take one photo." We don't have a family photo. I didn't take a photo with a couple of my friends who came, nothing. Which is great as far as I was just really in the moment. I had the best few days. It was so great being with my family. And I didn't even take a picture. But that's okay, there's always next year, right?

So this is why it is on my mind this morning and where I wanted to start with this month of celebrations. And again, not because we're linking celebrations to rest or taking time off. But when I think about taking time off

## Ep #110: Taking Time Off from Your Coaching Business

or going on vacation, and I'm not talking about being sick or resting because you need to rest, that's a different topic.

I'm talking about purposefully taking time off. Even if it's weekends, deciding I do not work on weekends, I spend time with my family, I spend time doing hobbies, I spend time alone with myself. I fill my cup up in other ways that isn't my business. Or maybe we're talking about taking a week off and going on vacation, or taking a week off and staying home and just spending it with your family or spending it during holidays doing whatever it is that you love to do.

So before I dive into all the ways that I do this and the ways I think about it and all the different options when it comes to spending time off without coaching, I want you to answer just a couple of questions for yourself. And I'm going to say them now before I give you all of my ideas. I'm going to ask them, and then if you want to pause this and spend a second, if you have time to spend a second thinking about this, perfect.

So if I say, let's plan a vacation, you're going to take a whole week off. You're not going to check in on your clients. You're not going to work at all. You're not going to coach, none of it. Just sit with that for a second and see what comes up for you.

So some of you may have this down, right? It may be easy, but some of you maybe not. And I want you to just consider what are your thoughts about that? What are your thoughts about you as a coach doing that? And what are your thoughts about your clients? What do you think your clients will think when you tell them, "Hey, I'm taking a week off, I'm going on vacation."

And now I want you to consider, you're taking a week off but you're not going on vacation. You're just going to be home resting your brain, having fun with your friends and family, doing things that you love. You're just going to have the week off. What comes up for you when I say that? How

## Ep #110: Taking Time Off from Your Coaching Business

do you think about yourself as a coach? What do you think your clients will think about this?

And now the same thing, but consider maybe there's a holiday coming up. And you want to take more time than you're used to off on each side of the holiday, right? Just because. Just because you want to have time off, maybe your kids are out of school or you're going to travel with your parents or whatever it is. Whatever it is that you love to do around the holidays, you want to take more time off than you think might be necessary. What comes up for you when you think about that?

Or what if you want to take an extended vacation? You want to take a two week vacation or a three week vacation. What are your thoughts about that? How do you think and feel about yourself as a coach? What do you think is going to come up for your clients when you tell them?

So we're not necessarily doing anything with these answers right now, we're just noticing them, right? We're just noticing where, if any, stickiness comes up for you around these things, right? Is there anywhere that you're like, "Oh, but what do you mean? Like I can't check in with them at all? I can't send them any messages to like see how they're doing? Oh, but I could just do those handful of calls, or I could just coach in my group."

Now, of course, there's no right or wrong, right? That that's what you have to do, that anytime you take off you can never check in with your clients, or do a coaching call, or a coaching session or anything like that. I'm not suggesting that, I just think it's so interesting to see what comes up when you think about doing it.

So one thing I'm going to do, because you know I'm always very open with you, very honest about my experience of these things, I'm going to give you kind of a before and after of how I used to handle things like this in the beginning of my business and as I was growing my business as a one-on-one coach. And then I'll talk about ways that I would handle it now if I was



## Ep #110: Taking Time Off from Your Coaching Business

going to go back and have that same type of one-on-one schedule and how I handle it in my groups.

So when I was at first a one-on-one coach, the way I would structure my packages is that clients would work with me for six months or 12 months. And we would just have weekly calls and that was it. That was the plan. We would meet every week on the phone for an hour. And over the phone, not over Zoom, so over the phone every week for an hour and they would have regularly scheduled calls, most of them.

So their calls would be, let's say every Tuesday at noon, that would just be your time. I would call you every Tuesday at noon, we would coach for an hour over the phone. That was my whole package. That was the whole plan. And there's nothing wrong with that, it worked very well. But what I see now looking back, and I kind of laugh about, is the way I would handle, so I didn't have any plan for if it was like a holiday week, or if I was going on vacation, or I needed time off or anything like that. I had no plan for that.

And so the way I would handle it is I would, maybe sometimes I would shorten the vacation a little bit so that maybe I was home Monday and Tuesday, right? Like I would structure it so that I would maybe leave on a Wednesday and then be back on Sunday. And then I would take all of the calls. I would reschedule everyone's calls and just take back-to-back calls Monday and Tuesday.

And at first it wasn't a problem, right? Because I just had a couple clients, I had a handful of clients and that was fine. But as I kept going and as I had a bunch of clients, and I had 20 clients, at one point I had 20, I think 22 clients, that's a lot of calls to reschedule and to host in a couple days. So you can see, as I kept going, why this kind of became a problem.

And sometimes the other thing I would do, if I couldn't figure out how to do it that way, I would take calls over vacation. So I would maybe pick a couple days and schedule the calls those days. And not that any of this is a

## Ep #110: Taking Time Off from Your Coaching Business

problem, sometimes these can be great solutions, and we'll get more into that. But I was doing that all the time. Every time it came up.

Oh, it's the week of, let's say, Christmas? Okay, fine. Christmas is on Thursday, so I'm going to take calls Monday through Wednesday, and then we'll have Christmas on Thursday. Mind you, my daughter's birthday, as I told you, is on Christmas Eve, that would make for a very stressful week. For me, for my family, right, for kind of everyone. My kids would be off school.

It was always just, I was never thinking ahead and saying, "Oh, I should take this week off, I should take this week off." Every once in a while I would take a week off, let's say, for vacation. And I usually did that when it was impossible for me to have calls for some reason. I was afraid of bad reception or just I knew we'd have a lot of plans throughout the week and I would just cancel. And I would then add those calls maybe to the end of the six month package or tell them okay, we can have two calls one week.

And I was kind of just always playing it by the seat of my pants, right? It was always just like, "Oh no, I forgot I have vacation next week. How do we figure this out? How do I reschedule with my clients? What do we do?" And now, of course, because of what I teach it's so interesting for me to see that and to see the difference between that versus what I teach my clients now. Which is you just make a decision ahead of time and then you stick with it as best you can, right?

You make a plan that feels amazing to you, that works well for you. And then you execute it. And I'm going to give you some examples of plans. But first I want you to just think about your thoughts going into things like that. Your thoughts about taking time off.

My thoughts used to be, in the examples that I was giving you my thoughts were, "Oh no, my clients won't like it if I take a week off, what will they do?" Which I laugh about now, right? What will they do? What will they think?

## Ep #110: Taking Time Off from Your Coaching Business

They won't want to do that. They will think I'm irresponsible. They'll think that I am bad at managing my time. I have to be there for them.

All of these, right? All of the different thoughts. And I'm sure there were others. But those were the main ones. And then when I became really busy, when I was very fully booked and maybe had a few too many clients, there were thoughts like, "I can't possibly reschedule because where would I put everyone?" And I kind of just backed myself into that hole.

Because I had no other plan, I backed myself into this hole of I have to just keep going. Even to the point sometimes where it was like, "I'm sick, who cares? Doing calls." Oh, my kids are homesick, who cares? I'm doing calls. And I can see now, looking back, it didn't really feel like that much of a problem. It really felt like there was nothing I could kind of do about it and I was kind of paying my dues as a coach, right?

And I thought, just like I said at the beginning of this episode, I would have thoughts like, yeah, but someday I'll have a group and this won't be a problem. Or I'll be making more money and I'll be able to figure this out. I don't know what that even means. Like somehow the money would figure out the scheduling for me, right?

And even thoughts like, "Well, eventually, my kids will be older, they won't need as much of my attention when they're on vacation. And so then it won't matter, I'll be able to work." Which is so silly, right? Like, who cares how much of my attention they need? What about me just having fun with them on vacation?

So if these are you, if any of this resonates with you in any way, can I give you some new ways to handle this and some new ways to think about it? And I just want you to know, I see you. First, I have been there, I get it. It really does feel very important in the moment when you're thinking about these things.

## Ep #110: Taking Time Off from Your Coaching Business

So I see you, and also I see you trying to convince yourself that it's fine that you don't take time off. What I think is so fascinating about this is that so many of you, so many of my clients, of people that I work with, come into coaching from fields where they were very busy and miserable.

I have lots of clients who were physicians, who were lawyers, who were just working full-time in an industry that demanded a lot of their time, and that was just the norm. And then they come into coaching thinking, I'm going to be, you know, I'm in charge, I get to be in charge of my time, this is going to be amazing. Being an entrepreneur is everything I've ever wanted. I am in charge of everything. I'm taking my time back. I get to spend time with my family. I'm not making these up, I've heard them from you.

And then you do the thing that I was just saying. You create the schedule where you have zero time off, where you're going to burn out, you're going to be exhausted, you're going to be tired from coaching your clients. Which is something that you just love so much and couldn't just wait to do.

Now I want you to consider all of those thoughts from a client's perspective. One of my favorite things to do any time I'm having some drama come up about anything that has to do with my coaching, or my schedule, or my business, I love to think about what would it feel like to say these out loud to my clients, right?

So let's say in those moments, in those times, if I had taken a second to say like, "Okay, what are my thoughts about taking time off?" And then consider, I didn't do it at the time, right? But looking back, if I had done this it would have been so powerful to really look at that and say, would I read these? Would I tell all of these thoughts to my clients? Would I say them out loud?

Yes, I know I'm your life coach, but also I really don't think that you're going to be okay without me for a week. Or I just don't think that you will like it if I ever take a vacation. Or if I spend time with my family for the holidays. Or I

## Ep #110: Taking Time Off from Your Coaching Business

just don't think that you're going to understand if I need to reschedule a call. That's so fascinating, right?

And then when you think about that, think about also what you're teaching your clients. You're teaching them that this is how it goes. We don't take time off, we don't reschedule calls, we don't go on vacation. Turning it around like this, I think, is always, always so powerful. And really getting in there and being honest about your thoughts. Because I know sometimes they seem very useful, right?

They seem very like, “No, no, but I need to be there for my clients. They really need my support.” But even then, if you think about what you're mirroring for your clients, right? Showing them we don't take time off, we don't reschedule calls, who cares if you're sick? Who cares if you want to go on vacation with your family. Who cares if you are on vacation? You should definitely be working.

One thing that happened for me in this situation, and a couple reasons that it really hit me, “Whoa, I need to examine this, I need to work on this,” is that a couple things. One, I kept getting sick. I kept getting sick over and over. I just was like I'm sick all the time, I would have colds and I would get strep throat. And then the next week I would be sick again with something else.

And it felt like the universe or whoever just showing me, hey, like this can't keep going, you can't keep doing this. And I was becoming exhausted and I got to the point where there were days that I didn't want to have client calls. If you feel like this, if there are days that you're like, “I just don't want to coach today.”

Now, not because you're sick or because something out of the ordinary is happening, but if you're just waking up thinking, “Ugh, I don't know if I can do this today. I don't want to coach all of these clients today.” I would say

## Ep #110: Taking Time Off from Your Coaching Business

that's a good indication that you could look at your thoughts around taking time off.

That is what happened for me, right? I started waking up thinking, "Oh, I don't know if I can, I don't want to do this today. I don't want to coach these clients." And when I noticed it, it was just like, "Okay, wait a minute, what is going on here? This is so out of the ordinary." Because coaching is my favorite thing in my business, right? Like not my favorite thing in the whole world, but it's my favorite thing in my business. My favorite part of my business is the coaching.

So for me to not want to do that, now if I was waking up thinking, "Oh, I really don't want to write these emails," okay, that might be one thing. That might be more believable. But for me to not want to coach my clients was a big wake-up call.

And then one day one of my clients said to me, we were on a call and I heard something in the background. And I said, "Oh, are your kids home today?" And she said, "Oh, we're actually on vacation." And I was like, "Wait, what? Why didn't you tell me?" And she said, "Oh, well, I didn't know, I didn't like think that, I wasn't sure what to do, if I could like miss a call."

And it really hit me when I got off the phone with her, oh my goodness, I've never given my clients permission to take vacation, to take time for themselves, to not show up for a coaching call, right? A planned not show up, not just like not show up, right? But to say, "Hey, Lindsay, I want to take next week off, I don't want to coach. I'm going to be at the beach with my family, I'm going to be, you know, whatever, wherever they would be.

And it really hit me, okay, I need to think about this. I need to look into this. I need to see what are all my thoughts? Like how did I get here and how did I create this? And I really started making some changes which, of course, some of them I still implement.

## Ep #110: Taking Time Off from Your Coaching Business

Now I'm very good at taking time off and really being off, as I said in the beginning, when I was thinking about being off for Thanksgiving. I have turned into the person who is very, very good at being off when I say I'm going to be off. And I want that for you, too.

You're a life coach, or a business coach, or whatever, a health coach, whatever kind of coach you are. And you don't want to be a life coach saying, "Oh, but my business is more important than my life." Or a business coach, of course you're not saying those words, right? But that's modeling, "Oh, my business is the most important thing and there's nothing else in my life that I ever do or think about." Or a health coach who is not giving themselves time off to just spend doing other things. It's just really interesting when you think about it from that perspective.

Now, I also know that some of you are on the very other end of this, right? Where you're like, "Oh no, I take time off all the time and that's not a problem. If anything, maybe I take too much time off." And that's also a reason to think about the things that I'm talking about today, right?

If you find yourself flaking on your clients, or taking time off, a lot of time off last minute and that happens all the time and your clients are not quite sure what to expect from you, that's kind of the other end of the spectrum. But I think there's that middle ground, right? Where we take the time off that we want and we also show up and we're responsible as a coach for our clients and we're there when we say we're going to be there.

So I started to say this a little bit ago, and I'm going to come back to it. The way to solve, no matter which side of this you're on, the way to solve for it is to decide, what do I want to do? Decide it ahead of time and then follow through.

And again, this has nothing to do with, I'm sick at the last minute, or emergencies that come up at the last minute. Everything I'm talking about

## Ep #110: Taking Time Off from Your Coaching Business

right now is just in general taking time off, spending time outside of your business.

So I'm going to tell you some ways that I teach, that I coach on, mostly in the Coach Lab. But when this comes up, there are ways that you can handle this that you may not have thought of. I wish someone had told me a list when I was really in the weeds of it myself.

So some of these will be specifically for one-on-one clients and some of them will be a little more specific for groups. But I'm just going to give you a whole list. And there are probably so many options that I haven't even thought of.

But one thing that I love to do when I'm trying to solve any kind of problem is just say, "Okay, let's just come up with every single solution we could possibly think of. And then we're going to decide, which ones do I love which ones are right for me? And go from there." So that's what we're going to do right now.

Okay, so one option that I teach a lot that I love, love, that I wish I had thought of when I was a one-on-one coach is to create packages, to sell packages that include some time off. So, of course, this seems so obvious, right? But you'd be surprised. I never thought of it, and I tell so many of my clients this and they're like, "Oh my gosh, I never thought of that."

So for example, if you have a six month package, that would be 26 sessions if you do them weekly. And you could just say it's six months and it's 24 sessions. So that gives us two weeks off that we use at any time during the six months. You use one, I use one, and anything outside of that we reschedule, right?

So there might be one time that I'm on vacation and one time that you're on vacation. And we're just going to take those weeks off, if that's what you want to do for your week. And then if there are more times outside of that that we're on vacation, or that someone's sick, or we need to make up a



## Ep #110: Taking Time Off from Your Coaching Business

call, we will make those up or add them to the end. It doesn't have to be exactly like that, right? But that's just an example.

I really wish that I had had that when I was having lots and lots of clients, was fully booked. That would have been so useful, I don't know why I never thought of it. So that's one option.

Another thing that I recommend is that when you are scheduling sales calls or consults and you think you might be signing a new client, I think it's super useful to just look at your calendar ahead of time and just know are there any weeks coming up that I know that I need to be off, right? Do I have a vacation coming up? Does it fall over Christmas and I always take off the week before Christmas and New Year's, right?

Like just looking at that and just knowing ahead of time, because think about it from the client's standpoint, right? We can sometimes have so much drama about, oh, well what will they think if I take time off?

But if you think about it from the client's standpoint, if they're like, "Oh, I'm a yes, I can't wait to do this. How do we start? What do we do?" And you're like, "Okay, here's how it works." And you lay it all out for them and you say, also a month from now I am going on spring break with my family, I'll be taking that whole week off, just you can go ahead and plan that in."

Think about that difference between letting them know that a month ahead of time when you're signing them as a client, versus doing, honestly, what I did sometimes was texting them at the last minute, "Oh no, hey, I forgot I have this thing coming up. I need to reschedule our call for next week. I'm doing calls on Monday, do you have any time? Oh, I only have this one hour available." Right? It's just a very different experience from the client's point of view.

Or prepping them, right? Like my family celebrates Christmas and I always take off that week between Christmas and New Year's Eve or New Year's

## Ep #110: Taking Time Off from Your Coaching Business

and so you can just mark that on your calendar, we have that off. I do this now in my group. I used to be not great about it, but I've gotten better.

Before the six months, so my mastermind is six months long, before that even starts I try to look at the calendar and say, "Okay, are there any weeks that I know for sure I won't be there?" Now, I do have guest coaches, which is another option I'll talk about in a minute. So I do have coaches that fill in on occasion when I take a week off or anything like that.

But for example, for the week between Christmas and New Year's, I do always take that off. And most of my clients, because they live someplace where most of them do celebrate Christmas or celebrate some holiday around that same timing, they like to have that week off, right? So then we just take it off.

And I can also look at my calendar ahead of time and say, oh, I know I'll be traveling this week. Sometimes I even travel for my business. I know I'll be traveling this week and this week, and so we're going to have a guest coach and I might even think about it ahead of time.

What will I be teaching then? Who can I get to coach that is either really great at teaching this thing, this concept that I teach? Which a lot of times that's someone who has been in my mastermind before, or who is a colleague of mine who could come in and teach something that isn't necessarily my expertise, but that pairs really well with what I'll be teaching at that time.

So this leads in beautifully to here's another option, right? You can have a guest coach. Now, I've never known people to do that with one-on-one coaching, although I'm sure it's completely possible, right? You could definitely pay someone to coach for you for a week while you're on vacation.

I don't know that that is maybe the best plan with one-on-one coaching, unless there is a very specific reason. You know, like maybe you're a one-

## Ep #110: Taking Time Off from Your Coaching Business

on-one coach but all your clients are on the same program, all doing the same thing each week. And you could have a guest coach, very similar to coming into a program, come in and coach your one-on-one clients for a couple of days or whatever it is that you're needing. It's not not an option, I've just never done it. But definitely, if you have a program or a mastermind, that is always an option.

And one thing that sometimes my clients say to me is that, you know, they're like, "Oh yeah, but it's different for you because you coach coaches." It is not different, I promise you. Your clients will love a guest coach. And you, although you may not be teaching coaches like I do, you can easily find guest coaches.

Ask your colleagues who are coaches. Email me, tell me you need some recommendations, I have some really good ones. I happen to have lots of coaches who are really good at coaching, who have been through my programs who I know would be delighted to be guest coaches. You can have your clients, you know, you can tell them ahead of time you won't be there, but just pick one of them to kind of lead the call, but have them kind of mastermind together, right? Have them walk each other through specific activities. They can do this even if they aren't coaches.

I'm not suggesting, obviously, that you do this all the time or every week. But I just think it's so good to have these options to think about, oh, here are some things I could do if I was taking the week off and I still wanted my clients to have their regular call.

Sometimes I do this every once in a while in my mastermind and I actually think it's really powerful to have them mastermind together, ask each other questions, and kind of just share and sometimes coach each other. Which that is one benefit of me coaching coaches, is that they can coach each other.

## Ep #110: Taking Time Off from Your Coaching Business

And it is also a good practice coaching for them. But sometimes I think they share things, or ask for coaching on things, or open up about things that they might not when they expect me to be there leading them and leading the call. So I think it can be a really powerful exercise.

As a one-on-one coach, one thing that you could do in a similar type of situation when you – This is one reason I say it's so great, if you can, to plan it ahead of time – is you can know, here's an activity I could give my client, like something they could work on for the week.

I don't necessarily mean an activity like a worksheet, although I'm sure some of you do that. But here's something they can think about, something they can notice in their life, a journal prompt that I could have them do every day of that week. Or it's something that we don't normally do on calls, that I can give them ahead of time that we're then going to talk about the next week, right, the next time we have a session.

You can also use some of those ideas that I was actually talking about in the beginning of the call, I just wasn't executing them very well. But they're not terrible ideas, right? So if you know, for example, that you have lots of travel coming up or something is out of the ordinary that you think, “I don't want to not be able to coach my clients for three weeks” or something along those lines.

You can say, “Okay, well, which days can I take clients? Can I have a couple days where I have back-to-back calls before I leave for a vacation or before I go on this bonus trip or whatever it is that I'm doing? Or when something comes up, and it's one thing about being an entrepreneur that is very nice, is you are more flexible.

But when something comes up and you do want to go but you also know, okay, I'm going to be responsible for my clients, you can do also the thing that I said at the beginning, which is schedule a couple times while you are on vacation, or while you're taking that trip, or while you're traveling for

## Ep #110: Taking Time Off from Your Coaching Business

work or whatever it is, where these are the two days, these are like the two mornings I'm taking calls, or the two afternoons I'm taking calls, or the one full day I'm taking calls, whatever it is.

I think the difference between doing it the way I'm saying now and doing it the way I was doing it when I had a bunch of one-on-one clients, is that deciding ahead of time piece, right? Deciding ahead of time and loving your reasons, and really deciding am I doing this because I feel bad taking a week off? Or am I doing this because this is what makes sense for my schedule right now?

That's a big, big difference, right? I was doing it because I thought I can't take a week off. My clients won't like it if I take a week off. They need me. Like whatever those thoughts were, those are very different than, oh, I have a couple of vacations back-to-back, I don't want to have that many makeup calls, or I don't want my clients to be unsupported for that many weeks in a row, I'm going to figure out how I can do both.

But I even think those situations are much more uncommon. Where I see most coaches really struggling with this or having lots of drama about it is just the regular taking a week off, taking a vacation, taking a holiday off and, oh no, what do I do with my schedule?

Okay, so we've talked about creating packages with weeks off built in. We've talked about scheduling around vacations or during vacations, figuring that out ahead of time. We've talked about guest coaches. And then the other thing I would say is just having a really solid plan for what do we do about make-up calls will feel so different for you as the coach than if you just are like, "I don't know, I have no idea."

So even if you're a brand new coach and you're like, "Oh, I've never thought of this, I don't even know," this is a question that someone might ask on a consult or on a sales call. What do I do if I'm sick? What do I do if my kids are sick? What happens if you, as the coach, are sick, do you

## Ep #110: Taking Time Off from Your Coaching Business

cancel the call? Right? Thinking about all those scenarios ahead of time and just having a plan will feel so much better than just letting it come up in the moment of, “Oh no, I don't know, I don't have a plan for this.”

And then the last thing I want to dig into a little bit about taking time off is taking time off, I'm saying it with like hand quotes, you can't see me. But taking time off but still telling your client, oh, but I'll be available all week through text if you need me, or on Voxer if you need me, or on email if you need me. I'll be checking in every day just to make sure that you know I'm here.

I would just get really curious about that. I think that this is very interesting behavior that I see a lot of coaches doing. And I think it's fascinating. When I coach coaches on this, a lot of times what we find is that the coach is doing it for themselves, not so much for the client. They're either having thoughts, “Oh, I shouldn't be taking this time off, I have to be available.” All the similar thoughts that I was talking about in the beginning of this episode.

Or they are thinking, “I need to know if my client is doing what they're supposed to be doing. I need to know if they're staying on track. I need to make sure that they're like okay without me. I need to just be sure that they know that if anything at all comes up, that I'm here for them.” Or my favorite is, “I want my clients to know that I'm here if there's an emergency.” I used that one a lot when I was a newer coach.

And here's what I'm going to say, there is rarely, rarely, rarely a coaching emergency. Like an actual coaching emergency. Usually what you're thinking as a coach when you say that is, “I need to be sure that they just tell me if anything comes up so I can help them handle it the way I think they should handle it.”

If you feel a little called out right now, it's okay. We've all been there, I promise. Nothing has gone wrong. Once you see this, hopefully it will be

## Ep #110: Taking Time Off from Your Coaching Business

easier to unwind it a little bit and to just really question, why am I doing this? Why am I saying, “Oh, I'm going to be on vacation all week, but it's okay, it's okay, you'll still have full access to me.”

Think about what would be different if you completely trusted your client, right? If you had all the faith in the world that they were going to be completely fine without you for the whole week, and that you knew they would maybe stay on track if that's what your thought is. Or that they would be okay without you for the whole week.

And if they didn't or if they weren't, that's not a problem. You just coach on it the next week. How did last week go? Tell me everything. Did anything come up for you? Was there anything you want to coaching on that we didn't get to coach on because I wasn't available? Or you were on vacation, was there anything that came up? I know you wanted to take the week off, was there anything that came up that you want coaching on now?

So much of the amazing part, in my opinion, of being a coach is that we really are helping our clients, showing our clients how to think about things differently. How to use their own brain to solve problems. How to understand themselves better, right? It's all about like learning about themselves.

I don't care what kind of coach you are, this is what you're doing as a coach, or what you should be doing as a coach. And when you are taking that opportunity away from them, you're just not trusting that they're capable of it, right?

So if your job as a coach is to help your client trust themselves, and to know how to handle situations by themselves, and to know how to think differently without asking you what's your opinion, what would you do about this? If you are thinking, “They can't go a week without me,” you're not trusting that that's what they're doing, right? That they're learning how to do

## Ep #110: Taking Time Off from Your Coaching Business

all these things. that they're having a new awareness about themselves that changes the way they show up in the world.

So just consider it. And I hope this was all super helpful. Again, like I said, I'm going to be back throughout this month talking about – This was a little different. This was about taking time off and taking vacation, which is kind of celebration adjacent, right? Taking a vacation can feel like a celebration.

And so I'm going to be back all month talking about all things, celebrating all things, you know, the way I think about celebrating, the way I celebrate. And if you don't like the word celebrate, if you're like, "Celebrations, blah," what I'm talking about is how do you enjoy your life? How do you enjoy your business? How do you enjoy just being a human, being you?

How do you show up in a world, in the world in a way that you enjoy it and find joy in it, and maybe celebrate, and party, and do whatever celebrating means to you?

All right. So that is what's going to be happening. Come back, I can't wait to see you next week. I'll talk to you then. Bye.

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.