

Ep #117: How to Hire a Coach



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With Your Host

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Hey, this is Lindsay Dotzlaf, and you're listening to *Mastering Coaching Skills*, episode 117.

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 happy to have you here today for this podcast episode. I'm going to talk about something today that I get asked about a lot. So if you remove any questions that potential clients or clients or colleagues ask me about actual coaching and just look at the other questions I get that are kind of outside of that, this is one of them. Some form of how do I hire a coach? Or how do I decide which coach I want to hire? Or which coach should I hire?

I get these types of questions a lot, right? I also get questions about coaching recommendations a lot because so many people know that I work with coaches. I teach them to be amazing coaches, so of course, I know a lot of great coaches. But today, we're going to talk about how to hire a coach, how to decide if you want to hire a coach, and how to decide if it's the coach for you if they are the coach for you. And just in general questions that I ask myself and ways that I make this decision.

We'll talk about it through that frame of reference, like some of my experiences. And also just things that I see other people doing, thoughts that I know are very useful, and thoughts that I've also seen that are not necessarily the most useful.

So I think that the reason I want to talk about this and the reason that it feels important to talk about it is because, as coaches, of course, most of us love coaching. Now, if you don't, that's for a different episode. Like, go check your thoughts on that and figure out what's going on there. But if you're a coach, most of us love coaching, and we love hiring coaches, and

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we love the idea that coaching can help us create the results that we want to create, right?

Which means as coaches, a lot of us are hiring lots of different types of coaches. And sometimes, it's amazing, and sometimes we're hiring them for not great reasons. And sometimes, it can get a little out of control, right? Speaking from experience, I have found myself a time or two on a day when I wake up, and I'm just like, how many coaches do I have? How did I get here?

Now, that doesn't really happen anymore, but it used to. So we'll talk about that a little bit and how to avoid it, you know, things I've learned along the way. But just in general, it's so great that we love coaching, right? Like if you're a coach, yes, please, love coaching. Like that is very important. And it also doesn't mean that every coach is for you, right?

Some coaches definitely won't be for you. They won't be your style. They won't be your vibe. They won't be your whatever; fill in the blank, and that's totally fine. So let's just dive in. Let's talk about reasons that you would hire a coach. Reasons that maybe you shouldn't hire a coach. Or I think the bigger thing is the in-between, right? The learning to pause and ask some questions because so many coaches, and this is part of why I hesitated and kind of put off this episode because I'm like, am I going to talk them out of hiring me or other coaches? And that's not the point.

Obviously, of course, I want you to hire coaches. I just want you to do it with a little more self-awareness for some of you. All right? Because so many coaches are doing their thing, right? They're out in the world. They're selling coaching. And especially depending on how long they've been doing it, they might be really, really good at selling their coaching.

And that's great. I'm so glad that they are. I want that for you, too, right? But for you as the consumer, I want you to consider what is good for you. What is healthy for you? What's healthy for your stage of growth, where you are right now?

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So the first thing I want to examine is the different reasons we would hire a coach. I think that there are probably three main categories, in my opinion, like if you are a coach, of coaches that you would hire. And you've probably heard this before. I've heard this from a couple of different people. I did not make this up.

So I think there's hiring a coach to help you know how to coach, right? To work on coaching skills, to work on your coaching style, to work on all the things that I work on, right? That's one category. Maybe it's a certification, training, or any of that. Like there's the learning and coaching usually involved. Some learning, maybe learning skills, learning whatever it is you need to learn, and hopefully, some coaching that goes along with it. That's one kind of category, right? The coaching on being a coach.

Then, there is business coaching. So many coaches, of course, hire business coaches. How I would define a business coach is a coach that is teaching you business strategy and then coaching on it. So teaching you, here's how you grow a business, here's how you sell your thing, here's how you work on your copy, here's how you market, here's how you do consults. All of that, right, from start to finish. Maybe it's like, here's how you do ads. There could be so many pieces of that for a coach. And then hopefully coaching around all of it.

And then the last category is a lot more broad. And it's just some sort of life coach. So maybe just a general life coach, right? Sometimes you might just think, I just want a coach that I can bring all the things to. I don't want to necessarily talk about my business, or maybe I do sometimes, but mostly I want to talk about all this other stuff that's going on in my life.

So, for me, that would include any other kind of coach as well. So maybe, like, for something in your life that's outside of your business. I say this because I'm talking specifically to coaches, right? If I was recording this podcast for everyone, all of the humans, I would probably break up the categories differently, right? Because maybe there's like a health coach, or a relationship coach, or whatever, like all those different things.

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But for me, for the purpose of this podcast, I'm going to put all of those into one thing. So maybe it's you want to hire a general life coach, or maybe you want to hire a marriage coach or relationship coach. Maybe you want to hire a parenting coach or a divorce coach, right? Like anything that has to do with creating the results, you want in your life.

So when I think about those three, those are kind of the three categories that I hire for in my life and my business as a coach. Not always all of them at the same time, which is probably pretty important for you to consider, too, right? Maybe consider that you don't need all of these at the same time. Maybe even consider, and this might be a little controversial, that to be a coach, you don't actually have to have a coach 100% of the time.

It is okay if you don't. It's okay if you go through periods, you know, maybe you're in between coaches, maybe you just aren't quite sure what you need right now. Maybe you don't want to make a quick decision, and you are like, let me think on this for a while, right? Whatever it is, I don't think it's a problem to go for periods without having a coach. Actually, sometimes I think it's great.

I know for me, I have done this a few times, and there are good things that can come from it. The only thing I would check on around this is if you have thoughts that are like, well, I'm a coach, so why would I hire a coach? Or I'm a coach, so I can do this on my own, or I should be able to do this on my own, right? If you're having thoughts about hiring a coach that aren't maybe creating the best results for you or that have you thinking about coaching in a negative way, I would look into those. But otherwise, I think there can be great reasons to sometimes not have a coach.

When I think about hiring a coach, the main thing that I kind of ask myself is, what is the experience I want to have when creating these results? And this is just like, in general, do I want to hire a coach? This isn't maybe deciding about the coach I want to hire, but just what's the experience I want to have. What kind of support do I want? Who do I want in my corner? How do I want to think about this, right? Like all of those things.

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Okay, so when we dive into, as a coach, how to hire a coach, how to think about it, one question, and this is going to seem really obvious, but I'm going to say it, and then I want you to pay attention to what I mean by it. One question is, is this something I want to work on right now? And did I plan or budget for this? Yes or no. Neither is right nor wrong. But did I plan or budget for it? And if I didn't, why am I thinking I need this thing right now, or kind of what's changing my mind?

So when I was a newer coach, right, I have had my business since 2015. I've been hiring coaches since 2014. And trust me when I say I have hired coaches all over the board when it comes to what we're working on, when it comes to their styles, all the things. I've hired them from really incredible, useful thoughts, and I've hired them from maybe not the best place.

And, shockingly, I'm sure, you know, I'm sure this will shock you to hear me say it makes a difference, the results that I create when hiring them, depending on what it is I'm thinking about when I hire them or why I think I need to hire them.

So one reason that I always do, so I even do this now, right? Is this something I want to work on right now? And, like, is it in the plans? So if I think back to when I was first hiring coaches, sometimes I definitely wasn't asking myself this question, right? It might be like, yes, of course, this is what I want to work on right now. And I just saw this webinar, and so now I must buy this thing. And it becomes a kind of like a quick decision.

Now, as I do a lot more planning in my business, I'm much more thoughtful about where I want to spend money. What is my growth right now? Where do I want to spend not even just money but time, right? Where do I want to put my focus? I'm a lot more calculated. I don't know if that's the right word. I just do a lot more thinking about it and a lot more planning, right?

So sometimes I'm like, okay, here is what I know I want support with. So maybe I'll always have, for example, maybe I'll always have a business coach. I love having a business coach. If, for some reason, I decided I

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didn't want to work with the business coach that I have now, I wouldn't just immediately go hire someone else, right? I might take some time in between. But I would probably think I would love to work with another business coach. I want that support. I'm going to find it.

But then, sometimes, you might come across an ad or an email or something that is selling you something, which is, of course, a coach's job. And if they're good at what they're doing, and if they're good at showing you, here's why you want this thing, here's what it's going to help with, it can create a little bit of like, do I need this right now? And so I just really try to pay attention to that and not make the decision from that space, right? I just slow down a little bit. Is this something I planned on working on?

It doesn't mean if the answer is no, then I'm immediately like, okay, well, I'm not going to do it then, move on. It just means I'm going to slow down and not buy from that raised energy. Now, of course, if you're coming to my training, if you're coming to my whatever, if you're coming to interact with me, and you're like, I have to work with Lindsay, you should totally do it. But in all honesty and seriousness, even people that hire me, I just love the pause, right? Just pause. Is this what I want to work on right now?

There are times I do think that you might hear me talk about or hear another coach talk about, like, here's why you might want to work on this thing right now. Here's why you might want to put attention on your, let's say, coaching skills versus some of these other things. Here are the effects it will have. And you might think, oh my gosh, I hadn't even thought of this. Okay, let me think about this. Does this feel like a good time for me? Is this a good decision?

And I think asking yourself those questions are really useful. And you can also ask yourself, is it in the budget? Now, that doesn't mean - This is very different than can I afford it? So for me, when I'm thinking about is it in the budget, because I've been doing this for a while, because I pay attention to what do I need for support this year in my business, and I might put money

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aside, right? This is money for coaching. This is money for learning. This is money for fill-in-the-blank.

Now, for some of you, especially if you're newer coaches, you might not have that business money yet just sitting there that's like, oh, what am I going to do with this? I can't wait to hire a coach with it. So when I say, "is it in the budget," I don't necessarily mean, like, oh, do I have just all this extra money sitting around waiting to be spent? Because that's almost always a no. But can I create the money? Can I find the money? Do I want to? Does this feel like a good business decision, right? As a coach, where do I want to put my money?

Sometimes that might be I want to further my coaching skills. Sometimes that might be I want support in growing my business. And sometimes that might be I have to take, you know, not have to, I want to take care of this thing in my life because it's distracting me when I'm in my business. Or because it feels so out of, like, as a coach, I can see where I'm kind of creating this, and it feels very out of maybe alignment that like this thing feels so bad when maybe the rest of my life feels so good.

So I think that there are lots of reasons when it comes to that. Like when it comes to do I want to find the money or create the money, even if it's not right there. But I think even just slowing yourself down to think about it can be a good choice. And sometimes it might literally be, I do not have the money for this right now, but, and here's what I would, I'm going to make a pitch for you starting to think about this the way I do.

When I know that there's something like that, I'm like, oh, okay, this looks amazing, but I either don't have the space or time for it right now. Or I didn't maybe plan for it the way I would like to because it's a fairly expensive thing or whatever that is. I don't just like, boo, okay, move on.

If I'm serious about it, I take note of it, and then I make a plan, right? When is it enrolling again? When will I be able to do this? How much do I need to

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save so that by, you know, four months from now, when it's enrolling again, I'm able to do it? Whatever, you know, that thing is.

I think sometimes coaches get very like, ugh, if you can't do it right now, right? Especially when and if you're buying from that very heightened energy, it can be very deflating to, like, I can't buy it right now, and just feel defeated, frustrated, and then just move on.

My suggestion would be, okay, feel frustrated. Feel however you want to feel. But then make a plan, right? If you still want to do this thing a few months from now, great, make a plan. Like, figure out how you're going to create the money or find the money or whatever it is.

I also want to be really clear. Just for one second, I'm going to say this. This isn't something I talk about a lot on the podcast, but if you're a coach and you have your own business, I also don't think if you're in the beginning stages, especially and you don't have a lot of money coming in, it's totally normal for new businesses to have business debt.

Now, I'm not suggesting that you go get ten new credit cards and max them all out and go crazy, go wild, because who cares? You'll create it later. 1,000% not what I'm saying. But to have a business credit card or to have business debt is normal and okay. If you're okay with it, right? I just want to throw that in there; there's absolutely nothing wrong with that.

And actually, I think coaches and a lot of online businesses in general where we're selling services, I think we can actually get very spoiled and think that we shouldn't ever have to have debt or have anything on a credit card. And that's so abnormal if you zoom out to other types of businesses, right?

Like, if I was going to start a storefront or a physical space, I'm going to take out business loans. That's almost always what happens. That's how people start a restaurant or start a clothing store, or whatever it is. If it's like a full, real-life store with physical products, it requires money upfront before you start making money.

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Sorry, that was just a little caveat, a little side note. And 100% yes, I did put coaching on credit cards when I was starting my business because, to me, that was the most important piece of my growth and the support that I wanted. And I would say the two main places I did that were having a business coach and also learning how to coach.

Okay, the next thing when thinking about hiring a coach, spend some time interacting with that coach, with their content, with them in whatever capacity. Even if that's just quickly scrolling through their Instagram or listening to, oh, she has a podcast. Let me listen to an episode of her podcast.

And just be honest with yourself about do I love this coach's style, right? Like, do I want to be in a room with them? Do I love the way that they show up and interact with people? Do I align with their values? Do I love the strategies that they teach, right?

I think sometimes what can happen is that we forget that whatever methods or strategies that coaches are selling, pretty much all of them work. I'm sure there are some that don't, but that's not what we're talking about right now. If that's you, come join Coaching Masters, and I'll help you clean that up. But most of them work, right?

Most of them, if they're selling, let's say there are three health coaches. And one of them, I should have thought of this example earlier so it could be succinct. But let's just say there are three health coaches. One of them is like, one thing we're going to do is have this eating plan. We're going to talk a lot about macros. You're going to track your macros. You're going to track all of this, and here are the results that we're going to create.

Maybe another one of them is like. I'm going to teach you how to just listen to your body, right? You can pretty much eat anything you want, any food that you want. I'm going to teach you how to be more intuitive with your eating and just really listen to what your body is craving. And maybe the

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third one is, you know, here's this very specific plan that we're going to follow.

I hired, I don't know if I would call it. It was like a health coaching program, I guess. I like joined this program at one point. I think I've talked about it on here before. It doesn't matter what it was. That's not the point of this. But it was very specific. It was like, here's the plan, in the morning, you eat this and this. And it was all about creating more energy, so like eating for energy. I wasn't trying to lose weight or create results like that.

But it was very specific, right? Like on this day, like every third day, I'm making this up. By the way, I don't remember exactly what it was. Every third day we're going to eat high fat. And every morning, here are the options. And right, it was very specific. This is true for most coaches, especially if you're joining a program or a group. There's usually some sort of strategy involved.

So another example is if you think about a business coach, right? If you're looking for a business coach, let's say you're looking at three different business masterminds or group coaching. And you go check out the coaches on Instagram, on podcasts, on wherever, and one of them has talked a lot about ads, right?

And it's like, here's how we're going to do ads. You have to have a funnel. There's all of that. I'm going to teach you how to write your emails. We're going to, you know, all of those things, all of that like techy business side. Maybe that is a lot of their strategy.

And then there's another one that's like, we're going to do this organically, and you're going to go out into the world, and some of you have probably heard this before, you're going to go meet people, whatever, tell them you're a coach, offer to help, right? Like organic business building, selling coaching to just people that are already in your life.

And then maybe there's a third one that has a totally different strategy, right? Maybe it's getting booked at speaking gigs or something, right? So

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when I say check the coach out and decide do I like the style? Do I like the way this coach shows up? Do I like the strategies that she's teaching, that they're teaching? This is what I mean.

What I sometimes see coaches do, is they get in this space where they're like, oh, what I'm doing isn't working. So I'm going to go hire a coach who teaches something totally outside of the realm of what I like to do or what I want to do or the way I want to do it. And they hire the coach because they think it's going to be this secret magic plan because they see other people creating success, right?

And those people probably are creating success. Like it's going well for them. But it's probably going well for them because they love that method. They love whatever it is that they're doing. But when you see that and then you go to hire that same coach because, okay, well, other people are doing it, so if it works for them, it'll work for me. But then the whole time, you're showing up like, ugh, I hate this.

This would be like me hiring maybe like a business coach or whatever kind of, a social media coach that's like, let's do reels every day. Are you kidding me? No way, right? Or a coach who's like, we're going to build your business just on TikTok. Now, nothing wrong with reels, absolutely nothing wrong with TikTok. I've talked about social media on here before.

Of course, there's nothing wrong with any of that, but it would be my probably least favorite way to grow a business or find clients. It doesn't mean that there isn't some of that that I already do and that I already like. But just that thought of, like, if I am looking to hire a coach, what are the things I want to focus on? If I believe whatever their strategy is, is going to work, does their strategy sound fun to me?

These are the types of things I want you to ask yourself when you are looking at your options, right? Do I like their energy? Do I just like the way they show up? Do I feel like I wish I could be sitting with that person right

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now, having a conversation, just asking them all the questions that I have about this thing, right?

About like, if it's me if you're considering ever hiring me, truly ask yourself, would I just love to sit with Lindsay and have a conversation with her about coaching and have her tell me the things she knows, the things she's learned, where she's learned them, right? Like whatever it is. Just do I want to be around that? Does that sound fun? Does it sound interesting, or would I rather stab myself in the eye?

Okay, that's obviously very dramatic, right? Hopefully, none of you are thinking that about me. If you are, I'm not sure why you're here listening to the podcast. But just really being honest with yourself about do I like this person?

Now, maybe for some of you, that part isn't as important. I know, for me, 100%, because I have hired coaches that I am really drawn to. And I've also done what I was just talking about that's not great. I've hired coaches because, I don't know, like, maybe this is the magic plan. And it just hasn't gone well, right?

When I get in a space, and I'm like, oh, what was I thinking? I do not like listening to this coaching. I don't even want to do these things, whatever they are. I think you can know that by just interacting with someone. By maybe seeing them coach, by coming to their live free trainings, by just showing up wherever in the spaces where they are, and just being really honest with yourself, right?

Do I want to hire this coach for me? Or do I want to hire this coach because my friend did or because I've heard about these other people who are getting results or whatever that is? I think that is just really checking in with yourself and trusting that whatever it is that you want coaching on, you will find a coach that you align within that space.

And there are so many coaches. There are so many coaches. I mean, the coaching world is so much bigger than you know of, I promise. Even me,

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no matter who you are listening, no matter what size business you have, no matter any of those things, I promise you, the coaching industry is larger than you think it is. There are people way outside of the spaces that you are already in. And if you're not finding what you want, just go look further, right? Go look around more.

Okay, and then the last question, and this, I feel like, is one of the most important things you can ask yourself because it will affect the way you show up from day one of working with a coach. How do I feel? What is the emotion that I experience? What is the feeling I have when I think about paying this person or this business money? When I think about giving them money to be my coach, how do I feel? And just noticing that, right?

Just noticing, okay, what comes up for me? Because however you feel when you think about that, however, you feel when you're like, okay, I'm going to give this person money, whether it's a little bit of money or a lot of money, you want it to feel good. That doesn't mean that there can't be some fear, right, of like, oh, I've never made an investment like this or, you know, like an excited bubbly fear. Okay, that's one thing.

But if you visualize it and you're like, I'm going to hand this person money, if you immediately feel in your body heavy, or like you shouldn't have to do this, or regret, or despair, or any kind of emotion that is heavy and not great, that doesn't feel good, I would figure that out before you pay.

So sometimes that can be your own stuff that's coming up, right? Maybe you really do want to work with this coach, and there's something there that you just need to dig into that's like, oh, where is this feeling coming from? Like, what are your thoughts? What are my really honest thoughts about this coach? What are my honest thoughts about doing the work that I'm about to sign up for? And it's just you, so just be honest, right? 100% honest and see what's there.

If you hire a coach from this space of I shouldn't have to do this work, I don't even really like this coach, but my friends are doing it, or whatever,

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whatever the thoughts are, that are creating the heaviness, you will show up immediately from day one, if you don't work through it, you will show up with that thought. And then think about how that thought plays out for however long it is that you're working in that space, right? It's definitely not how you want to show up for coaching.

Another way, another emotion that I want you to check in with if it's happening when you hire a coach is that like very heightened excitement or urgency. Now, excitement is good. I usually feel excited when I hire a coach. I'm excited to do the work. I am like, okay, let's get started. So I'm not saying it shouldn't be there.

But if it is overly heightened and overly, like if there's so much urgency and it feels buzzy like, ah, we must start right now, like I need the solution to this thing that I'm fixing right now, slow down and take a deep breath and check in with that, right?

Why is that there? What are you thinking? Like, what's the magic potion you think this coach has? Because all coaches are human, no one has any, truly, I promise you, even the best coaches out there don't have an actual magic wand that they can just wave at you, right?

So if you're overly excited or overly urgent in a way that you're thinking that the hiring of the coach is the magic wand, that's what you want to look into. Right? Like why is that there? Why is it coming up? Again, not that you can't work through it and still hire a coach, but my opinion is you just want to be really aware of why it's there and why it's happening.

What happens, what I notice when people have hired, when clients have hired me from that emotion or, you know, I usually see it not in my space but outside of my space when they've hired maybe like a business coach, and they saw them like teach a thing and then they got so excited. And they weren't planning on hiring this coach, but then they did. And they're like, ah, right? I see, sometimes, colleagues or clients come to me with this.

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A lot of times, what can happen, not always, but if you don't catch it, what can happen is then you get into the space, that feeling of urgency that you had in that moment when your emotions were very, very high, is gone. And you might be sitting in a little bit of like, oh, why am I here? Or why did I make this decision? Or, you know, regret or not really, truly excited to do the work.

I think that there's a difference. Like when I say it's not bad to hire a coach and feel excited, I think that's great. But what you want to be excited about is working with that coach, doing the work, and having them support you and help you along the way while you're creating the results that you want to create. Not the excitement of a really, really great sales pitch that heightens your emotion, that gets you urgent and buying right then.

Sometimes that can happen, right? Like I feel that still, sometimes when I see something that I'm like, I didn't even know I needed this, and now I do. I experience that a lot more often when I'm looking at like clothes or shoes online or just a beautiful ad. I'm like, I need that.

So it's not a bad thing. It's just one of those things like, okay, slow down and check-in, right? Is this a decision you want to make right now? Do you feel excited, not just to work with this coach, but to do the work, to put in the work over the next however many months to create the result?

Unfortunately, the hiring of a coach, although sometimes hiring a coach and committing to that growth, can be beneficial, right? Especially if it's the first time you've done it or if you have to work through some fears to do it, there can be so much growth in that. And that's amazing.

But that's different than thinking. If I just hire this person, all my problems will be solved, right? It's like, if I just hire this, for example, weight loss coach, then, obviously, I'm just going to lose weight. That's not a great way to think about it, right?

What I would suggest is thinking, if I just hire this weight loss coach, then I get to do this work. I get to commit time to this. I get to spend time with this

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coach, in this community, with this support. Whatever those things are, those are the things you want to be excited about, not just the heightened energy of like the quick fix, because it's just not coaching is, unfortunately, right?

We would all be making all of the money if that's what coaching was. If we all just had magic wands and we could just wave them, and our clients didn't have to really like settle into the work, and they could just poof, like create results. That would be amazing. That would also probably be a little scammy, so I don't know. Maybe let's not do that.

Okay, I hope that this was so helpful. If you have questions about this, let me know. Message me on Instagram, comment on the podcast post, whatever it is, like find me and ask me questions. Because I do feel really passionately about this, and I think that hiring a coach can be one of the best decisions that you can make, of course. Hiring coaches has changed my life, truly, and helped me create this business that I have. And it's the reason I'm here talking to you, right?

There are so many amazing things that can come from hiring coaches, but sometimes we just do it for the wrong reasons. And I would just love to just put that out there into the world of, like, let's really just check in with why are we doing it, right? Are we looking for the magic fix? Or are we excited to do the work?

Okay, that is all for today. I will see you again next week. Goodbye.

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