

Ep #125: A Simple Way to Improve Your Coaching



Full Episode Transcript

With Your Host

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Hey, this is Lindsay Dotzlaf and you are listening to *Mastering Coaching Skills* episode 125.

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 you're here today. First, I have a confession. This podcast kind of snuck up on me. I hosted a masterclass today and I have been preparing for it for weeks. I have been talking about it, and marketing it, and doing all the things, thinking about the masterclass. And I realized today that this episode of my podcast was actually due to my producer yesterday.

And I'm telling you this for a reason. So I finished the masterclass and this was the first thing that I realized. It just hit me, oh my gosh, I haven't recorded a podcast for next week. And so then I started thinking, what am I going to talk about? What do I want to record an episode on? And I do have a bank of ideas and I was thinking about what would be the easiest thing that would deliver a lot of value?

So what I decided to do is I realized in that moment, oh, why don't I talk about one of the things that I just talked about in the masterclass? Because it's so fresh in my mind and because so many good things came up in the masterclass of things that participants told me that will be useful for you.

So the masterclass I taught was Five Simple Ways to Improve Your Coaching. And while I'm not going to go through all of them here on the podcast, if you're listening to this in real time I would love for you to join me in The Coach Lab if that has been on your list.

If you join me by today, by midnight tonight, again, if you're listening in real time, I'm doing a bonus for my clients tomorrow, Wednesday March 22nd, 2023 at noon where we're going to go through the workbook that I created for the masterclass. We're going to go through it and coach on it and apply it specifically to your business.

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So if you've been on the fence, if you've been thinking about joining The Coach Lab, now is the time because if you do it today you can get in on that bonus even if you didn't attend the masterclass live, all right? So I'm just going to say that.

But one of the things that I talked about, so obviously I went through five ways that any coach, literally any coach could improve their coaching today. But one of the things that I realized I haven't really talked about this a lot very specifically on the podcast. One of the things that I talked about is the thoughts that you have about yourself as a coach.

Now, when it comes to the ways we think about coaching and the ways we think about ourselves, there's the thoughts about ourselves as a coach, thoughts about coaching in general, and thoughts about our clients, right? And when you think about how they show up in your coaching, today I'm going to speak specifically to the thoughts that so many coaches have about themselves and the teensy little ways that it shows up in your coaching.

And we know that it also definitely shows up in your marketing, in your selling, everywhere outside of your coaching in similar ways. But I'm just here right in this moment to talk about specific ways it shows up while coaching clients or while thinking about your clients outside of coaching sessions, okay?

So I'm going to kind of walk you through it like I did them in the masterclass. And if you're part of The Coach Lab, by the way, this masterclass is going to be homed there. So this is always available to you. You can always go watch the replay. If you're not and you're listening to this in the future, then you're just going to have to wait until I do the next one and hopefully join me. And I'm sorry you missed it.

I know, this is like a very short timeframe, only if you're listening the day of do you get this very special bonus. But that's okay, no matter what, this is going to be valuable for every coach.

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So what I know about most of you if you're listening to this podcast where we focus on coaching skills, here's what I know about you. You want to be an expert, right? You want to be amazing at what you do for your clients. You want to know that you're helping your clients, that they're creating the best results possible.

And you probably want to feel amazing about your coaching sessions with every session you have. No matter what happens, no matter how it goes, you want to get off of that session feeling like you did your best job, like you just nailed it, right? Like just feeling that calm confidence of like, okay, yeah, did it. Amazing, it went great.

What I see so many coaches doing when they're trying to figure out how to believe all those things and feel all those things I was just talking about, what I see a lot of coaches doing is forgetting that they are already an expert even if you only know foundational coaching skills. Even if those are the only skills you have, you get to be an expert at those skills, right?

And if you don't believe that you're an expert and an expert at what you do, then what can happen is you pretend that you are, right? You pretend like those thoughts aren't there, you just kind of sweep them under the rug. And then you move about your day, move into your coaching sessions with these thoughts playing in the background.

And I'll go through some very specific thoughts, but with these other thoughts playing in the background that aren't useful. And they show up in teensy little ways throughout your coaching sessions and throughout your work with your clients.

The reason that doesn't work when you're just pretending that you know what you're doing, pretending that those thoughts aren't there is that you're just never really addressing the problem. And it can even sometimes create clients responding to you in a way that you don't understand, right? Like why is this client showing up like this? Or why is this thing happening? Why does this thing keep coming up?

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My guess is sometimes this is happening because of thoughts that you're having about yourself. And it also just keeps you, you know, the other thing that's happening when you're not checking in with this, when you're just in this space, is that you just feel kind of bad after your coaching sessions. Or maybe even after just certain coaching sessions, right?

Because maybe you have thoughts about yourself in general as a coach that are different from thoughts about yourself as a coach when you're coaching very specific clients, right? Maybe clients that you just aren't quite sure how to help them get their results, or they're not moving forward, or you feel a little lost as to what to do. Your thoughts about your coaching might be different when it comes to those clients.

So when you're thinking through this for yourself, you can use either of those, right? Like overall thoughts about yourself as a coach or thoughts about yourself as a coach for specific clients. So instead of sweeping these thoughts under the rug and ignoring them and pretending that they're not there, what I would urge you to do instead is get them out of your brain.

Like really be okay with exploring the thoughts without shaming yourself. Just explore the thoughts, and specifically how they show up in your coaching. And even if they're thoughts that don't necessarily feel bad, it can be fun to explore, and I'll give you some very specific examples, but just all of the thoughts about yourself as a coach, right? And like, what is that creating inside of your coaching?

The reason you want to do this is it creates so much awareness for you as the coach instead of just avoiding it, right? It actually helps you maybe fix a problem or fix something in your coaching or create more awareness of why certain clients are getting results and certain clients are not. Or awareness of why you show up one way here, why you show up another way there, right? Just a lot of awareness for everything that's going on just in your coaching.

It doesn't really take tons of skill to know how to do this, you just have to set aside and commit to giving yourself time to explore it, right? Like just

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getting those thoughts out, exploring them, figuring out why they're there, deciding what you want to do about them just takes a little bit of time. So that's really all it takes, is to just set this aside and do the thing that I'm about to teach you.

And then when you do this, when you spend time doing that before your coaching calls, even when it feels like this isn't how I should be spending my time, sometimes I think it can be the most important way to spend your time. The results that you'll have from it will just help you feel so much more calm and relaxed during your coaching. So much more aware of, you know, oh, when this thing is showing up in my coaching, I know it's because I'm having these kind of belief problems or thoughts about myself as a coach or what I do.

It just helps you recognize them and be able to make those micro shifts or fix them in the moment. So I'm going to walk you through some specific examples and some examples that – Some of them are examples that I came up with that I just have heard so many of my clients say. And then some of them are just thoughts that were shared in the masterclass today.

And before I start sharing specific thoughts and kind of how they might be affecting your coaching, I just want to reassure you that this happens to every coach at every level, right? Even if they're positive thoughts or negative thoughts or neutral thoughts or whatever. Every coach at every level has thoughts about themselves as a coach. Sometimes they're useful, sometimes they're not.

So this is work that can be done no matter who you are, what kind of coach you are, what level of coach you consider yourself, if you think you're an expert, if you don't, anywhere in between. If you've been a coach for five minutes or five years, I don't care, this is a useful exercise.

So one of the main thoughts, of course, like one of the examples that I thought of just that I see a lot is I don't know what I'm doing, right? Or I don't know what I'm doing yet. Or I need more skills in order to be able to coach my clients.

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And what happens when you have that thought but then you're like, okay, but I'm going to do it anyway, I'm just going to coach the clients. When you haven't really decided that you do know what you're doing, the way it shows up in small, little ways in your coaching, you're going to maybe second guess yourself. Of course, these are just my examples, right, and things that I've seen. You might have your own things, so get specific with what they are for you.

But you might second guess yourself, right? You might ask your client a question and then second guess it and then ask a different question, or move on to something else before they answer. Like it might just show up in little tiny seeds of doubt that your client can hear when you're coaching them. Or you might just be confusing your client because you ask them one thing, and then you switch to another thing.

It can also show up in you trying to solve for not knowing what you're doing by creating strategies that aren't normally in your coaching. So maybe you're like, oh my gosh, I don't know what I'm doing. I need to be able to teach this client this specific thing. So then you go find a tool to teach them the thing, instead of coaching them.

It can also show up where you let the client lead when you should be leading. So, for example, we always know, like the client always gets to be an expert about themselves. But you always get to be the expert about the coaching, right? And when you're not the expert about the coaching, then you might get a little into like just kind of asking, leaning on the client a little bit in a way that probably doesn't feel amazing to the client of like, well, what do you think is the answer?

Now, not when you're exploring maybe actions that a client is going to take or something like that. Of course, you can always ask them, probably the best thing to do is ask them, what do you want to do? Why do you want to do that? Whatever, explore the actions with them.

But what I'm talking about is the actual coaching skill, right? Like, what do you think you need in this moment is not the best question to ask your

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client, unless you're teaching them how to check in with themselves and like, what do you need, not what do you need from my coaching, which is very different.

Another thought that shows up a lot of times for coaches is I need a certification or a new certification or a new tool to be great at this. And this is very similar to the first one, right? But when you're in that space, so much of what happens is that you forget that you're an expert at the tools that you already have. Or you don't just learn foundational tools and then decide to be an expert at those.

And it will constantly keep you, this might be more outside of your coaching sessions, but it'll constantly keep you searching for new tools. Then when you show up to your coaching, to your sessions with your clients, you get confused about what do I use? What's the right thing here? I'm not an expert at anything, I don't know what to do.

And it just creates this whole kind of cycle of not knowing what to do, instead of I know exactly what to do. I have these tools, let me really become an expert at using these. Which is very much what I teach, by the way, in The Coach Lab, is like let's be an expert at just these foundational tools.

It's so much easier than thinking you need more and more and more and going out and finding 100 more tools, right? So I teach basic tools in there. And a lot of times coaches also come in with some of their own tools that are maybe either similar or outside of what I teach, which is great. But I just encourage you, no matter what tools you have, to know that you can be an expert at using those and that can be enough, okay?

The next thing that I hear a lot is I need to be more professional in order for my clients to take me seriously, or something along those lines I need to be more, fill in the blank, in order for this to work. For my clients to take me seriously, for them to think that showing up to coaching is important. Fill in those blanks, whatever that sounds like for you, whatever your specific

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flavor of that is. Think about that for you, and how specifically does it show up in your coaching?

So for most clients, when they're thinking that, they start making weird decisions. So if you go with the exact thought that I said, which is I need to be more professional, which I have a lot of thoughts about the word professional, it's like what exactly does that even mean? You get to decide.

But a lot of times when I see my clients thinking that or thinking something specific, how it starts showing up in their coaching is they get very rigid. Like they create rigid rules that maybe are against how they would normally show up as just a regular human. They create very rigid rules and insist that their clients follow them, whether that be a very rigid schedule or things that have to be turned in or submitted or whatever.

Just more focus goes on rigidity and "professionalism" than just showing up and being there for your client and knowing how to coach them, right? You can be completely unprofessional, I'm saying this in air quotes, whatever that means to you and still be an incredible coach.

Now, of course, you want to have a structured business and a way that your clients show up feeling very comfortable working with you. When I say unprofessional, again in air quotes, what I mean by that is you get to decide. You get to decide what that looks like for you, right? You don't have to go by somebody else's pre-prescribed structure of this is what a real coach does or this is what the good coaches do or whatever. I just don't prescribe to that.

If you like this idea, definitely come join us in The Coach Lab and you'll see how I do it there, right? How I coach and how I show up in that space is maybe different than you see it happening in other spaces around the industry because I think coaching is so powerful, that there are so many things outside of the coaching that, to me, just doesn't matter.

Now, I do think it can be – When I say you don't have to have a rigid structure and all of that, so for example, in The Coach Lab, I do have a

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structure that we follow. There's a call every Thursday, it's always at the same time. I like to create that predictability for my clients.

And I would suggest that you do that as well, whatever that predictability sounds like to you, looks like to you. But what I don't mean is that creating it in a way like I think it's supposed to look like this, even though it goes against all my beliefs about how we should operate in the world as humans, right?

So far, these first few things that I've shared are probably more likely to happen with newer coaches. I want to share a couple that are kind of at the other end of the spectrum, which is coaches who have been coaching a little bit longer, or that are just in that space where they do believe they're more of an expert and how that can actually create problems sometimes too. Or just show up in your coaching in ways that you don't intend it to and it doesn't have amazing results for your clients.

So one of them is something along the lines of my way is the only way, right? So like if a client doesn't get on board with my strategy, or the way I do something, then they're wrong, which is just not true, right? No matter what kind of coach you are, even if you do have a very specific strategy that you walk your clients through, there are 100 ways to do whatever it is. And your way is definitely not the only way.

It might be the only way that you work with your clients, which is totally fine, right? Like if you are a parenting coach and you have this very specific strategy and structure that you work with your clients in and you give them the strategy and then they go try it and come back and you coach on it and whatever. That's fine. But I think when coaches get to that space of my way is the only way, it can start showing up in your coaching where you just lose a lot of curiosity, right?

Where you just are like, well, if that doesn't work, then I don't know because this is just the way. Instead of getting really curious. Oh, tell me more. Why do you think it didn't work, right? And just asking a lot of questions. It can make a coach inside of their coaching container just show

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up kind of really closed off and not open to hearing their clients. It can also create a space where clients just don't feel as cared for or as heard.

Again, I want to be clear, you can have one strategy that you use that's like, this is the way I do things, which is totally fine. And just don't be so rigid about it that you can't see that there actually could be other ways outside of that. And if you do have a very specific strategy or very specific things that you expect your clients to do, you just want to make that clear ahead of time so that they're not buying coaching and then getting into a situation where they're like, oh, I don't want to do this, right?

Let's say you're a nutrition coach and you have this very specific way that you walk your clients through counting macros and just keeping a food journal. Just lots of that type of work and they have to do it to be in your program. You just want to be clear about that upfront, right? Because some clients might know ahead of time, oh, I don't want to do that. And it's not the only way.

So just knowing that, I think, can be so powerful as a coach. And I think it makes you a lot more agile and really shows more coaching mastery, to me, than someone who's just like, there's one way, that's the only way. Period, end of story.

Another thought that I have heard coaches express some flavor of this kind of towards their clients, they might not say it towards their clients, but it is certainly showing up in their coaching, is my time is more valuable than yours. That is never true. Like what does that even mean, right? All humans have the same, in my opinion, the same worth, the same value, our time is all valuable, period, the end. I don't know, I can't even add to that because I think it's such a weird sentiment.

But I have heard people say that. I've heard coaches say it. They don't usually say it just like that, but just some flavor of that. And I think it can also show up in micro ways that you might not even realize you're thinking it.

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For example, when you get upset that a client doesn't show up for a call and maybe they didn't tell you, and later you find out maybe there was an emergency and they're so sorry. And they're a client that never misses calls, but you're still really irritated that they missed the call or didn't tell you. Instead of just like, of course, we all have things that come up and this isn't a problem, right?

Now, that's different than a client missing calls all the time. Very different. But I'm talking about a client who shows up regularly, right? Who always is showing up. And if your thought is like, oh, I need to coach them on why they didn't show up on time, there could be something there. Let's examine your thoughts about yourself, about your time, about the value of your time and whatever. This can also just be a business decision you make on how to handle this that just can keep you out of all the drama. But so that's one way it shows up.

It can also show up maybe when you decide to leave a call because a client is a couple of minutes late. Or you cancel a call or end a call early because a client is like, I don't know what to be coached on, instead of helping them figure it out. There can just be little tiny ways that this shows up. Or if it's an overall like prevailing thought it can show up in big ways. When you are thinking this as the coach, it does not help the client feel valued, of course.

And then the last one I want to explore is one that probably is pretty helpful and more neutral. But it's going to help you show up in a very neutral space and will also kind of show you how when you're thinking this thing about yourself as a coach, like how does that show up in positive ways when you're coaching your clients?

So maybe a thought you have is, I have every tool I need to be the exact coach my client needs. That's a great thought, right? Even if you're like, and I know there are these other tools I want to use. Or even if you're like I know, I want to join Lindsay in The Coach Lab today, you could still believe today in a client session that you have every tool you need to run that session, to run that call as the best coach possible that you can be today.

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So how would that thought show up in sessions that's different than some of those other thoughts? You would probably just show up pretty calm as a coach, right? You would show up curious. Like, okay, what are we coaching on today? What do you have for me? Anything you have, throw it at me. You can be messy, I have every tool I need.

It would show up in many other ways too, right? But I want you to just think about this. Just take a second, when you get off this call you can do this work today. Even if you're driving right now listening to this, you can just at the end –

Well, at the end what you're going to do is you're going to go find the link, join The Coach Lab so you can get coaching on this from me specifically, tomorrow. Or if you're listening in the future, you can come into The Coach Lab and get coaching on any of this at any point. You just want to get the extra special small bonus call that we're doing tomorrow.

But after you do that, then you can pause and just think through this, right? What are the main thoughts I have about myself as a coach? What am I telling myself before I hop on a client session? What are the things that are running through my mind? And then how, specifically, do those show up in my sessions?

Think back to your last sessions, how did that thought, like how could you see that playing out in your session, good or bad? You don't just have to list the bad things. Maybe some of the ways that it shows up are really good. You want to address those too, right? And it'll kind of help you decide, is this a thought I want to keep or is it not?

All right, friend, I hope that this was so helpful. I hope to see you tomorrow in the bonus training. I also hope to just see you in general in The Coach Lab. It is truly one of the best coaching communities, maybe the best. I mean, I think I'm biased. But we have so much fun in there. We get so much work done.

This is the stuff we talk about all the time. How we show up for our clients. How to be the best coaches. What to do when something goes awry in a

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coaching session. What to do when your client brings you something that you don't know what to do with. Just all the what to do's mixed with a lot of coaching, a lot of strategy, and a lot of just love from me and from everyone.

It's the most supportive community, in my opinion. So you should definitely come join us. I can't wait to see you there. And I will be back here next week. Goodbye.

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