

# Ep #127: When Your Clients Aren't Getting Results



## Full Episode Transcript

With Your Host

**Lindsay Dotzlaf**

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Hi, this is Lindsay Dotzlaf and you are listening to *Mastering Coaching Skills* episode 127.

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'm so happy you're here today. I want to share something with you. So today I just got off of my call with my advanced certification group, and I just love coaching there so much. We have so much fun.

And one thing that I do with them, and I'm going to teach you something that I teach them. Just one very small thing that can be used no matter what kind of coach you are. No matter where you are in your coaching journey, whether you work with one on one clients, or group clients, or whatever it is. I want to share something with you that hopefully will be very helpful.

So, one thing that we do that I teach them is I take them through a process of creating and or refining their coaching process. So what I mean by that is most people that are in the certification, that come to work with me in that space, a lot of them have been coaching for a while. They are working with clients, they have the foundations down, right?

They've moved past the foundations and they are working with one on one clients or some of them are transitioning to group, figuring out how to take their one on one practice and turn it into group coaching or into programs or courses. And I help them with that. I help them identify what is the process that you use? And not all of them are doing that, some of them are continuing to work with one on one clients. But we still dig into what's your process?

Some of them have very general, broad processes. And some of them are very specific, especially when they're transitioning into a program or a course, getting very clear about what are all the steps that you take your clients through. But here's something that came up today that we had a

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discussion about that I just want to share with you. I think it's going to be really useful because I know all coaches do this, and I know I used to do this.

So one of the questions that I asked them, we kind of start with what is the process you are using now? Because all of you, if you're listening, if you're a coach, if you've ever worked with any clients, you have a process that you use right now. Whatever you're doing, it is your process. And just so you know, my definition of a process is what's just the general process that you use to work with all of your clients?

So it does not mean like a 20 step process, a very specific process. It could just be I sign a client, we set goals, then we create a plan of how we're going to get there. We create awareness, where are we right now? Then we start working towards where they want to go. And we evaluate along the way and we just keep going. It could be that simple. So I just want to clarify that.

But one question that I ask them is some form of are there any gaps in your process? And or do you have clients who are not getting results? And so we started talking about that today. And this discussion came up where a couple of my clients, which by the way, this is totally normal, especially when you're working with lots of clients. Of course, sometimes you're going to have clients for one reason or another that aren't creating the results that they want to create. And so we dug into this a little bit today because a couple people wanted coaching on it.

So here's what I want to share. First of all, when it comes to clients not getting results, the first thing you want to do is be really clear about numbers, like actual facts. Is it one client? Which would be like a major outlier.

Let's say you have 10 clients, or 20 clients, or you've worked with 50 clients, or however many clients you have. If you have one client that's not getting results, this is going to be a situation that's a little bit of an outlier, right? And you can still investigate it for sure. 100% I would say, yes. But

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that's very different than, okay, most of my clients are getting results, but there's this like 25% of them are not, or I'm not sure, or whatever that answer looks like.

And here's what I want to offer when it comes to this. So whether you're experiencing this with one client or with a bunch of clients, here are the options you have that you can lean into when your clients aren't getting results. The first one, and by the way, these are not options I recommend, I'm just telling you all the options and then I'm going to talk about them.

So the first one is you can make it mean something about you, right? That you're a terrible coach, that you don't know what you're doing, that you're a bad person, that whatever. You might feel shame, you might feel embarrassed, you might feel frustrated, feel however you're going to feel. But that's the first option is you just completely make it mean something about you.

The second option is you can make it mean something about your client that is unchangeable. That's just how they are, they're a bad person, they aren't showing up like they're supposed to, whatever all those other thoughts would be.

So instead of you putting the blame on yourself, you're going to put it 100% outside of yourself and decide, there's absolutely nothing you can do about it. This is just how that person is. It's just how they show up. It's just their personality or their tendency is to show up this way. And there's just nothing you can do about it and they're not going to create the results that they want. That also usually leads to frustration, irritation, whatever, however you feel when you're having these thoughts about your clients.

The third option is, which might feel very obvious, but it's not what a lot of you do in the moment. The third option is to dig in and figure out why they aren't getting results, without making it mean anything about you, without making it mean anything about them. Just digging into like, oh, why aren't they? Let me get really curious, right? I've talked about this before, but just doubling down on curiosity.

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And especially if, you know, in the beginning we talked about one client versus many clients not getting results. One client is like, okay, we're going to be curious about that, maybe coaching just isn't a great fit for them. But especially if it's many clients, like let me really dig into this and figure out why. Because if some of your clients are getting results, we know you know how to coach, right? Maybe there's just something you're missing over here.

So if you think of the three options, so it's taking it all on yourself, making it mean something about you. Putting it all on the client and kind of like blaming them. There's just something wrong with them as a client, that's why they're not getting results. Or getting to work and just figuring out why and solving it. I'm sure you can guess, but I'm just going to tell you which one is the best option.

The first two are no good. They take you nowhere, they lead to nothing great. The third option is a yes, that is where you want to get curious, right? Like, oh, okay. Instead of ignoring it, instead of making it mean terrible things about yourself as a coach, instead of making it mean terrible things about your client, let me just dig in and figure out how to solve this.

And I'm going to tell you kind of the places where you can solve it. But I want to give you an example first. I talked about this also on the call today, I want to share it with you. So imagine you're a baker and you make cakes. That's all you do, you bake cakes. You're really good at it and people buy your cakes. You bake cakes all the time, sell cakes all the time, and all of your cakes are delicious. You're like known for making cakes.

And then one time you bake a cake and you get it out of the oven and something has gone very wrong, right? You can tell immediately, you look at the cake, and you're like, "Oh, something has gone wrong." If you think about that with the examples I just gave you, you have three choices, right?

You can make it mean stuff about yourself. You can be like, I'm a terrible baker, I cannot believe this. This is terrible. I'm a bad person. I should

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never make a cake again, I should just quit. You know, whatever, I'm not good enough. All the things you might make it mean about yourself.

You can make it mean something about the recipe maybe, the cake or the recipe, right? Like that recipe is just terrible, I'm never using it again. It's awful. I'm never going to make that kind of cake.

Or you can get really curious and figure out what may have gone wrong. Did you miss an ingredient? Did you misread the recipe? Did you skip a step? Did you mix it too long? Like what are all the things that could have gone wrong and how do you solve for it? And then try again next time.

Thinking about it that way, it's kind of silly, right, when you just make it mean something about yourself. Like of course, if you're just used to baking cakes, you bake cakes all the time, your cakes are amazing. If you have one bad cake, you're not going to think, "Oh no, I'm a terrible person." But for some reason in coaching, especially with those of you that are newer, you tend to do this.

And any time you're spending there thinking about yourself, obviously, like if you're trying to solve for how do I be good enough? How do I be a good enough human to be a good coach, that is wasted time. Just like it's wasted time if you spend time blaming, or being angry with, or whatever your clients.

The only time that you can spend that's super productive in this space is thinking about, okay, how do I fix it? And maybe the fixing it sometimes is, I want to be really clear about this, sometimes the fixing it could be this just isn't a good match. It's not a great client for me. I don't know how to help this person. I don't know how to coach on this specific thing.

But you can come to that conclusion or the client really isn't invested in this. They don't want coaching anymore. They're canceling all their calls, whatever. But you can come to that conclusion without making it mean anything about yourself or the client.

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What it looks like or what it could look like to solve it, when I say like, okay, dig in, get curious, think about how you can solve it. Now, I'm not going to just go deep into each one. If you want to do that, come work with me and I will teach you. But here's all the places you can look, right?

How are you setting up your coaching? How are you talking about it? How are you explaining it in your marketing and to your clients when they're thinking of hiring you, like on a consult or whatever? That's one thing.

How can you filter for certain types of clients that maybe you don't love working with? And again, that can be in your marketing, in your consult and anywhere leading up to them signing with you, right? So being super clear about what coaching is, about how you coach, about what you do and what you don't do. And then how do you filter? Which these are similar things, how do you filter for clients that you don't love working with or coaching that you don't do?

The next thing is within the coaching, right? So you're already working with the client, they are not moving forward, they're not moving towards their goal. Maybe they're frustrated, maybe you're frustrated, whatever. But this is the next opportunity where you can dig in and really get curious.

Are you sure that the goal you're thinking about is their same goal? How clear are you on that? Do you know exactly what it is that they're wanting to work on? Or are you projecting your thoughts about what they should be doing or where they should be at this point?

What questions can you ask in the moment to be really curious about why it's not working or why they think they're not moving forward? Or why does this thing keep coming up in coaching? How curious can you be and what will that change when you choose to dig into this area, instead of going all the way back to like, well, I'm a bad person, or they're a bad person. That's just never useful.

I just offer that for you so that you can consider it next time. I want to be clear, we all have clients that we find it harder to coach. That is just a thing. If you haven't had any clients like that, or you haven't had them yet, you

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probably just haven't had enough clients. It's going to happen at some point. It happens even to me sometimes, right?

There are times that the way a client shows up, I'm like, oh man, okay, let me think. But because I don't judge myself, I don't shame myself, I'm always just questioning how do I make sure this client gets the results they hired me for? Let me get really curious about that. What do I think is in their way? What do they think is in their way?

How can you shift it all so even during the coaching sessions or in the coaching, how can you shift it back to them? Sometimes you won't be able to solve this outside of a coaching session, you need to really get in there, get more curious and ask them questions.

Sometimes, I find this fascinating, this happens all the time. This shows up a lot of times in the Coach Lab. Someone will come, they'll tell me a problem and I'm like, okay, that's interesting. Does your client think that this is a problem? And so many times, like more often than not, the coach says, either, no, actually, they told me that they're loving it and the coaching is great. And they want to renew or something along those lines. I'm like, wait, what? Or they'll say, I don't know, I haven't asked them.

My suggestion before you just decide that everything is going wrong, or that it's not working, or that a client isn't moving forward, is to ask the client. So what I mean by that is, if you ever just notice yourself outside of sessions kind of trying to figure it out without the client, this is not client-centered coaching.

Client-centered is the focus is all on the client. They get to decide, are they moving forward? Is this going the way they want it to go? Do they love this coaching experience? That's very different than you, the coach, thinking about it, obsessing about it outside of the coaching session and trying to solve it.

Because sometimes if you just asked it'll either, one, they'll tell you something that you're like, oh, that's not what I thought you were going to say. Or two, you might notice they are very happy about the progress they



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have and you are the only one having thoughts about it. Maybe you're comparing them to other clients that are moving faster or to yourself when you've done this work or to what you thought it might look like.

Or three, they might really be able to tell you – Like you might find, okay, they do agree with you, but they're going to show you why. They might give you some insight into why they think it's not working or what they think is coming up for them, which is going to be so much more useful for you because then you can solve this together, right? Instead of thinking, I need to solve this and maybe I need to create more rules for them, or create more client filters, or create more whatever, versus let me just get in there and ask the client.

Now, of course, this is all going to look different depending on what type of container you have, right? Whether it's one on one coaching, or group coaching, or program. You're going to have more access, obviously, client to client if you're working with clients one on one. But even in groups, I would encourage you to know, is everyone moving forward? And if not, why not and how can you help the ones that aren't?

All right, so that was just a little behind the scenes just sharing some wisdom of something that came up in my certification call today. And if you want to get in this room and be in on these conversations, the certification is opening up to launch at the end of April. So if that is you, be sure to join the waitlist. We will put the link in the show notes. And I will hopefully see you there. I can't wait. 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](http://lindsaydotzlafoaching.com). That's Lindsay with an A, D-O-T-Z-L-A-F.com. See you next week.