

Ep #128: Should Coaches Coach Coaches?



Full Episode Transcript

With Your Host

Lindsay Dotzlaf

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Hey, this is Lindsay Dotzlaf, and you are listening to *Mastering Coaching Skills* episode 128.

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. I want to talk to you about something today that has been on my mind for a while. And I keep hearing about this, I keep hearing about it every once in a while in my spaces, but also just in the industry in general. And I think it's fun to just think about these things and address them sometimes head on, because I know some of you are thinking about this sometimes and have this little seed in the back of your head where you let this thing that I'm about to talk about, sometimes affect your coaching or your coaching business.

So I want to kind of break you free of it, if possible. And I think I've mentioned this on the podcast before, but I've never dedicated a whole episode to it. So today I want to talk about, are you ready? Coaches coaching coaches and why it happens. If it's good or bad. I'm just going to share some of my thoughts about it.

Now, obviously, I am a coach that coaches coaches. So spoiler alert, I don't think it's a bad thing. And I'm going to tell you why and why I think it happens so often. Why I think it's amazing. And then also how sometimes thoughts about that being an easier route or thoughts about not that you shouldn't be doing that or that you should be doing that, or whatever your thoughts are around it, how that can sometimes get in the way of you being the best possible coach for your clients. All right?

So one thing that I kind of hear come up a lot, especially in spaces that are full of coaches who are all kind of building their business, sometimes I'll hear some chatter about, oh, but it's easier if you coach coaches. Or the only way to really make money in this industry is by coaching other coaches, which is 1,000% not true. I can debunk this in so many ways.

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In my spaces, this is not something that happens. I actually don't even have a lot of coaches who are business coaches for coaches in my spaces. Sometimes I do. I'm not saying I don't have any. I definitely have some, but maybe because my spaces, especially my masterminds and certification, we don't focus hardcore on making money. And I think a lot of business coaches love to be in those types of spaces. Totally fine. No judgment at all. I like to be in those spaces, too.

So one thing I want to talk about is something that I notice that sometimes happens with coaches, there are a couple things. And before I go down that road, I really just want to say I think it makes so much sense that coaches would hire their own coach. Do I think it's necessary? Do I think you need to have a coach all the time, 24/7 if you're a coach? Absolutely not. To me, it's not a requirement.

But I think one reason that it happens is because – So I'll just use myself for an example. I know, this is true for a lot of people. As a coach, I believe so much in coaching, that when something comes up for me that I want to work on, if it's something that I want help with, of course, my first thought is like, "Oh, I bet I could hire a coach for this." No matter what it is.

And I've worked with so many different types of coaches, obviously, for my business, and for coaching skills and developing my coaching. But also for things in my life. Just my relationships, and money, and nutrition, and time management. I'm sure that there are other things, but I've just worked with a lot of coaches. And I think the reason that happens so often isn't because it's some scam or weird thing that coaches are running.

Now, okay, hold on. I can't say that's true for 100% of the industry. But at least what I have done, the spaces I have been in, that's never a scam. Like that's not a thing. And I just think it makes so much sense, right?

It's like if I think about other industries, for example, if I'm thinking about what physician would I go to when I'm sick? Or maybe not when I'm sick, but one that I'm going to see regularly, would I want to go to the physician, to the doctor who is like, "Oh, I don't actually believe in doctors myself, but I

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can help you.” No, right? You want the one that’s passionate about what they do and about medicine and, of course, they’re going to go to the doctor when they need to, right?

And you could think about this in so many other professions. Are you going to hire someone to help you with your money who thinks, “Oh, I would never. I think it’s really weird to hire people to help you with your money.” No, you’re going to hire someone that’s like, “Of course you want this. It’s so much better. Let me help you.” And I think that’s just what happens in the coaching industry.

Now, I think one thing where this kind of gets in the way or where it really can hold up some coaches or affect the way you coach or show up for your clients, or at least this is some things that I see in my spaces or that I notice, is when you as the coach, when you start to think, “Oh, I have to be a business coach or coach coaches in some fashion in order to make money.”

First of all, not true. And not only is it not true, but I’ve seen coaches go back and forth between this where they’re maybe a general life coach, or they have another niche. And then they flip because they think, oh, it’s better over there. It’s easier if I do this. And then have the exact same issues that they had when they weren’t working with coaches or weren’t working with other entrepreneurs.

And then now they’ve changed their niche and they’re like, “Now, I’m in this niche that I don’t even really love. I was really passionate, maybe, about what I was doing before. I just thought it was going to be better over here and turns out it’s not.” And so then it creates this kind of back and forth.

And I really think, you know, I have been talking a lot about niches with my clients and I really think when it comes to niches, you want to pick something that you do feel at least semi-passionate about or that you have lots and lots of knowledge about.

So one way where I really see it start to affect coaches coaching as well, and of course this is the piece because this is what I talk about, this is the

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piece that I feel so strongly about. One thing that I notice is that sometimes people in my spaces will be like, “Well, I don’t only coach coaches, but that’s just who comes to me. There’s nothing I can do about it. There’s nothing I’m doing to make that happen, that’s just who comes to me.” Which if that’s what you want to happen, that’s totally fine.

I just think you want to be really aware of it because the danger you can get into, and what I’ve noticed is sometimes when coaches start to go down that road, what they miss out on is really learning how to talk about coaching and to craft a message and to craft their own coaching process in a way that makes sense to all the people. Because sometimes one reason it could be “easier” and I’m saying easier in air quotes, you just can’t see me.

One reason it could be easier to sell coaching to coaches is because you can be a little lazy, the way you talk about it and the way you market. Which, okay, maybe for a moment that’s like, “Oh, well, that would be nice. I wouldn’t have to think about it so much.” But it’s actually not a good thing. Because when I say that, what I mean is it can keep you stuck using words that only coaches would understand. Or selling things or marketing things that only coaches are going to understand. And that payoff doesn’t last very long.

You might find immediate clients with that because they already know you, maybe they’re your colleagues, your friends in the coaching space, because you’re probably also in a lot of coaching spaces surrounded by a lot of coaches, which is a whole other thing. So that might immediately attract some people.

But over time what I see happening is when those coaches are never forced to work on like, but how would I say this? How would I just explain coaching in a way that anyone could understand? How would I explain what I do or how I work with my clients in a way, using words that any person would understand? As you keep going, it’s really hard to scale a business coaching, let’s say coaches or other entrepreneurs.

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Like I said, at first it might work because you're going to go with people that are warm, right, that are just like immediately around you. But as you get into colder and colder traffic, and by that I just mean people that have no idea who you are. So maybe you're doing ads or you're doing anything like that, like just reaching people who don't have any – Or maybe a podcast, right? Reaching people who don't have any idea who you are or what you do.

No matter who you work with, whether it's coaches, entrepreneurs, or any of the other humans, you have to know how to talk about coaching in a way that everyone's going to understand.

So what I see happen a lot of times when coaches go this route, when they do it kind of for the wrong reasons because they think it's better over there or it's easy over there. What I see happen is like immediately they might sign a few clients because of their thoughts about how easy it is. It's easier to sell this coaching to the other coaches. And then that goes away. And then it becomes like, okay, now what?

So here's what I would offer for any of you that are like, "Oh my gosh, I think about this all the time." Because I know so many of you do. I have conversations with you, and I see the posts and the rants and all the things about it. But here's what I would just for a moment ask yourself if you're ever considering this.

And again, obviously, I coach coaches. I think it's an incredible thing. I think coaches love to work with other coaches. But I also think that if there's another niche out there that you really are passionate about and you just think this other thing is going to be easier, please just don't rid the world of your genius in that other area.

That's what makes me so sad, is when I see people that have these sometimes incredible niches that I'm like 100% this is going to work, you can do this. Even if it's general life coaching, I just know they're such a gift to the industry and to all of their clients who are not coaches. Sometimes it just makes me a little sad when I see them shift over into this other lane

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only because they think it's going to be easier. Or they think like, I don't know why this isn't working. And instead of figuring it out, I think the answer is to just change this situation, change my circumstances.

Now, the one thing, it's really funny that I'm saying this because, obviously, again, I coach the coaches. But I think what's funny about my journey is I resisted that for so long. I was just like, "Nope, that is not what I'm doing. That is not who I'm here to coach." But what I noticed, kind of how it went for me, is that I noticed all I wanted to think about was the actual coaching, like the art of coaching.

And, of course, I thought nobody, for sure, would ever buy any kind of offer that pertained to that, right? So I was like, "Okay, well, if I'm not going to be a business coach and help coaches make money, then this just isn't a thing that I can do." Now, of course, I've proved that wrong. I have evolved. I now do what I'm doing. But now that I have so many clients, I'm working with so many coaches, now I just see it coming up for people.

And you can just tell, I think you can check in with yourself if you're in this position and just kind of know like in your heart of hearts – This is one of my favorite questions, by the way. What would you do? What would you choose? What would you want to do if you knew it was going to work? If it was just guaranteed this thing is going to work.

What I see a lot of you do is you decide you aren't going to coach coaches or coach entrepreneurs, and you're going to really lean into this niche that you love and that you really feel passionately about. But then you let that drama play in the back of your mind of like, "But still would that other thing be easier?"

And to me that's like the number one thing that's probably going to slow you down. It has nothing to do with what your actual niche is, but more to do with how much are you entertaining the thought, "this is the wrong thing, or this isn't going to work" instead of just making a very clear decision and then getting to work figuring out how to make it work. Surrounding yourself,

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like thinking about all the things, how do I surround myself with more of these people?

I said this a little bit ago, but this is one thing I also see a lot of coaches do, is they get in programs and masterminds and group coaching, you know, spaces or coach certifications or anything like that, where they're just surrounded by tons of coaches. And then they're like, well, I don't know, I mean, the only people that hire me are coaches, even though I'm like a, fill in the blank coach. A weight loss coach, a marriage coach, whatever. But it's only coaches that hire me.

The first thing I always say to these people is, well, but how many people are you surrounding yourself with that aren't coaches? It's amazing to be in these spaces, right? Like people in the Coach Lab, I love it. It's one of my favorite communities. I mean, I'm biased, obviously, because I created it. But I love it so much and the community is so amazing.

And in my certification, for example, I've never felt so close to a group of people and we're only a couple of months in and it's so exciting. So I get it. I love those spaces, too. But you want to think about what is my niche? And how do I also surround myself with these people? How do I talk about coaching in a way that I am helping all the women in marriages that aren't working or whatever it is, right?

How do I surround myself with more of that? Where do I find them? Because once you make the decision, you know, I said one of, I think, the things that slow so many coaches down is just having that little voice in the back of their head that's like, "Oh, but it's better over here. Or it's better over here."

But once you make a clear decision and say, "Okay, I'm never entertaining that again." At least for now, right? Like that's totally off the table, I'm not entertaining it. Then you can get to work finding your people and problem solving for, okay, well, if it's not working, does that just mean I'm not in enough groups where my ideal clients might be hanging out?

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How do I fix that? How do I find more of them? How do I spend more time thinking about my coaching process for them instead of entertaining that maybe I'm doing the wrong thing, right, or that I need to change my niche and that's the issue?

And I think I've said this before, of course, I do think there are some niches that I'm like, these are way too narrow or that's such a small percentage of humans or sometimes someone will tell me what their niche is and I'm like, oh, how many people do you know? Like, why is that your niche? How many people do you know that want to work on that? And they're like, oh, none, I just thought it was a good niche. That's not usually a great reason to choose a niche unless you're willing to really stick with it and go find the people.

While we're on the topic of niches, I'm just going to say this really quickly because it has come to my attention that it's a thing that happens in the industry and I think it's very strange. I have learned that there are some spaces, some coach trainings, where they kind of pick your niche for you or give you options that are like, oh, these niches are really hot right now, you should pick one of these. And it has nothing to do with maybe who you as a coach are or nothing that you've ever worked on.

I had someone come to me, I don't know, at this point, maybe a year or two ago. She had just finished this training, don't ask me because I don't even remember what the training was. And this isn't anything bad about the training because I know nothing about it. It was just one of these things where I was like, "Wait." I was just kind of scratching my head like, "Wait, what?"

So she came to me, and she wanted to join, I think, my mastermind or something at the time. And she said, when I asked her what her niche was, she said it was something along the lines, something medical. Like I coach women with diabetes or something like that.

Now, I did have an amazing client who does this, and if you're listening, you are not who I'm talking about. This is someone I don't even remember

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her name. She just came and she told me this. And I said, “Oh, that’s a great niche.” I was just making conversation, right? I was like, “Do you have a history with that? How did you get into this?”

And she said, “No, I just went to this coach training and then at the end they kind of suggest niches that would be good for you.” And I said, “Oh, but why this one? Do you know a lot about diabetes? Do people in your family have diabetes?” I was just asking lots of questions. And she was basically just like, “Nope, I know nothing about it. I have no attachment to it, whatever.”

I’m just going to pin this for anyone that has had this situation happen to them. I don’t know why this is happening and I think it’s a terrible idea. This is, obviously, just my opinion. But I don’t care how “hot,” again air quotes, a niche is. If you have no connection to it or don’t care about it at all, and not only that, but when it’s something very specific and medical, like diabetes, and you’re going to have to learn about it in order to sell this or to even work with clients. To me, that’s a huge red flag for you as the coach and also as a client anytime you’re hiring a coach.

I would never hire a coach that is just like, “No, I don’t actually know anything about diabetes. I just coach women.” No, that to me, you can hear how ridiculous I think it is, right? It blows my mind that that’s a thing that happens.

Now, if that has happened to you and it is working, go for it. Like just keep going. I’m sure you’re killing it. This is just a very personal opinion that I just wanted to say because I work with so many coaches and I have hundreds of coaches in the Coach Lab, and I hear so many niches. And every once in a while I can just tell by the way someone talks about it that they were kind of told, like you should do this. Or you can’t do this other thing, do this thing, because that’s where the money will be.

The money is not going to be anywhere where you don’t have an attachment, some kind of attachment or passion about what it is that you’re doing. Not that it has to be this deeply rooted, like passion of all passions,

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bleeding heart kind of thing. But you at least want to wake up in the morning, and again, this is opinion, maybe this isn't true for everyone. But my thought is I want to wake up every morning so excited for what I'm doing.

So to bring it back around to what I was talking about at the very beginning, if you know, no, I do want to be a coach that helps coaches in their businesses, or whatever it is, that is all I ever want to think about every single day. That's kind of what happened for me. And I also started to notice, because I was a general life coach, I also started to notice that when people would come to me with all these other things, I had no interest. I didn't want to coach on them.

So that was just interesting, too. I just noticed it for a while. And that was dramatic, it wasn't that I had no interest. It was just a little bit of like, I just want to be thinking about coaching and about coaching skills about how to be a better coach. That happened for probably a couple years before I even decided that that's what my niche was.

And it's funny now because it's like it's never actually better on the other side. So here I am now doing that very thing, and now there are times where I'm like, "Wouldn't it just be fun to coach someone on anything?" Which I do sometimes in other spaces. I love guest coaching for people because it gives me the opportunity to coach on other things, but it's just funny, right? Because it's like, okay, well that wasn't actually the answer, although I'm still very passionate about it.

I do not feel bored ever of coaching my clients or of thinking about how to be the best coach for each of them. But it is just interesting how it comes full circle. And I'm like, oh, but it would be fun to just be a general life coach again. So just know that that's true for you, too. No matter what you choose, at some point, the grass is always greener, always, on the other side.

But I just wanted to talk about this a little bit today. I hope that this was helpful. If you have any questions about it, please reach out to me. And I

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want to be really clear, again, I am not on either side. I'm not saying like, because I see some coaches out there who are like, "Don't do this. Why are all these coaches, coaches for coaches?" I have no opinion about that.

I love coaches. I hire coaches. I think it makes a lot of sense that coaches hire coaches. But if that is not what you're passionate about, just please don't forget about the wide, wide world of all the other humans who also really could probably use your help in whatever lane it is that you want to be in, that you want to coach in.

And actually, I want to add one more thing before I hop off here, which is, I forgot about this until I was about to sign off. The other thing that I see that happens often is when you go down that road of being a coach for coaches because you think it's better over there or you think you're going to make more money, especially when you're a business coach. I see this happen for so, so, so many coaches. They think that that's where the secret, magic money lane is.

So they decide that's what they're going to do, but haven't made a ton of money themselves in their business. Or maybe they're making some money, but it still feels a little shaky. And then they decide that they're going to help other coaches make money, but then the drama that you can have as a coach when you go down that road can be so connected to your coaching process and to the results that your clients are getting, that it can kind of turn into one big pile of poo, to put it nicely, right?

Because now you're having your own drama in your own business – I can't even tell you how many times I've seen this. You're having your own drama over here in your own business. Maybe you have a bad month or a bad few months, or you're not making the money you want, or you have a failed launch or whatever it is that's happening over here for you. But then your clients are coming to you for coaching on this very thing.

And now it's just a huge tornado of everyone's drama that nobody can see outside of. And it creates coaching which, of course, this is the part that I feel so passionately about, it creates coaching sometimes that really isn't

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the best for your clients and that really isn't great coaching from a totally more neutral, removed place.

But it's also probably not great coaching from any kind of business strategy place because if it's not working for you, or if it's something you've never tried and you're trying to teach your clients. And they're like, "I don't know, it's not working." And then you're like, "I don't know why it's not working because it's not working for me either." Again, we just want to stay out of that. Make it easier on yourself.

I think it's so interesting when coaches think it's going to be easier to go down this road. And I'm like, "No, it's not. Stop." "It's going to be easier," is never the reason that you want to choose this lane because I promise you, it's not easier. Not only is it not easier, but lots of coaches also believe this is true, so there's also just more coaches, in my opinion, in that space.

All right, I hope this was really helpful for you. And if you are a coach that is experiencing this or is thinking about this or thinking it's better over there, really just sit with this and believe that what you want to do, what you feel passionately about is great. It is your lane, you just have to figure out how to make it work, just like you would no matter what you choose, all right? And I support you, obviously, either way. I'm so glad you're here today. And if you –

One quick announcement, if you're interested in joining the Advanced Certification in Coaching Mastery, it is launching April 26th. And we're opening it 24 hours early. If you're on the waitlist there's going to be a bonus period, 24 hours. So join the waitlist so you can get all the information. It's all coming very soon, and I am planning some things that are kind of blowing my own mind. So I don't know what you're waiting for.

If you're not already on the list, if this is the place where you are in your coaching journey where you feel solid about your coaching foundations and you're really ready to take that next step, take it to the next level and find your unique coaching style, make your coaching more your own, create your work that people will recognize and say, oh my gosh, that's so and

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so's. Like that's her coaching style. That's his coaching style. Consider joining us. It's so fun. I would love to have you, so click the link, there's a waitlist link in the show notes and hopefully I'll see you there. 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.