

Ep #156: 6 Coaching and Business Lessons from The Coach Lab



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 156.

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. I wanted to hop on and just record this kind of quick episode for you. I'll tell you, just on a personal note, I have had COVID and wasn't sure that I was going to actually be able to record an episode this week. But I am.

Here I am and I'm going to try to get through it without coughing. I keep getting a tickle in my throat. I'm not feeling 100%, but I have been laying in bed thinking about some things for days, going on like six days now. And I wanted to get out of bed and record you an episode talking about some of the things I have been thinking about.

So if you're listening to this in real time, one thing that's happening right now is I'm hosting something called Coach Week, hopefully. I'm sure it's happening, I'm just going to put that out there because it is next week and I am still not feeling 100%. But surely by next week I will be feeling up for it.

So if you're listening in real time, that's happening right now. I'll put the link in the show notes, it is not too late to join us if you would love to join Coach Week. It's the second annual coach week and it is just a week long, free training for any coach that wants to just come learn and get coached and just talk about all things coaching.

There's a private Facebook group that goes along with it, so there's a community aspect to it. And it really is one of my favorite things. So just if you're listening to this the day it comes out, or the week it comes out, first of all, check out Coach Week. Second, just hope that it's, like cross your fingers for me, that it's actually happening right now.

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But by the way I feel today, we're just going to assume it is because if I can record a podcast, surely I can be there for a week long training, right? And I have plenty of help, so that's always useful, too. But one thing that's going to happen at the end of Coach Week is I'm going to talk about my offers. I'm going to talk about The Coach Lab, I'm also going to talk about the advanced certification in coaching mastery that I offer.

And so what I want to do in this podcast episode, I had planned to record a podcast episode about The Coach Lab and I was kind of thinking about what I wanted to say, what I wanted to talk about. And one thing I haven't shared about The Coach Lab is some of the biggest learnings that I've had.

So I launched it last year. So it's been open for about a year and a half and I have had some really big, of course, learnings and takeaways. And I just took some notes on a few of them that I want to share with you.

So if you have been participating in Coach Week, or even if you've just been listening to the podcast and you're just curious about The Coach Lab, or you're just curious to hear me talk about a program and kind of how I structure it and how I think about it, I'll be doing some of that in this episode.

And if you are interested in the certification that I offer, I will be selling that in November. So it will be launching all through November. If that's something that you are looking forward to then just make sure you're paying attention. The Coach Lab is open now, you can join us any time. The certification will be opening at the end of this week. I'll actually be opening up to do some calls, some kind of sales calls but more just like Q&A schedule a call with me if you want my help figuring out if it's a great fit for you.

We'll actually be opening those at the end of this week. So make sure you're on my email list and just paying attention if that's something that you're interested in or that you have questions about.

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So let's just dive in. Here are some, originally it was the top five, but somehow it turned into six. So these are six things that I've learned in the last year and a half from running The Coach Lab. And just to give you some details if you're not in it, and you're kind of like, okay, what's the structure of it? It is a lifetime access program. It's \$2,000 in one payment or I have a payment plan, three payments over three months.

And there are around 400 people in The Coach Lab, 400 clients. Not everyone participates at the same time. Not everyone is in the Facebook community. I think there's about 300 people in the Facebook community, 300 coaches. And I still can't quite believe it when I think back to when I launched it a year and a half ago. This was like my dream, but I couldn't even quite get my mind there. I had probably thought this was like years in the future of having this many clients, helping this many coaches.

And so that's kind of the structure of it. We have weekly coaching calls every Thursday at noon Eastern time. We have a coaching call, we have the Facebook community where people can post and get coaching and get help at any time. We have a private podcast.

And we also have monthly workshops where once a month instead of those regular coaching calls, I or someone who I invite in, like another expert, I might invite an expert in to come in and host a workshop for me if they have an expertise that I don't have that just melds beautifully with what I teach in The Coach Lab.

So actually, for example, today as I'm recording this, Sara Fisk, who if you listen to the podcast regularly, was on I believe last week or two weeks ago now. And she was actually teaching a workshop there today on people pleasing and pleasing your clients, which I haven't watched the replay, but I've only heard incredible feedback.

Okay, so that's kind of the structure. I just wanted to give you a little bit of what it looks like, so that you know the lens I'm using when I'm talking through some of these things. So number one, this is probably one of the

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things that stands out the most to me that I didn't consider from the very beginning.

So when I created The Coach Lab I filmed a bunch of content ahead of time, right? I filmed content on videos, training videos on coaching foundations and on foundational coaching tools and some things adjacent to that, right? Like asking for consent during coaching, creating safety, those are the two that stand out to me right now, but all kinds of things. And then we have the monthly workshops, which all those recordings are in there, too. So I'm constantly adding to the content that's inside.

But one thing I didn't know going in is the pull, the very, very strong pull to constantly want to add new stuff and redo all of it. Now, I had heard of this from other people, from colleagues, from friends. And I was like, yeah, yeah. I mean, I know, I understand that because I always want to redo my podcast intro and whatever. Like there are always things that are always on my mind that I should redo. But this is just another level.

So I only offer this to say, if you're thinking of creating something like this, a course or a program or something that has lots of content that your clients will consume, just know that if this happens to you, it's totally normal where, I mean, it is just like part of my job is to silence that voice sometimes, right? Because if I was constantly giving into it, I would be getting nothing else done.

And it's not actually the best for my clients, right? If I'm like, okay, here's all the content. And then a month later it's like, here's all the new content. And a month later, okay, scratch that. Now, here's the new content over and over, that's not really that useful for our clients.

Now, it's actually something I am currently working on and I've been working on it a little bit this week while I'm sick when I have had time, now that it's a year and a half in and I actually have lots of feedback from people going through the content and being in the container. Now I actually am going to redo some of it, refilm some of it, add some stuff, simplify some

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things, include some learning that I've had in the last year and a half, and to just really up the value that is offered inside The Coach Lab. So that is happening.

So just to be clear, I'm not saying that it's something that we just never do. But I just wasn't prepared for how strong and constant that pull would be to redo the content. So that's something I just want to share. If this has happened to you, just know it's totally normal.

The second thing is, one thing that I was worried about when I started The Coach Lab is that in a container with that many humans, and one thing I'll say is the way I structure the weekly calls, it's on Zoom but I use the format where I can see everyone. So I don't do it webinar style. I've been in some programs before where they do it webinar style where it's like just the coach is the only person you see and then maybe sometimes they bring on the person getting coached.

For now, at least while I'm recording this, I do it where everyone can see everyone because I love seeing people's faces. Now, that does not mean that people have to be on camera, right? There might be like 50 people on a call and sometimes maybe only 20 of them are on camera. That's totally fine. I love giving people the option of tuning in live, but not necessarily having to be on camera and participate.

This isn't like a mastermind or something like that where it really takes everyone actively participating. Sometimes people are just there to listen and I fully appreciate that. Or sometimes I know for some people they're showing up really late at night, or early in the morning, or while they're doing other things or whatever and I love that. So how they show up is how they show up and it's perfect for me.

One thing I was really afraid of is that there wouldn't be as much of a connection and the coaching wouldn't be that deep. And what I'm very happy to report is that that has actually not been true. And that's been really surprising for me. I still feel very connected, not to everyone, I have

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lots of clients in there who have never been coached, right? They just either don't show up for the coaching or don't volunteer to ask for coaching. And that's 100%, fine. That's the type of program it is.

And there are people that show up and get coached a lot. And for those people, I do, I still feel very connected to them. But more importantly, the coaching still feels just as impactful and deep. It does not, like my fear is that sometimes it might be very surface level, people might be scared to really be open and honest and really ask for the coaching they need. And that has just not been the case at all.

And I really want to say thank you to all of my clients for that. Because that is something that they – I mean, okay, I have created that somehow, right? And I've created the container. But I really appreciate my clients who show up and really allow me to get in there and coach them and really make big shifts for them, which is so fun.

The next thing, this has more to do with the selling than the running of the program, but although actually that's not true. This also trickles into the running of it. Selling to cold traffic and delivering to cold traffic is just a little wild. It is very different than warm traffic. It's very different than people who, I'll use this selling term I'm sure you've heard, but the know, like and trust, right? Like the people you've already built the know, like and trust factor with. It's very different.

So this year I've started doing Facebook ads and just venturing into ads in general. And it's just very different, right? There's just a different level of value that people are looking for because they don't have that thought like, oh, I already like this person, I already like this coach, or I like their work, or I can't wait to work with them or whatever. They don't have that, they're kind of coming in blind.

And so I really want to offer this for any of you listening that feel me on this, right? So you can just know like, yep, totally normal. It's also why I think a lot of business coaches teach organic marketing and selling in the

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beginning, because there is just a different flavor that has to happen when you go out into cold traffic and start talking to people who have no idea who you are and they have no interaction with you or your work previously.

And then the same is true for delivery, right? They come in just a little more, like they just don't have those lovely thoughts about you that sometimes warm traffic can have, which I think makes total sense, right?

This is nothing. I'm not saying anything bad about any of the humans, it's just different, like you just have to think about it in a different way. And really think about how can I nurture them? How can I love on them? How can I make sure they feel fully heard, seen and supported? Which is always my goal anyway.

The next thing is asking for feedback, which I'll probably do a totally separate episode on this at some point. But asking for feedback is amazing. And you have to be very good, if you're going to do it, at deciphering what you want to listen to and what you don't. Because what I have learned over the last year and a half, more so than ever before, is that everyone is going to have an opinion and all of those opinions are going to be different.

So in a few different ways I've asked for some feedback within The Coach Lab space. And I'll be doing that more because I do think it's really important. So here that, I am not saying don't ask for it. I'm just saying you have to be prepared for what you get. And you have to be able to decipher what is useful feedback for you and sometimes what isn't. And just go into it knowing, oh, of course, everybody has a different opinion.

If I lined up 20 of my clients in The Coach Lab and asked each of them in a perfect world what would this space look like, they would probably all say something different, right? So a couple of examples are at one point I had someone say I don't think, like sometimes people ask for coaching on their business instead of on their coaching. Totally fair and true. Usually when that happens, I steer it back to how does this apply in your coaching?

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And I've gotten pretty good, over the last year and a half I've gotten pretty good at redirecting these requests. But some people also love that, right? I've also had the opposite feedback that like, oh, I'm really glad sometimes you talk about business in here. Sometimes you let people get coached on these things. Now, again, there's probably more of that in the beginning because it takes time to learn how to run a container like that, right?

Another example might be like call times, right? I really thought when I started it that after, because I really love the idea of everybody getting the coaching that they need at all times. And so far, that happens. But I really thought when I started it that we would have to quickly add. When I saw how many people were joining in my very first launch, I thought, oh, we're going to have to have a second call time, just because I really wanted to be sure that people get what they came for and that they get the coaching they want.

So far, at this point, I'm going to knock on wood, I have gotten through coaching every person that has wanted it on every call. Now, sometimes I have guest coaches if I'm sick or if I'm traveling or if I just have a guest expert coming in to teach a workshop. So I can't, I guess, say 100% of the time, but I'm pretty certain that on every call, we've coached every person that wants coached.

And that will change in the future if it needs to, right? If I start finding that it does become a problem, then I will look at how to solve it. But I've just really been surprised that I've been able to do that. So that's been really fun.

But to bring it back to what I was saying, everyone will want something different, right? So I constantly get requests for can we add another call time, can we, you know. And then I'm sure if we changed the call time, people would be upset about that. When I very first launched it, some people were upset that the community was on Facebook, which trust me, I get it. Facebook isn't my favorite spot to hang out either. But there were lots of reasons that I chose it.

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And at one point I considered changing it. I ran it by a bunch of people and they were all like, absolutely no, we don't like Slack. We don't like whatever the other options were. So that's just something you have to know, right? The bigger the room, the more people in the room, the more opinions you are going to have. And you just have to be really solid in the biggest thing just being like why you are making every decision, right?

It doesn't mean I don't listen to people. I absolutely do. I love getting feedback. I think that I'm always open to making changes and making shifts. And there are some changes and some things coming, probably at the beginning of the year, I'm guessing will be when a lot of that rolls out. But there's a difference between being open to it, being receptive and listening versus thinking you have to do what every single piece of feedback tells you, which just can be really tricky.

So you just have to know that. I'm just letting you know, if you ever consider creating a program like this where the volume of humans will be large, you just have to consider that. You just have to know that going in so you can be ready for it.

The next part is one thing I hadn't really considered. When I launched The Coach Lab I had a lot of questions like, how do I sell this? How do I get people in here? One thing that I hadn't really considered that I've recently started thinking a lot more on is how do I keep clients engaged once they're in?

I think that it's really easy with something like a lifetime access program, I mean, I've bought them before, I know that I've done this where I've bought them and then, one, either never really used them. Or two, maybe kind of used it at first and then kind of stopped showing up.

So I've been having lots of ideas recently on how to keep clients engaged. But that was just something I didn't, I just hadn't even considered that before I started it, before I started the program. And yeah, it's not good or

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bad, it was just like, oh yeah, this is something. And over time, as I've run it for a while now you start to see patterns too, right?

Like in the summer I notice the attendance on the calls kind of goes down quite a bit. And then it goes back up in the fall and through the winter. And then you start to notice trends like that. And so now that I've been doing it for a little bit, I've just recently started thinking, oh, what are some ideas that I can come up with to help people be reengaged in the space?

Now, I do know that launching some new content inside and creating some new opportunities for people to participate is going to be very helpful, but it's just something to know going in when you're creating a space like this, that your job isn't just done once you get them in the door.

And then the last one is, this is going to sound ridiculous, maybe not. If you're my client, hopefully you'll receive this. But I am just blown away by how incredible my clients are. And really, truly by the way they show up. And, of course, I knew this going in. But just seeing the power of it over the last year and a half with so many people in one space, just really seeing how the way your clients show up to a space affects everything, right?

So every week, when I encourage my clients to ask questions and to show up and to be vulnerable, and to really get what they need, and to be open and honest so that they can get the coaching that they want, I see them do it and it, like I never don't have gratitude for that. I'm blown away every single time, every single week. And I'm always so grateful. And I would offer to you, if you have any kind of group space, to really think about that.

Sometimes it's hard, not hard, sometimes we forget or sometimes I see a lot of my clients forget to kind of put themselves on the other side. Like when you're creating a group space, put yourself on the other side of not being the coach, but being the person being coached and showing up and getting coached in front of a group of people. Sometimes that can be uncomfortable, and I think that we forget as coaches.

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So I'm constantly asking myself, like this is something I've kind of done from the beginning, how do I create a space that feels very safe for clients to show up and get the coaching they need? Because the more openness and vulnerability people are showing up with, the more it transforms the room, truly. The people that are listening have transformations. Sometimes just the people that are listening are now more brave because they just heard someone else get coached.

But I think it's really important, you know, I hear this sometimes where coaches get really frustrated about the way their clients are showing up or just have thoughts in general about how they could be showing up differently. And I just think it's easy to forget how vulnerable and scary it can be.

I know even I, I mean I've been getting coached for years, and sometimes even now in group spaces when I raise my hand, I was just at a live event, probably why I have Covid. Not the event itself, just the travel in general, I think that's where I got it. And I was just at a live event and I raised my hand a few times to get some coaching or to share something and my voice shakes every time. It just does. That's just who I am.

Now, after I talk for a few minutes, then it goes away. I stop shaking. But there's just something that sometimes can happen in our bodies that's like, this is vulnerable. This feels scary. And I think the more, as coaches, the more we question, of course, this is true with one on one clients, too, right?

The more you can question that and say, how do I create the safest space possible so that my clients can show up and get what they came for, the better your spaces are going to be. The more comfortable they're going to be for your clients. The more warm and inviting and welcoming they're going to be. And I just encourage you to try it no matter how many clients you have.

So that is all for today. I just want to leave you with these things. Thanks for hanging in there, I'm getting a little hoarse. Thanks for hanging in and

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listening to all of this. And if you haven't joined Coach Week, do it now. We have all the replays ready for you so you haven't missed anything.

You can dive right in and participate in the community today. You can watch the replays. You can come to calls today, tomorrow, the rest of the week. And hopefully I'll see you there. All right, goodbye.

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