

Ep #169: Goal Management: Navigating Overwhelm and Negative Feelings



Full Episode Transcript

With Your Host

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Hey, this is Lindsay Dotzlaf and you are listening to *Mastering Coaching Skills* episode 169.

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. Due to a little mix-up in my schedule we are running a replay today. It is checking in on goals, one more episode that I previously recorded about goals. Hopefully it's exactly what you need to hear today, even though this was not the scheduled content. If not, don't worry, I will be back next week with a very interesting episode. Can't wait to see you then.

Hey, coach. So last week, I recorded a podcast for you about the program launch that I had and about the results I created. And then how I experienced some anxiety and overwhelm even though I created results that technically were great.

The whole podcast I talked about just, I was very in it at the time that I was recording. I talked about my whole experience of why my brain really wanted to find all the things that were still going to go wrong, even though I was creating the results that I was wanting.

And today, I want to kind of talk about the opposite, which is probably a lot more common. We talk about this a lot more often. But thanks to someone on my podcast producer's team who was like, "Hey, you should talk about what happens when the opposite happens. When things don't go the way you want, like what do you do then?" Right?

Because, obviously, a lot of times in those moments we still experience the exact same thing I was talking about on the podcast last week. So I want to spend some time thinking about that today. And what you can do when something like this happens in your business and, of course, also how you can use this in the coaching of your clients.

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So last week, I gave the example of I had a goal for my program, I exceeded the goal, everything should have felt great. And instead, it felt awful and I was anxious, and I was just actively looking for all the possibilities of all the things that were going to come crashing down.

And then I told you, so if you haven't listened, you should go back and listen, because I kind of gave strategy for what to do when that happens and how to know if you act on it or not, right? So I gave some examples of like, "Oh no, now this is going to happen." And just talked about noticing where is that thought coming from and how do you know whether you should go check on that thing, or take action on it, or just notice it and be with yourself in the discomfort.

And what's interesting is that since someone suggested this podcast, I have been thinking about it. And I've realized, oh, it's actually the exact same thing. And I'm going to tell you what I mean by that. So think about, so if you're a coach and if you have set business goals before we're going to start there. And then I'll give examples in other coaching scenarios as well.

But because most of the listeners are coaches, a lot of you have your own businesses, so I'm just going to use that as the first example because it's also the example I used last week. So let's say you set a business goal, and maybe it's to sign a certain number of clients this month. Maybe it's to only work a certain amount of hours. Maybe it's to create a new process for your clients. It could be anything.

So you set the goal and you feel pretty good about it. You get coached on it or you coach yourself on it. And you're like, "Yeah, I think this is going to work. Yeah, let's do it." Right? And you go into it feeling pretty confident. So let's just say it's similar to what I was talking about last week where you have a two to three day period and you're creating this thing. And then you're measuring the results.

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And within that period, you think, like you envision it going a certain way. You know, you just feel good about it. You feel confident, you think it's going to happen, you know it's going to happen. And then the first day goes by and the results start coming in, whatever those results are, and they aren't what you expect.

And you're like, "Huh, that's weird. I wonder why." And then maybe the second day, now you're like in the second day and now the results are like really not what you expect, or just lower than you expect, right? So let's go with the number of clients.

Let's say you launch a program, just like I did. I had the goal of 50 people, so let's say you have that goal, three days, 50 people. And like midway through the second day, maybe you have 10, right? 10 clients have enrolled in your program. Now at that point, it doesn't mean that you can't still hit the goal, right? You still have time.

But your brain starts going to the place where it's like, "Oh no, this isn't working. What do I do? I have to fix it." And what I said last week was when things are going well and your results are making sense and your brain is going to all the things, a lot of times it's kind of like making things up. Like there's nothing actually to fix and your brain is just looking for the problem.

But sometimes if you're not hitting the goal, and especially if you're not even coming close, it might feel very true that no, there is an actual problem and I need to figure out how to fix it because it's not working or this isn't what I expected.

When you notice this happening, a lot of times what I see many coaches do, and, I mean, I know I've done it myself, is you start taking action from that place of believing everything has gone wrong and I need to fix it. And usually what that looks like is maybe you write more emails, you do some more posts. You just like ramp up the action, right?

Now, this isn't necessarily a bad thing, right? Sometimes more action, depending on who you are, depending on how you normally operate, more

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action can be good. But just like in the other podcast, what I want to offer is the thing you want to ask yourself, what is the thought and the feeling that I'm taking action from?

Because if you think about this, let's say your thought is, "Oh no, this isn't working, I have to fix it." And you feel defeated and you're only a day and a half in, so you're only like halfway through the launch. And you start looking for all the problems, just like I did last week, right? You start looking for all the problems.

But when you are believing that you're not creating the results that you want, all the problems feel very true. And it becomes this kind of race of putting out every fire. I have to react to this, I have to react to this because clearly, it's not working. I have to fix everything.

When you do that, interestingly, a lot of you have probably maybe seen this before if you're on email lists, it doesn't have to even be of coaches, but any service based business. You can usually read in an email when someone is selling from a little bit of desperation or selling from a space of like, "It's not working. Oh no, I have to convince them. I have to fix this thing." Right?

So that's usually what starts happening. If you don't catch yourself and you're just like, "Oh no, it's not working. Oh my gosh, I have to fix it." And you're feeling defeated and your actions are like write more emails, post more things. I don't even know what else, there's tons of things, right? Plan a last minute Q&A, plan a last minute freebie, like whatever. Just tons of action.

Anytime you're doing it from that space, it will come across in whatever it is that you're wanting the other person to do, right? It will come across in, it's not working. Then you're saying like, "Okay, how do I get it to work? Oh, I forgot to tell them this thing." And then you're telling your audience the thing through the lens of it's not working, I have to fix this.

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Which is so different and so opposite. So let's say in the launch you planned everything ahead of time, you wrote the emails, you did all the things from a place of believing it was going to work. And now you're trying to fix it from a place of it's not working. And in my experience of being on the receiving end of this, what I see happen a lot in emails and in posts, and you know, wherever is it almost sometimes creates conflicting messages because you might be asking yourself, like, what haven't I said?

Which can be a very good question, but I'm going to get into that in a minute. What haven't I said? And then you'll write an email about something that has like, nothing really even to do with what you're selling. You're just like, "Oh, and I could add this thing on," or "Oh, I didn't talk about this thing yet." And it's not even really like a core part of your process. And your thoughts are just kind of everywhere and you're just throwing everything out there.

And what happens when people are watching that, they might not know that it happens. What will happen for your audience is they'll just get a little bit confused. They'll be confused just enough that they're like, "I don't know, I'm going to keep watching. I'll wait."

So what do you do, right? Like what is the actual way to handle this? The first thing is just to notice it. To notice that moment that you're thinking it's not working, that you're feeling defeated or some form of negative emotion that you weren't in before you looked at the results. And you just notice like how do I feel about this?

You just really stop and check in. How am I feeling right now? What am I believing? What am I making this mean, either about myself as a human, or about the launch, about the goal, right? Like any of that. What am I making it mean? And notice that if you're feeling defeated and you feel like you're trying to solve problems, don't take action from that space.

The space you want to be in is curiosity, which, of course, I talk about all the time, right? You have to find your way back to like detaching your self-

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worth from the launch, detaching what you're going to make it mean about yourself as a human from the launch, detaching all the other things besides just the data, right?

Here's the data. I've sold 10 spots, my goal is 50. And then operating from a place of curiosity, of even like intrigue, maybe. I love the word intrigue because for me it feels a little different than curiosity. It feels a little more like fun and mischievous. But it's like, it's intrigue, right? Like, oh, it's so interesting. You know, "No one has signed up today, why not?" It's such a different place than, "Oh no, nothing is working, everything is terrible. I have to make all these changes."

So let's turn this around and think about coaching your clients. I'm going to just use a couple different examples. But let's say you're a relationship coach or a dating coach. And you're coaching your clients on going on all these dates and maybe they set goals for what they want to accomplish on the dates.

And you have a client who comes to you and she says, "Listen, this just isn't working. I thought my profile was great. I've chatted with a couple of the people, I just don't like it, this isn't working." Or even maybe, "I've been going on a bunch of dates and none of the guys are my type. None of the other humans are my type. And I just, I hate it. I don't want to keep going." And she's feeling defeated.

A lot of times, a lot of coaches, what you'll do is you'll believe your client, right? You'll just believe like, oh my gosh, you say it's not working, it's not working. Instead of finding all the things that are working, leading up to the main result that you're trying to create, right? There's always something that's working.

What could be working is you've been willing to put yourself out there, you've gone on all these dates. You can't control, necessarily, the exact type of person that you're going on the date with. Maybe we can get better at narrowing it down, and we're going to learn something, right? What have

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I learned? That's also a huge takeaway from this. But just really examining, like what are the things that are working?

If you think about this in the realm of dating, if your client is feeling defeated and then you both start to problem solve for, okay, what do we do now? What do you want to do next? And you go to really looking at the actions of dating, of creating the dates, of going on the dates, and you start problem solving for everything has gone wrong. What do I change?

And you start changing everything. And just envision your client being on their own in between calls. They're thinking it's not working, you've maybe agreed with them. And then they're trying to make all these changes, right? They may keep making a lot of changes to their dating profiles. They might just start saying yes to all the wrong people because they're convinced it's not working anyway. Right?

Just think about just the subtle shift of when you believe it's not working, and it's never going to work, and I'm defeated. Versus, oh, interesting. What have I learned from this? What is already working? What are the parts that aren't working? But like in a more productive way than just going to defeated Right?

Because you can think with the same thought, this isn't working, there are multiple feelings that are optional there, right? You could have that thought and get so curious about it. I wonder why it's not working. I wonder why I keep attracting all of the same type of person to go on dates with when they're not my type.

Being curious about it could get you taking very different actions very small shifts, as opposed to just feeling defeated, nothing is working and just throwing it in the garbage, all of it, right? Just like letting it explode.

Another type of client, so let's say you are a fitness coach, and you help your clients design workouts and then you do mindset coaching in between. And they've been doing all the workouts, they've been sticking to

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the plan and it's just not working. For whatever reason, right? Like the weight that they're lifting isn't going up or whatever the goal is, right?

They're just not making progress, it's not working. And together, the two of you decide, you're right, it's not working. Oh no, let's fix it. Think about the difference between all the changes you would make, all the actions you might take or your client might take from that place instead of, "Oh, it's interesting. I wonder why. I wonder why this piece isn't working, I wonder what's happening. Let's do some investigating." Right?

Investigating is so much different, that's going to come from a place of curiosity, versus let's just throw it all in the trash and start over or change tactics completely and do something totally different. Delete the dating accounts, throw the weights away, like whatever, right?

Obviously, that's very dramatic, but that is what a lot of coaches do. And the reason that happens is because you're believing your clients when they say it's not working. And it's true, sometimes it might not be working as in they're not moving towards the result. But the moment you think, "Oh no, this is a big problem" takes you out of all curiosity. Even though it might feel like you're being curious, it takes you out of all curiosity and throws you into more of a like panic mode, right?

It's the difference, like all the examples I'm giving, it's the difference between taking action from sufficiency versus insufficiency. So sufficiency is, okay, I didn't fill my launch, that's interesting. I wonder why not. Let me examine it. Versus insufficiency is, oh my gosh, I didn't fill my launch. This is never going to work, I'm a failure. I need to change my niche, I need to make all the changes. I should probably change my offer. It's just like throwing it in the trash and spiraling out.

The first option is probably a little better. And you just kind of want to be on to yourself and be on to your clients when the attitude is a little more like, let's just throw it all in the trash.

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Sometimes, for me, I think it's fun to watch kids problem solve because they go about it in such a different way than most adults do, right? They haven't been kind of like jaded by society and by people telling them they're not doing it right and correcting them.

And it makes me think of, I think it was last year. It wasn't this winter, so it must have been last winter because we were in our new house and we have a big yard. And my kids were so excited when it snowed and they couldn't wait to make a bunch of snowmen, snow people, whatever you want to call them.

And so they go out, you know, they put all their things on, they go out, they get all the stuff and they start collecting the snow. And I could tell just by watching them that it was not good building snow, it was very powdery. And I just watched them through the windows, we have big windows on the back of our house and I could just see them out there playing.

And they just kept going. They just kept going and going and it just was not working. But they were trying everything. They came in and got some special bowls and tools and all the things and they just kept going. And they were having so much fun. They were never frustrated, they just kept going and going.

And at one point my older daughter came in and she said, "We had an idea. Is it okay if I fill up a bucket with water that we can use?" And I said, "Okay, there's a bucket in the garage. What are you going to use it for?" And she said, which at the time I was like, she clearly just wasn't thinking because she was old enough to know probably at the time.

But she said, "Well, we decided we need the snow to be harder, we need it to be icier. So we're going to pour the water, we're going to make a big snowball. And then we're going to pour the water over it so that it can freeze and it'll hold it together."

Now, obviously, as the adult I knew if they poured water on the snow, the snow was just going to melt and they were just going to have a big puddle

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of water. But I stopped myself from saying anything because I was just amazed even then, even just watching, it really stood out to me how they just kept coming up with different ideas.

They kept the same goal, they didn't change anything about what they were trying to do, about the end. But they just kept trying all different things. And they were coming up with some actually really creative solutions. This one, although, I mean I could see where they were coming from and like why they might think that, it wasn't probably the best solution. But I was like, "Sure, here's some water."

So they take the water out back. My older daughter is carrying it, she's so excited. I can see her like animated through the window telling my younger daughter and her friend that she got the water. So they get this ball of snow as best they can, because it's not really balling up very well. And they pour the water on it.

And of course, the whole thing just melts. And they are just laughing. Like they did not, there was no defeat, they were having the best time. And I just think there's so much to learn from that, right? So much to think about. Like how can we be more like that? How can we teach our clients to be more like that? Instead of going immediately to, "Oh no, it didn't work. Oh no, I'm defeated. Like, this is all terrible."

They just kept problem solving, and problem solving, and problem solving. And I remember thinking at the time, there is a lot to learn from watching this happen. And then the next weekend it snowed again and they went back out. And because of all the things they had tried the weekend before, now they have this full toolbox of like, okay, here are all the things we tried.

They realized immediately that the snow was a little different. And because they had tried all the things the weekend before, they were able to use all those things and have so much fun using them, not the water situation. That obviously just didn't go well. But they were able to use them to make

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all different kinds of snowman, snow women, snow people, they made snow dogs.

And actually, I think they did use the bucket, and they put a bunch of snow in it, and then poured some water on it and let it, I forget what they did, they like let it freeze overnight. And then they turned it over and made a turtle. But just think about that, like let that simmer, right? Use that example, how is that different than the way you might be going about goals?

You set a goal, you're hard on yourself. And I know not all of you do this but I know it's a thing because so many of my clients talk about it. And you don't hit the goal and you try to course correct, or it would be like if they just tried to make a snowman the first time. And then they were like, "Well, this is stupid. Let's go inside and play video games." I mean, they probably still would have had fun, they love playing video games.

But certainly, when they're playing video games, they're not out in the snow, having so much fun, cackling and laughing, and trying things and learning. And it was just so amazing to watch. So I just want to offer that for you. Next time you're not hitting your goal, next time you think everything is going wrong. And definitely the next time you're coaching your client, and they're in that space.

You could even use that example, you don't have to say it's my kids. But just thinking about how kids problem solve for things because they don't have the attachment to, "If this doesn't work, I'm a terrible person. If this doesn't work, it means something awful about me." Right? It's like they just have fun in the process and they hope that they create the result that they want.

But for the most part, they just keep going, they have fun. And eventually they ended up creating because of all the hard work the weekend before and all the creativity and curiosity. It affected their results they had the next week in the most amazing way. So take this with you. Use it with your

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clients, use it in your self-coaching and I will see you back here next week.
Bye.

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.