

Ep #176: What The Coach Lab Is Really Like With My Clients: Regina, Jess, and Suzanne



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 176.

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 have something really fun for you. If you listened last week, you know that I said this month, if you're listening in real time, is the two year anniversary, the two year celebration of me opening The Coach Lab, which feels just so fun to me.

So if you listened last week, I did a whole Q&A about The Coach Lab and about why I built it the way I did, why I created it the way I did, just approaching it from questions from people considering joining, but also from clients or from those of you that are listening that are just curious about the structure and why I made some of the decisions that I did when I was creating it.

And then in this week's episode we're going to do something a little different where I have interviewed some of my clients from The Coach Lab and we've done very short interviews and combined them into this one episode with three of my clients who are inside The Coach Lab, all have very different businesses, very different coaching practices and niches. And they are going to share with you one very specific takeaway that they've had since joining.

Some of them have been there since the beginning, some have been in there for only a couple of months. And they're all going to just share something different and I want you to approach it from this isn't just you listening and deciding should I be in The Coach Lab, although of course you should be. So go to the show notes, find the link and definitely join us.

But I really structured it in a way that no matter what, even if you never join us, you can take a little something away from each of these interviews. You

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can take away something to learn for your own coaching, to implement in your own coaching practice.

So, whether or not you join us, or maybe you're going to listen and then decide you want support around some of the things that they're talking about all the time, but either way I still love you. I mean it. And I can't wait for you to hear their genius and what they have to share. So let's get into it.

Lindsey: Hello, I am so happy you're here today. Can you please introduce yourself and just tell everyone who you are and a little bit about what you do?

Regina: Yes, I am Regina Sloan, I'm a general life coach for women. I have been coaching professionally since April of 2023, and I was, and still am a nurse. I'm going into my 11th year of that. And so, yeah, I provide general life coaching for women.

Lindsey: I love it. And I have to say, I was really glad when I saw your – We had people kind of fill out questionnaires to be on today, and I was so excited when I saw yours come through for a couple of reasons. One, because I adore you and your energy. But second, because you haven't actually been a member in The Coach Lab for very long.

And I encouraged kind of everyone, like no matter how long you've been there or whatever, because I wanted to give an overview of just all the different clients in The Coach Lab. So first, thank you for being brave enough to do that and for joining. And I'm curious how you have felt, just in general, how have you felt about your experience since you joined us?

Regina: Yeah. Yeah, thank you, I'm glad you created this opportunity. For me, I think I found out about Coach Lab probably towards the end of 2023. And I'll have to say that I thought it was interesting, but I also at the point thought, I don't really need that right now.

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And the reason was because I just felt like, oh, coaching skills, I can just keep coaching and I'll just gain the skills. But what I found was that I was really getting in my own way, like in my coaching and kind of seeing the same situations that were happening with my clients and even in my marketing and really just in myself, because I didn't really have the belief in myself as far as like, oh, I know how to ask powerful questions, even though I had been certified and that was taught in there.

So I decided to join. I wasn't sure about my experience, but I have loved it. Like literally every second of it. Two, if I had to dumb it down to just a couple of things, I think what I love most about it is the safe space that's created to just be who I am. Like be where I am, who I am, what I'm struggling with.

Even when I go to the live calls, I don't feel like, you know, even if I'm going second, third, last, first, I don't feel like I need to be somewhere or act like I have it together. It's just such a beautiful space to really come and get the help I need. So I'm totally getting my money's worth, 100%.

And then when I can't show up, the replays are amazing. But the content that you have just alone in the modules were enough, and is enough, for me to continue going or like, I'll have a problem and I'm like, oh, she talked about that somewhere and I'll go and find it.

So I think that, for me, the experience has just been the best as far as me leveling up my coaching in a way that I don't think I would have done to myself, if that makes sense.

Lindsay: Okay, well, that's a wrap. I mean, I think we covered it all. You just kept talking. I was like, okay, this answer is amazing. Yes, cover all the bases.

Okay, so there are so many things you said that I want to ask you about. But if we go back to the very beginning, one thing I love that you said, because I think a lot of people have this thought, I don't really need this because it's like I know how to coach. It's like coaching skills.

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What do you think is the difference? Like if you can get really specific about that. For someone that's maybe listening that's like, yeah, that's totally my thought, what do you think is the difference between how you were thinking about it versus what it's actually been for you?

Regina: Yeah, so I think when I was thinking I didn't need it, it was because I can Google questions. I have questions for certification. I know you hold space and I just allow the client to lead, that's pretty much the gist of what I was taught in certification.

But the difference is that you can have a question, and I've done this where I've asked a question, I have a series of questions or I have them by my computer while I'm coaching. Like, okay, what do I ask next? Like that kind of thing. It takes me 100% out of the curiosity energy and holding space, for sure, because I'm so focused on me really. Because I'm like, oh, what do I say? What to say next? Oh, they said this. And it's like this checkbox situation.

Whereas I feel like in Coach Lab, it has really helped me to not even care about the specific question. It's helped me to, I mean, the questions are amazing and I love the workbook that you provide with some amazing questions. But what I found is the more I look at the questions, like study it, the more I'm asking, like, why would Lindsay say, ask this?

Or even when I'm getting coached live or someone else is getting coached, I love to hear how you're coaching because then I get to be curious and like, okay, why that, why does she say that now? What was the energy there? Why didn't she ask this? So it's like this nuance of like, yes, you know the questions. It's almost like a difference between like YouTube university and then like actually going and investing and being immersed in it.

And then by being coached myself, it allows me to feel it on both ends. So I can hear how you're saying something, how I'm feeling about it. So the specifics, I guess, is that I knew a question, I knew to ask it, I could hear

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the client. But Coach Lab has helped me to hold space for myself and where I am and get out of my head so that the entire hour that I'm spending with my client is truly about them. And I am understanding that where I am is okay.

So then that takes away from me having the pressure of like, I need to get this right. And that just makes it better for the client in every coaching session.

Lindsay: Okay, I love this so much. And this is the number one kind of thing that you mentioned on the form that you turned in, was just leaning into curiosity and like really seeing what that looks like in real time on the calls. And I'm curious when you think about that, what do you think is the difference, you touched on it a little bit, but specifically like for your client as you're coaching them, can you tell a difference in the way they show up or the way their energy is in the sessions when you're being that curious?

Regina: Yeah. I think before, before I understood curiosity, and it's such a work in progress too, and I'm getting better and better. But before –

Lindsay: For all of us, by the way. Let's just be clear. This is just always a work in progress for everyone, for all coaches.

Regina: Yeah, that's good to hear. So I think before what it was, I would ask, let's just say, one question the same way. I would ask a question, but because I wasn't in curious energy, I was more like, let me get this right. I need to get them to an answer. This question is it, it's going to get them there.

I didn't create a safe space for them to really explore. And that came across in my energy. Even though I didn't say any of that, it came across as like a question/answer, it came across as I was looking for something in particular.

And now that I'm learning what being curious really is, it creates a literal safety for them to say – I'm noticing them saying things like, can you repeat

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that? Whereas before they didn't feel the safety to say that. Or they'll say, I really don't know, and feel safe saying that. And I'll say, we can go explore more.

So with my clients, I'm seeing them like sitting with it, even. Like you know how you feel uncomfortable sitting with a question or just like this awkward silence, because I've created such space where it's like, really, this is your hour focused on you and I'm just being curious and guiding you and, you know, challenging you and all the things that we still do in our sessions. But it creates where they feel safe enough to be them.

I feel like that's the first level of them even creating the awareness around whatever we're working on, is they need to be safe, just like me when I come to Coach Lab, to be who they are and where they are and not be worried about that, so that we can really get to the depths of it. If that makes sense.

Lindsay: Yeah, that makes so much sense. I hear people say this sometimes, and so I'm curious what your take is on this. When you say that, when you're like I allow them a little more space and we're just exploring, a little more curious and allows them to take time and answer the questions maybe more honestly. Do you think it slows down their results?

Regina: I used to. I used to really think like, okay, I asked two questions, this is going to take a year to get to X, Y, Z. But no, I think, and even for myself, it speeds it up because – And I use that lightly, right? Because I don't even know what the trajectory is.

But I'll say when I'm asking, looking for certain answers and I didn't have a safety for them, it created this space where we weren't really working on real things. Like it was super shallow and super like, hey, check mark, check mark, check mark. Okay, great. How are you feeling? What's your insight for today? Bye. You know?

Lindsay: Yes. Yeah, I think you can kind of put your client a little bit in like good student energy, right? Like when you're like, let me ask the right

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question, then their energy, in my experience, maybe not in every single session, but what I used to notice is that it would turn their energy into like, oh, let me find the right answer, right? Like, what's the answer that she's looking for?

Regina: That's so true. Yeah, I didn't think about that. 100%. And then also, I have an example of a client that I've been working with, we're going into our second six months. And some things had come up a few weeks ago, and it helped me to realize how I was in the beginning.

And what I mean about slowing down and speeding up is that we're working on things and we're checkmarking and we were doing all the things and like, oh, what did you do in the A line? Just like the action of things. And, oh, you're speaking up for yourself, that's awesome. And then we're back to feeling horrible about myself. I don't trust myself. Like the baseline foundational things that may "take longer." But when you really get into the depths of it and work on that, everything just kind of domino effects.

So I think as a beginner coach I was like, and sometimes still, looking at the A line. Like what's happening? And not really what's happening in the body and the mind and how do you feel about you?

Lindsay: Yes. Yeah, that's a really good point. I think that when you do really dig into the curiosity, it can allow your clients to get a little deeper and get to the real thing and the real self-awareness, right? Which is usually the goal, to create self-awareness in coaching.

And then even when you're looking at like, okay, now what's the strategy or what are the actions we're going to take? But finding that self-awareness first and being able to dig into that and say, yeah, but let's look at this, because that's going to change the way you show up for all the action, for all the strategy.

Regina: Yeah, and I think it was super shallow at first. Like the example of that client was, something I'm thinking of now to really reflect that, is she's

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like, I really think things go bad all the time. I'm like looking for things to go bad and I don't know why.

So the whole session was really about fixing that, but it could have very well been so amazing and deep, like reflecting back at that time of like, why? Where does that come from? And getting to the very depths of why that is even a thing, instead of working on the A line of it. Like just make sure you think everything is crazy and let's fix that. So that's going to come back up later.

Lindsay: Yeah, which is useful also, by the way, let's just be clear. So that coaching was probably very useful for her, is my guess. And for anybody that's listening, if you're like, oh no, wait, is that what I'm doing? I think that still creates awareness. It still is very useful for a client to just question all of the things. It doesn't always, every single session, have to be like, let's just dig as deep as we can because sometimes, first of all, sometimes clients just don't want to go there, right?

But I just want to point that out. I highly doubt that your coaching was ineffective before you joined The Coach Lab.

Regina: That's so good to hear you say. It's something that I struggle with myself, for sure. And I think that's also, I'm glad you said that because this is a prime example of what I love about The Coach Lab, because I can be very hard on myself and I'll come to a session like, this entire hour was trash and I need a redo. And I can't, so I feel horrible.

So whether I'm being coached live by you, or I'm going through one of your modules, it always creates this thing of like, they got what they needed. Now, where can we grow from? And I just love that. And it allows me to really just move forward and not be stuck in, "Oh my God, I need to be perfect" type of energy.

Lindsay: I love that you said that. After just coaching so many coaches on this exact topic, right, and just hours and hours and hours, however many hours I've done it. It's just so funny, in all the times that I've ever asked,

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like, okay, the whole hour was trash. How do you know that? Did your client say that? What actually happened?

And I'm going to say like 99.5% of the time my clients are like, well, no, the client said the session was great. Or like this thing happened. Like there's so much proof that something good happened, versus the actual entire hour was trash.

Regina: Yes, and I know that as a client too. I had a particular coach I didn't really care for in general. But I still grew, even with certain things that I felt like, I don't really care that that happened or whatever. I still grew as a person, 100%. It was a great investment.

Lindsay: Yeah, I love that. Yeah, I think that that can be true a lot of times if we're just working with different coaches, even when you don't totally jive with someone who is your coach. Now, I don't think the goal of coaching should ever be like, I worked with this person so that I just learned what I don't like or I just learned, like I think sometimes coaches can like wash that away, right? Like, I don't know, maybe that was actually really bad coaching, but I learned from it, so it was worth it.

But that does still usually happen no matter what type of coaching it is or whatever.

Regina: Yeah, yeah. And then it allowed me to be curious too. Like how am I showing up? And I think, man, I just love that. Even on the end of being coached through Coach Lab, I think we haven't really hit on it. But yes, I'm in Coach Lab and it's helping me to better my coaching skills in so many different ways. But it's also helped me to be a better client too, because I'm able to show up and be curious about myself. Like, oh, she said that. How does that reflect on me? How am I going to use this moving forward?

And that's why I also love the group coaching, because other people are coming with other topics and I would have never even thought to bring that up. And I'm like, wow, I just had a client, that would have been amazing to

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know or what can I use moving forward from that? So it's just like a 10x situation.

Lindsay: I love it. All right, well, thank you for sharing this with us. Is there anything else that we haven't touched on that you want to mention? Just about your Coach Lab, or for anyone that's listening if they're like, okay, should I join? How do I know if it's for me? What would you say to them?

Regina: I would say that no matter where you are in coaching, if you want to go deeper into your coaching skills and deeper into who you are as a coach, and receive amazing one-on-one support, like I am not saying that to gas you up. I love the live – Listen, this is how you know I love it. I don't know if you know this, but I usually work every Wednesday night and I work every Thursday night. And I wake up, I go to sleep when I get home on Thursday and I go to sleep for a couple hours and I wake up and I jump on the call.

Lindsay: Really?

Regina: Yes.

Lindsay: Oh my gosh.

Regina: And then I try to go back to sleep for work. So that tells you it is 100% worth my time, my energy. So we, as coaches, have to invest in ourselves, that's what I personally believe. And I don't throw my money at things. I will say that's one great thing about me, for many different reasons. And it's the best 2k that I've spent. And you have a payment plan too. So what are people waiting on? Like, come on, let's go.

Lindsay: Yeah. Okay, I love that. Thank you for saying that. And I don't think you know how important I think sleep is, so when I hear this kind of thing – I'm sure as a nurse, you're probably used to just a weird sleep schedule. But I hear that and I'm like, oh no.

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Regina: No, I love it. It's totally worth it. My husband's like, you should probably stop. This is important, get out of the way.

Lindsay: That's funny. I love it.

Regina: Yeah.

Lindsay: All right. Well, thank you for being on. Thank you for doing this with me today. This has been so great. And everybody should check you out. They should come find you. You are so fun, I love just being in your energy. Where can people find you if they want to do that too?

Regina: Thank you. Thank you so much. So Regina Sloan on Facebook and on LinkedIn. And then Your, Y-O-U-R, Mindset Nurse on Instagram. I do have a podcast called *She Can Achieve*, which is personal development for women. I have other women come on and talk about their stories, their journeys, how they are affecting the world. And then I also have free monthly workshops if anybody wants to check those out.

Lindsay: Amazing. We will link all of that as well in the show notes. So for anyone that's listening, if they want to find you, they can just go to the show notes, click the links, and find you. Thank you again. Thank you, thank you, thank you.

Regina: Thank you.

Lindsay: Hello, I am so excited you're here today. Introduce yourself, tell everyone who you are and what you do.

Jess: Hi, I am Jess Johnson, and I'm a courage and compassion coach for entrepreneurs today.

Lindsay: Today?

Jess: Yes.

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Lindsay: We were just joking before we started recording that every time, because some of you might recognize Jess, she's been on the podcast. And we were joking about how every time you write your bio, it just changes a little bit, like this is just what I do this week. So yes, I totally get it, this is what I do today.

Okay, we weren't going to talk about this, but I have loved watching this about you. I think it might just be useful for coaches to know about you just kind of experimenting with what to call yourself. Because your work has kind of remained the same, but just like how to talk about it, what to call yourself. Is there anything about that that you want to say? Like how do you give yourself permission to just do that?

Jess: You get to have fun with it, right? When you're an entrepreneur, you're making the rules, that means you get to break them. What is easiest that comes out of your mouth? I watch coaches at every level try to figure this out. What is the easiest thing to say? How do I succinctly come up with something that everybody is going to understand the minute it comes out of my mouth?

Guess what? You can't. It's not going to happen. And it's definitely not going to happen without you sounding like a robot. So just trust that it might sound a little different every day or depending on who's in front of you. And as long as you're just trusting that whatever comes out of my mouth today is something that somebody needs to hear in order for their lives to start changing, it's really as easy as that.

Lindsay: I love it. Yes, that's so good. I'm so glad I asked because I think so many coaches struggle with that. Even when we were joking about the bio, I can always tell when I'll go back and read it, like when my bio is printed somewhere, like I was on someone's podcast or whatever. And I read it and I'm like, oh, I can definitely tell what kind of mood I was in the day I wrote it. Like there might be something funny in it or not, or it's very serious or whatever. So I love that.

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Jess: And I think that's why it's important to be able to give yourself permission to say the bio a little differently, to say the line, to say the tagline or whatever you're going to call yourself. And I mean, at the root of everything, we're all life coaches, right? And so, yeah, have fun with it.

Lindsay: I love it. Okay, so some of you have probably heard Jess on the podcast, but she is also actually a contract coach who coaches on occasion inside The Coach Lab. People are big fans of her. And I was really excited when she filled out the form to be on this podcast because I think that her perspective, I think your perspective, Jess, is such a good one from the standpoint of being in there as a student, as a client, and also as someone who shows up and coaches all the people.

So one thing that stood out to me in yours, you kind of put two things in your form. One of them was how, I must have said this to you, I guess, at some point, and you just took it and ran with it. Something about whatever is best for you is best for your clients, so like making decisions about running your coaching practice. And then the other one was just the way we talk about evaluations and evaluate coaching.

So let's just dig a little bit into each one, if that's okay.

Jess: Yeah, let's do it.

Lindsay: Okay, so anyone that's listening, tell them what you mean by what's best for you is best for your client. Like how did you interpret it? I don't remember how it came up originally at all. You might, or you might not, but I'm just curious, like, what is your interpretation of that and how do you use it for yourself when you're coaching and in your coaching practice?

Jess: You know, I don't remember either, except that it was probably just very early on. And maybe that wasn't even the line or the thought that you gave me, but it started me on a journey of thinking about, and anybody who knows me has heard me say this, right? Like I'm a product of my product, which means that when I am talking to people about choosing courage, about choosing compassion, that means that I go first.

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And I think that especially as women, we're so taught that everybody else has to be put in front of us, that we need to be taking care of families, of friends, like even in jobs. And in my time as a therapist, I felt as though there was a lot of lip service given to you're a therapist, be able to take care of yourself, set boundaries, practice self-care, and take mental health days. And that is just a laugh because the idea of a therapist being able to call in to their job and be like, I need a mental health day today. Like I just felt that the priority was always, all of your patients though, have to come first.

Lindsay: Take care of yourself, but...

Jess: Totally, yeah. After all of these things and your notes are written to perfection and all of this stuff. And when I became an entrepreneur, I remember I just made a decision, I'm never going to treat myself like I was treated in past jobs. And so I think that however it came to the coaching you gave me, what's best for me is best for my clients, like that comes down to like, what days do I want to work? What times do I want to work?

Like, I really just believe so passionately that when I am not spinning in drama, when I am taking care of myself, my clients absolutely get the best of me all the time. So for me, that means not only taking courses or really honing my own skills as a coach, but taking vacations, spending time with my family, allowing myself to have set hours where I commit to that and don't work past a certain time because I know when I'm getting sleep, when I'm tuned off, when I'm working out, like all of those things, I'm at my best for everybody around me.

I think that's one of the other thoughts, too, is I'm at my best for others when I put my needs and priorities first.

Lindsay: Yeah. I remember when I, this is just like a side note, but now that you're explaining it like that, I'm like, oh yeah, I'm sure that I said some form of that at some point because I believe that so strongly, that it is important to know things about yourself that make you a more effective coach, right?

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So, I mean, I remember when I was a general life coach and I was coaching all of the people, mostly women, and some of them worked regular hours at their job and they would say, oh, can we do a call at 6am or something along those lines. Now, I know you like to do things early in the morning sometimes, but you know me well enough to know I do not.

So I just remember thinking, like there was one time that I agreed to it. And before we even had our first call, I had to send her a message and say, actually, I just can't do that and you don't want me to, because I am going to be a terrible coach at 6am, for me, right? Like some people can do that and love early mornings. I do not. You don't want me coaching you at 6am.

Jess: Yes. I remember actually two things around this. One is I live in Hawaii and I'm from Maryland. My dad had a health scare and so I flew home back to Maryland. It was a six hour time difference, and so it shifted my calendar to evening. And yes, like you said, I am more of a morning person.

And I remember I had one client that wasn't going to start until 7pm. And I remember thinking like, oh, it's just one week, it'll be fine. Uh-huh, at 5.30 I was like, I don't feel like doing anything. And I really just sat back and was like, not only am I tired and my brain kind of turns off after five, but I also have been through a lot of stress. I'm here to spend time with my family. Let's just give myself permission, knowing that that's going to be able to give my client permission to do the same thing. And it was easy, seamless, like totally they understood.

Another time I remember I was getting ready to go to New Zealand and I got coaching in The Coach Lab, the weekly Thursday call. And I just think this one's kind of fun because I feel like at that time, there was a little bit of a narrative, like I should have this figured out. Why am I having drama about this?

Because I remember I was getting ready to go and somebody had said that they wanted to start working with me, but they hadn't paid their invoice yet.

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And I was like, should I message them first and remind them I'm going to be out of the loop for three weeks? Because I'm not planning on bringing a laptop with me as I'm trekking around New Zealand.

And whatever you said then, you know, what's best for you just cued me into that because in that moment, it's like, what's best for me is giving that reminder and saying like, hey, this is it. Whereas I think sometimes we get so twisted in our heads.

And this is what was happening to me before I got that coaching was like, oh, if I was certain about this, if I was just standing in my power, like I wouldn't have to send this follow-up email. No, I'm really confident in who I am and what I offer as a coach. And also I wanted that information so I didn't have to think about it at all. And I wanted to be sure that she knew I wasn't going to be responsive.

And yeah, I just think that's just a small thing because I think sometimes when people hear me say what's best for me is best for my clients, they think it means something else like kind of the boundary stuff or knowing your work days, knowing those things about you. And sometimes it just means you get to like give yourself permission, like what's going to settle me?

Lindsay: Yeah. And I think even just, I love that example you just gave, because even looking at that example through the lens of what if the thing that is best for me is also best for my client, and considering where is that true? Is that true? When I hear you say that, I'm like, of course you should send her an email just in case. Hey, I want to remind you or let you know or whatever. Now she knows when she emails you a week from that point and you don't respond, like, oh yeah, she's in New Zealand, right?

It's like we love to get in our head and think, I shouldn't have to do this, right? That's a thought I hear often. Or coaches use it against themselves, like, well, I wouldn't be doing this if I was a fully booked coach or I wouldn't be doing this if I was, fill in the blank. And I'm like, actually, why? I would. I

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would do it. I have hundreds of clients and I do that still, so I don't know why you're making it a problem, right?

And yeah, so I love that. Huge fan.

Jess: Yeah.

Lindsay: Okay. So then the other thing that you mentioned is evaluation. So tell me about that. Like, do you still evaluate your coaching? Because you've been in The Coach Lab, I can't remember if I said this, but you've been in since the very beginning. So we're two years in, do you still evaluate your coaching and or when do you? When does it feel the most useful?

Jess: Yes, absolutely. And I evaluate my coaching almost every single time I coach. And I keep it really simple, right? Like sometimes I see people do evaluations and they are writing up, it is literally a play-by-play. I picture it like a screenplay, right? It's like, enters the room, sits at the computer. I took a deep breath, right?

Like, it's good to know, right? But just write it succinctly because when you're trying to capture all those details, I can feel the anxiety of what am I missing when somebody writes all that. Like I spend two seconds, like what went well? What would I do differently? Like those are my post coaching, everyday evaluations.

If I felt like something was off in a session, I might do a little deeper one. Like what went well? What didn't go well? What do I need to be mindful of for next time? And again, I just think it's important to know that we are all humans before we're coaches, and having a skill like that is the most important one to have in your entire business, for your entire life.

And then I'll just write that and I put it, I don't take notes for clients or anything, but because I'm doing EFT or emotional freedom techniques, I'm writing notes down. So I'm just capturing my client's words specifically, and so I always put it at the end of there. And then I might write for next time, a

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reminder. And then that's the first thing I see when I go into my next session.

So then there's that reminder there in front of me like, oh yeah, I made this decision based on this evaluation, like heading in there.

Lindsay: And how do you think the evaluations, for maybe if someone is listening and they're like, I have never really evaluated my coaching, even though I've talked about it multiple times on the podcast. So go find the episode, you can listen to it. How do you think it has shifted your coaching kind of long-term?

Like I know sometimes I've had people talk about like, okay, I did this evaluation, kind of like what you said, the ones where they really dig in and get out every single detail, which on occasion can be useful. Especially if you're a newer coach, especially if you're like something was off and I don't really know what it was and it's more of like searching for it. But long-term, and you've kind of altered them to fit your needs and your timeframe, what would you say it has shifted in your coaching?

Jess: It's always about being able to have that reminder that you don't have to fix everything in one call. And I think that the evaluations, like the more you're just seeing that, the more at peace you get to be with that and then the more you're seeing their progress, the more you're feeling great, the more you're feeling steady and feeling patient and curious and more in understanding mode in coaching, if that makes sense. I'm sure there's a better way for me to articulate that. So if it happens, I'll be like, "And then edit that here."

Lindsay: No, I think it makes sense to me. I think maybe what I hear you saying is, because I know this has happened for me when I've done this in the past and even now I still evaluate my coaching. And what I notice is it kind of allows me to let go a little bit of like, oh, we have to change all of this immediately in this session.

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Like it translates into my coaching as well, because I see when I'm evaluating my coaching each week, or if I'm evaluating maybe like my coaching in my certification or just in different spaces where I'm like, how did this call go today? Something felt off. Let me just think about it for a minute. It allows me to like, oh, this is always just a work in progress, instead of like, oh no, something bad has happened and now we must shift it all by next week.

Jess: It's so funny. Yeah, it's like it teaches me not to take it for granted, right? Like to really know that the skill of coaching, you get more skillful the more people you coach, always, all the time. And that is going to be lifelong. So we don't always have to reach for the next certification just to make us feel great about what we know, right?

Evaluations will allow you to do that. So that way, when you do want to invest in something else, it's not from this place of like, oh, I guess I should because I need to, or there's something else I want to learn, right? It's like, oh, here's something I'm noticing. Here's a trend I'm noticing in evaluations. What support do I need from there?

And my personal opinion is almost always coming back to something we need, whether it's coming back to our own transformation versus a tool or something that we need to learn.

Lindsay: Yeah, I love that. I mean, you know this because you've been in my world for a while, but I just always talk about making those choices and those investments and deciding what kind of support you want from like, what am I actually missing or what do I want to work on?

It doesn't even have to be a need. It could just be like, what kind of support do I want? What am I looking for right now? Versus a, I always need more because that's just, I should be investing more. I always should be doing this, which is a very different energy, versus, no, this is what I want. I see it, I can see this thing keeps, like you said, this specific thing keeps coming up in my evaluations. Let me really be purposeful about what it is.

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Jess: Yeah, intentional.

Lindsay: Yeah, intentional, thank you.

Jess: I think it's also about who do I want to surround myself with, too, versus what's the next thing I need to learn just because? It's like, what are the rooms that I want to be in? Who do I want to be inspired by?

Lindsay: Okay, well, if someone is thinking about joining The Coach Lab and they're listening to this podcast and they're like, I'm on the fence. I don't know, is it for me? What would you say?

Jess: Anytime somebody comes to me and says, what kind of coaching certification should I do? I'm like, well, you know what? I think your first steps, actually, my recommendation would be to listen to Lindsay Dotzlafl's podcast, *Mastering Coaching Skills* and join The Coach Lab, because not only are you going to immediately have a heads up on some of the skills you need to be a magnificent coach, you're also going to be learning and surrounded by a wealth of people with such different backgrounds that that's going to help you make that decision.

And it's people who are committed to not just coaching, but the art of coaching, the skill of coaching. And they're committed to, I think, making it about them. I mean, that's so much about, certainly when I first joined your world, it was like, oh, I'm going to go and learn all of these things.

And then it was like, oh, no shit, I'm going to go and I'm going to work on some stuff, like how I am approaching this and thinking and thinking about myself as a coach and myself as a business owner. And that is the foundation that you absolutely have to – It's so necessary to being in this world and the longevity of staying in the coaching industry forever, period.

Lindsay: I love it. Okay, if anyone's listening and they want to find you, I mean, we've done this before, but tell them again, where can they find you? Where can they connect with you? What do you have going on right now? Any of it.

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Jess: Well, I've also changed my Instagram handle multiple times.

Lindsay: Oh yeah, every time we have a new one.

Jess: And we've landed on one, it's super original and nobody's ever going to forget it. It's Jess.JohnsonCoaching.

Lindsay: Love it. You know this is always my plan, just like it's just my name. Find me anywhere.

Jess: Yep. So you can find me there on Instagram, that's mostly where I show up. And keep an eye on that this year, I am launching a YouTube channel that I'm super excited about. And I will be putting more information on that launch coming up.

Lindsay: Yes. Okay, not to put you on the spot, but because you do, your coaching is a little different than some of the people that I have on because you also include EFT, why are you starting a YouTube? What's that going to be about? Because I think it's incredible and I'm really excited about it.

Jess: Yes, so the YouTube channel will be mostly EFT tapping based where people can tap along with videos, and there's just tons of them. There's going to be a space particularly for entrepreneurs and some of the things that I know that entrepreneurs deal with around money, around showing up, around being seen.

There will be life coaching specific taps that people can follow around, because obviously I'm a life coach and so I know the nuances of that. Specific things for anxiety, overwhelm, inspiration, and not only being able to calm the central nervous system, but also being able to tap into things like creativity and inspiration. And I'm just super excited about it.

Lindsay: That was excellent, I just put you on the spot and I thought that you might be like, oh my gosh, what is it? How do I say it? You nailed it. I can't wait for it to start and people are going to be so lucky to have this as a tool.

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Jess: Yes. Thank you.

Lindsay: Yeah, you're so welcome. All right, well, thank you for being on.

Lindsay: Hello. Thank you so much for being here today. I'm so excited to have you. Can you introduce yourself, tell everybody who you are and what you do?

Suzanne: Well, I'm really excited too. So I'm Suzanne Clarke, I'm in England and I am a coach, a life and business coach for business owners and leaders.

Lindsay: I love it. Welcome. Thank you so much, again, for being here, for taking time out of your day to do this quick little interview. And so today I'm having you on to talk a little bit about The Coach Lab, about your experience, but also to just kind of teach the listener maybe something that you have learned, in your own words, from being in The Coach Lab.

So one thing that stood out to me when I read your form that you sent in is when you talked about just being able to let go a little bit of feeling like you have to tell your clients what to do. Like you have to solve everything for them. You have to have a very specific strategy for everything. So let's just start there, if that's okay.

Suzanne: Before I joined The Coach Lab, I kind of got up in my own head and I felt like I had to have an answer for everything. I also felt like I needed to know what the next question was. It was just like I didn't trust myself.

And then once I'd actually been on a few calls and you had coached me, two things really. You are so calm anyway, which instilled a calmness in me. But it just gave me, it's almost like magical, it just gave me that feeling of, no, I don't need the answers. I don't even need the next question. I can just trust myself that the best question will come by actually listening to the

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client and then deciding, rather than deciding on a question and then it might not even fit that well after the person has spoken.

So you just instilled this absolute calmness and this renewed confidence that everything I needed was just sitting right there. I just hadn't unleashed it.

Lindsay: I love that. It's interesting, right before this I interviewed someone else and she said a very similar thing. We had a similar conversation just with a slightly different take on it. But I just think it's really interesting, I think so many coaches probably experience this where they're just in their head constantly thinking, okay, what's the next thing I'm going to say? Instead of really listening to what their client is saying.

So your background is in recruiting?

Suzanne: Yes. IT recruitment, yes.

Lindsay: Okay. And do you think that that played a part in like when you kind of transitioned into coaching, did you find it hard switching from – This is an off the wall question, I didn't tell you I was going to ask this. But did you find it hard kind of switching from your recruiting brain and how you showed up working with people there to, okay, now I'm a coach and it's like the energy was a little different or no?

Suzanne: No. Do you know, I think the main difference and I think the reason, going back to the original point, that I feel like I needed to have the questions is because I always did as a recruiter. I knew what I was going to ask. I knew, and also I was an expert. I'd been recruiting since 1988, so it was second nature.

The other thing is I think that I was sort of an undiagnosed coach the whole time. My style of recruiting was very, very much what's right for you, what's right for the client, no one's more important than each other. So coaching seemed like such a natural way to progress, that I think in a way my energy

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was even better because I was just so keen to help other people to help their lives and the businesses be better.

So yeah, no, the recruitment was a really good base for it. It was just this whole thing of because I felt like I was a really good recruiter and I had the answers, oh gosh, I'm starting again, I don't have them as a coach. And coaching is such a special thing, and without knocking it, I also didn't realize how simple it could be to get the most outstanding results. And that's what you taught me and I needed to learn.

Lindsay: I love that you said undiagnosed coach. I've never heard that before and that's so great. Everybody has to start saying that now, it's so good.

So you work with a lot of executives. I know this because you've been in a couple of spaces of mine, so we've talked a lot about your business. And you work with executives, you work sometimes in the not for profit space. And I'm curious because I hear other clients say this to me a lot, they say, yeah, but you don't understand because I work with executives. I work in the corporate space more. Like people want more strategy. They want me to tell them what to do.

Do you find that to be true or did you believe that was true before you kind of realized that you didn't always have to tell your clients what to do?

Suzanne: I don't know if I believed it, I think maybe I did a bit. And going back to what I just said, what I discovered quite quickly is that really the executives just want a sounding board and they want to be heard. And just sitting there, and I've done it even myself. I've had coaching and just sat and talked it through and gone, oh, I've got everything that I need. And that's what they needed. They don't need complicated questions. They need someone to listen, do a little bit of provoking every now and again.

I do have some clients where, yes, it's six months, a year, whatever to develop a strategy, but I still use the same techniques. But no, I think answering your question is to say, no, executives almost need more simple

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questions than anyone else. It's just someone giving them the time and just to go away and say, oh, I'm all sorted now. I've talked it out, with me sometimes having said very little.

But it is very powerful and it definitely comes from the trust. It isn't just that anybody could sit in front of that person, it's the trust that we've built up. But the seniority, no, doesn't seem to have any bearing on what you're saying.

Lindsay: I love that. Hopefully anyone that's listening that has had that thought can just release it because I do find that interesting. It's just something that I hear quite often that I always want to challenge. Like, how do we know that that's a thing? How do we know that it's true?

Suzanne: Can I add one extra thing?

Lindsay: Of course. Yeah, please.

Suzanne: One thing is that also when I first started, especially coaching executives, I felt like it had to be 60 minutes of amazingness and that to justify the cost they had to go away with life-changing. And yet, we can chat, it could be something so, so simple and they go away and that is life-changing to them, but it's something so incredibly simple.

Lindsay: Okay, I love that you said that. I'm like, question, does that change what I want to ask next? Can you see a difference in when you think about your coaching before, when you thought like, I really need to come with a solution for them? I think of more like, sometimes we do have solutions for our clients, right? Depending on what kind of coach we are, we have specific strategies or solutions that we use with our clients.

But when you kind of let them find the solution themselves or find it like, oh, I kind of already had the answer, I just need someone to like pull it out of me, what do you think is the difference in the way that – Can you pinpoint maybe the difference in the way they show up for the coaching or that they interact with the coaching?

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Suzanne: I think as I've made it simpler, they can just be themselves. That I'm not coming with a fancy agenda and no complicated questions, it just is so simple that it flows so much better. And yes, there are gaps and I will try and give them as much space as I can. So yeah, does that answer your question?

Lindsay: Yeah, no, I think so, for sure. Yeah, I was just curious if you could really tell the difference since you have kind of shifted your energy around it, if then your clients –

Suzanne: Oh yeah, sorry, 100%.

Lindsay: Yeah.

Suzanne: Yes, no, I can. Because I'm not putting pressure on myself, I'm not subconsciously putting pressure on them. So they can just be totally themselves and come to whatever conversations, decisions, thoughts that they're naturally having, rather than before maybe I was trying to force them a little bit. And maybe, I know I was probably trying to lead them down a path. And sometimes I probably thought that I knew best, which absolutely I do not.

Lindsay: Can you think of what happens, not to get personal or to give anything away about your coaching or whatever, but can you think of specific scenarios where you feel like that was the case and then you had to kind of come back and redo the coaching? Or they would take a strategy that you're giving them and then they didn't like it or anything that showed up specifically in the coaching that you can think of?

Suzanne: Yeah, I think sometimes I might make a suggestion, or no, what's better is I will have a suggestion in my mind and I'll just give them that bit longer and they say something that is not in the slightest bit what I was expecting.

Lindsay: Yes.

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Suzanne: Then I go, oh my God, thank goodness I did not open my mouth because –

Lindsay: That's so good. Yes, I've had that happen before where you're like, oh, the solution is so obvious, right? Like I know exactly what we can do here. And then if you just give long enough, then they're like, oh, here's, I think, what I want to do. And it's totally different from what you were thinking.

Suzanne: It's so right for them, yes. Yes. And that has happened. And I can honestly say I really don't like this in my previous coaching. You know, I've had a couple of clients where I had to do so much prep because it just hasn't been natural. And all my clients now, I absolutely love every single one of them. The time flies, it's an absolute joy, and it's because it isn't forced.

When it was forced, I can't see that it was that enjoyable for them, nor me.

Lindsay: Mm-hmm. When you show up that way for your clients, do you feel like it changes, you kind of just touched on this I think, but do you think it changes the relationship that they have with you as the coach? Like do they show up to calls differently moving forward or can you see those types of things, that it shifts something for them?

Suzanne: I definitely think so. I mean, I am the kind of person that loves to be friends with my clients, professional friends. We have such a great relationship, and some of them I will try to see whenever I can. So some I will meet face to face and there is that fantastic relationship.

So, yeah, I think once they know that it's 100% confidential and they feel comfortable, I don't even think they even kind of almost realize that they're in a coaching session. We're just having a conversation and they just feel great at the end of it.

Lindsay: So I'm just thinking from the standpoint of someone listening to this podcast and they're thinking, okay, great, that makes sense. And also

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sometimes my clients come and I try to help them find their own solutions or help them find their own strategies. And they really are like, but I really don't know. Like I really need guidance on this.

Does that happen to you, first? And if it does, how do you handle it?

Suzanne: Yes. So I do have things like if you could wave a magic wand, for example, that's sort of always a good one.

Lindsay: I love that question because I think sometimes the thought that's holding them back is like, well, there could be a solution, but obviously that one's not going to work. So then they don't even offer it or say it as a starting point.

Suzanne: Yes, yes. And I'll say various versions of that. So if it was outrageous or you really didn't ever believe it could happen, you know, as you're saying, just to try and generate that.

But one thing that I love, I don't know where I first heard it, and it may have even been with you, is I will say something like, could I just offer you something? Because that way – I know that is something you probably will say, so I probably did get it from you. And my clients just absolutely love it because they don't have to say yes, but they always do, but they don't have to.

So then I will say, well, what about X or Y or whatever, but it just feels gentler. It doesn't feel like I'm inflicting anything. They could genuinely say no, but they don't.

Lindsay: Yeah. My thought about that, and that would be my answer too because I was thinking like, I do have a solution for this, but I was just curious what yours was. And yeah, I love asking the questions of just like, if you had a magic wand or like if we're not going to judge it at all and it's like totally a silly solution, what would that look like? So I love all of those.

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But then if they really, because sometimes clients really are like, no, I just really have no idea, like help me. And I think saying, okay, well, I have a couple of ideas or I have an idea, we could just start there and then just see what happens. I love to offer it as like, this is just the beginning of the conversation around it. Versus what I think some coaches bring to sessions when they get a little stuck in like, I must have a solution, is like I have to have the right solution and the only solution that's going to solve this problem for a client.

Suzanne: I think it's so interesting that, as I said before, I may have a suggestion that's nothing like what they've been thinking. So yes, I'm very, very happy to make suggestions. And sometimes actually even just the start of a suggestion will then make them go, oh, right. No, no.

Lindsay: Yeah, oh, I just had a thought. Here's the thing. Like I could do this. I have also been known, I don't know if you've heard me talk about this before, I know I've talked about it probably in The Coach Lab, but I don't remember for sure. One thing I used to do is I would just offer some really silly solutions. Like talking about people's businesses or whatever I'd be like, well, you can rent a billboard, like on the highway, put something on there about your coaching. And they're like, wait, what? No.

But it just allows the client, I think, to release the like, oh, we're looking for the one perfect solution, versus let's just name all of the solutions, even if they're ridiculous. And then pick one.

Suzanne: You have some really funny ones. I remember telling you ones, there's the ice cream parlor one or something you couldn't even remember, but The Coach Lab does have some quite funny ones in there, yes.

Lindsay: I think it's just like poking at the seriousness of it, right? Like let's just release the, we have to find the perfect solution and let's brainstorm. Let's just come up with some ideas, creative ideas. Some are going to be silly ideas. Some are going to be terrible, we're definitely not going to do them. And some might be great.

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I think in that case, then sometimes clients end up with like, oh, I actually have three great solutions. Now, which one do I want to do? Which one do I want to try?

Suzanne: I completely agree. Yes. I am the queen of sort of strange analogies as well, so I will come up with all sorts. I was talking about tailoring the other day. You know, if somebody makes jackets but you want trousers, then there's nothing wrong with the fact that the person makes jackets, but it's just that you want trousers.

Lindsay: But it's not right for you, right? It's just not what you're looking for. Yes, that's a good one. I love it.

Okay, so if someone's listening and they're questioning, should I be in The Coach Lab? Is it for me? I don't know, I'm on the fence. What would you say to them?

Suzanne: I would say that, well, obviously it's a no-brainer. It's a steal of a price. I'm obviously doing lots of other things with you now as well, so that was just the start. I think it's amazing to be around other people at different stages of their coaching journey because you can think, oh, I'm further along, I'm less far along. Whereas when you're in the group, everyone is at a different level, there's always going to be something that comes up that's going to help you. And everybody's genuinely lovely.

And you can go dip in and out when you want. So you can go to the live calls if you want. You can listen to them the next day or whenever you choose. But you've just cultivated a group of people that genuinely want to be the best at what they do and they're prepared to be vulnerable in front of the rest of us, me included, so that we can be the best that we can be. Why wouldn't you join to get that?

Lindsay: I love that. One thing you said that I have been thinking about a lot recently, since we're talking about it being two years of The Coach Lab and all of that. And I've just been thinking about the space that we've created together and just all the things.

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One thing I think about often is, I think one of the most powerful things is to either be on the calls live or to watch them in replay and just watch someone who you know, because of whatever context they're giving, that maybe they've been coaching for a while and they're still bringing things that you're like, oh, I thought these things just like magically went away at some point. Like once I had enough coaching hours, surely at some point, these things will just never happen again.

And I think it can be just like, oh, okay, I don't have to judge myself for this. I can just solve it. I can just get coached on it.

Suzanne: Yeah. I had, I don't particularly call them consults, but a consult the other day and I'm now pretty confident in talking to people and what have you. And at the end I just thought, you know, I don't know if I can really offer you what you want. I just felt a bit, I probably could say more things, but I just don't think I want to. I just don't think this is going – I'm not sure I can help you in a way that I'm going to love it too.

So with every tool in the toolbox, it doesn't mean I could, not that I'd want to convince, but turn anyone into a client. I mean, maybe it's given me more confidence as well to say, no, I don't think you're the right person for me.

Lindsay: Yeah, that's really powerful. Any situation like that, where it's like you have the opportunity to beat yourself up about it and say like, I did it wrong or clearly I didn't make it, you know, I wasn't clear enough what coaching is or whatever people tell themselves after calls like that, whether it's a consult or whatever you call it, or an actual coaching session, I think that comes up too. Yeah, I think it's really powerful to just see, oh wait, it turns out maybe it's just not a great fit. Maybe they want, what did you say? A shirt, or maybe they're looking for pants, but I'm selling shirts.

Suzanne: Oh yeah, sorry. Trousers and pants, yes. Gosh, we can't say pants in the UK.

Lindsay: Oh yeah. What is that, does that mean underwear?

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Suzanne: Yes, it does.

Lindsay: Okay, perfect. Perfect. I don't think I've talked about underwear on here yet, so this is a first. It's perfect, I love it.

Suzanne: Actually, can I add one other thing if I may?

Lindsay: Of course.

Suzanne: I do have a client where I work with three of the leaders and then the CEO. And there was a time where I was just having a call with one of them and we were really just having a conversation, but we weren't coaching. And I turned around and said, are you actually really getting anything from this? And they kind of said, well, it's nice to talk to you, but probably not. And I wasn't either.

And so then it meant that the opportunity went to somebody else who really, really wanted it. And in the past, I'd have made that mean, oh my goodness, you know, I've failed. I'm not a good coach. Why can't I get anything out of them?

But then, having worked with you, and I actually think I brought – I'm fairly sure I brought it to one or two sessions.

Lindsay: Yeah, I remember that.

Suzanne: Yeah. I was able to just let that go and say, no, just this isn't right for either of us. And so let's give the opportunity to someone else. And that's been amazing.

Lindsay: Yes. Oh my gosh, how many times have you seen that? Maybe you're not always on, but I've seen this so many times come up in The Coach Lab where someone's kind of explaining something that happens in a session and finally, I'll just ask like, okay, wait, I have a question. Is this like a, you know, I know that they're a corporate coach or whatever they might call themselves. And I'm like, is this person paying for the coaching

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or have they been assigned the coaching or someone else is paying for the coaching?

I always find it fascinating how many coaches kind of beat themselves up about like, I'm not doing it right, when sometimes it's like, no, that person just doesn't actually want coaching, period. And that's okay. Like that's totally fine and it doesn't have to mean anything about you as a coach.

Suzanne: Exactly.

Lindsay: I love it.

Suzanne: So thank you for that, you helped me with that.

Lindsay: Of course. Well, thank you for being here today. If people are listening and they would love to find you or interact with your work or what you do, where would they look?

Suzanne: I don't do a great deal on my website, but I am suzanneclarke.com. So S-U-Z-A-N-N-E, Clarke with an E. I'm probably most active on LinkedIn. I think I'm Suzanne Clarke Coach on LinkedIn. So yeah, that's LinkedIn and my website.

Lindsay: I thought you were going to say they just have to come to the soccer club. I figured that was the only solution.

Suzanne: Well, if anyone doesn't know, I'm a Newcastle United fan and I've got some of my clients from up there. So tune, tune if you're in the UK. If you're not, then you won't know what on Earth I'm talking about.

Lindsay: Some people might because we watch Ted Lasso now, right? So it's like people understand it a little more, in the US at least, than we used to. Oh yeah, and I did say soccer, I should have said football. Sorry.

Suzanne: I'm sure most of your audience understands soccer rather than football. It's UK football and not American football.

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Lindsay: But I bring it up all the time because when I hear coaches talk about like, well, I don't know how to market. I don't know, like, where do I find people? Where do I find people who are going to be my clients? I'm like, well – That's not what we talk about necessarily in The Coach Lab, but just want to hear that in general in the industry, right? I'm like, you just go find them. Like, where are they? And go there.

And you're like, I know where exactly they are.

Suzanne: They're in the football club.

Lindsay: They are in the football club, hanging out, having fun. And that's what I'm going to do.

Suzanne: I mean, it's the best, best thing that the first thing that you would say to any of your clients or your contacts is, you know, did you see the game and all of that? The synergy is amazing. So yeah, if anyone out there has got something that they really, really love, and there's a group of people, then absolutely go for it.

Lindsay: I didn't even consider that about it. It gives you an instant kind of bond with them, doesn't it? When you're both like such big fans of the same team.

Suzanne: Yeah, you spend the first 15 minutes of any hour-long conversation talking about the latest results and who played how.

Lindsay: I love it. That's amazing. All right, well, thank you again for being here today. This was so fun and it's always fun to see you.

Suzanne: Thank you so, so much. I've loved it. Thank you.

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.