Ep #251: Why Self-Concept Work Can't Solve Your Coaching Problems

Full Episode Transcript

With Your Host

<u>Lindsay Dotzlaf</u>

Ep #251: Why Self-Concept Work Can't Solve Your Coaching Problems

Hey, this is Lindsay Dotzlaf and you are listening to *Mastering Coaching Skills* episode 251.

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 have something I want to talk to you about today. It's something that I see coming up in my programs and my different offers at every level, over and over and over. And I think it's just really important that we address it because this is a very subtle way that I see many, many coaches using coaching against themselves or using self-awareness and their ability to be self-aware and to go inward and explore, using it in a way that isn't always the most beneficial.

So I want to talk about it today because if you find yourself doing this, I just want you to be aware of it and to kind of catch yourself and say, "Wait, is this my best path forward right now?"

So, when I say I see this coming up, I mean really coming up very often, and again, at every level, like with all my different clients. And it shows up in different ways, but I'll give you some specific examples today. But the thing I see a lot of coaches doing is when they come up against something that feels difficult or come up against the obstacle, some of you are doing this thing where instead of thinking like "Okay, how do I solve this?" you go immediately to, "I must throw all of the possible coaching at this that there is. I must pause everything else while I go inward and explore and heal this part of myself."

Now, of course, sometimes that is super valuable, right? I want to be very clear: I am not saying that that is not something that you should ever be doing. Because sometimes, that's exactly what you need to be doing. And hopefully, after this episode today, you'll have at least a little bit better of an idea of when you should be doing that versus when you should be

[Mastering Coaching Skills](#) with Lindsay Dotzlaf

Ep #251: Why Self-Concept Work Can't Solve Your Coaching Problems

considering maybe there's a strategy error happening or that there could be so many other reasons that you're coming up against the obstacle that you're coming up against.

So, I'll give you some examples of how I see this showing up, and I want also to offer that this might show up for you in slightly different ways. I'm just going to give some examples that I kind of see over and over, kind of very generic examples, but just think about this for yourself. If you resonate with this, especially if you tend to be kind of an overthinker, over-analyzer, or you feel like you kind of see yourself as someone who doesn't have maybe a ton of self-confidence or confidence in certain areas.

Okay. So what this might look like is, here are some examples. Let's say your client, you have a client who's not getting great results. And maybe you're a newer coach, so you haven't had a ton of clients. You have - don't have a huge pool to know, like, "Okay, do they usually get results or do they not?" Maybe you just have a handful of clients. You have one that is really not getting incredible results.

It can be easy to say, "Oh, I must not be a good coach. I need to work on my confidence as a coach." Now, sometimes that might be true, but often, and I coach people on these types of thoughts a lot because I run The Coach Lab. This is what we're always talking about in there is this kind of thing.

And often, I will offer to them, well, "Well, maybe it has to do with your confidence, but first, let's just examine what's happening. Could it be your process? Could it be something about this particular client makes them harder for you to coach? Could it be that they're at a different starting point than all your other clients?" Right? There could be so many different reasons. Could it be that they're not really showing up for the coaching or maybe literally not even showing up for the coaching sessions?

Often, when I point some of these things out, my clients are a little bit like, "Oh, right." I always just notice, oh, their first inclination is to go straight to,

Ep #251: Why Self-Concept Work Can't Solve Your Coaching Problems

like, 'This is my fault,' in a way that makes it very much about their self-concept and them as a human, instead of, sure, it could be your fault as a coach, as in maybe your process could be improved or there's something that you're not doing, but that's very different than going all the way to like, "I'm a bad person," or "I have no confidence," or "I can never be a good coach or something like that."

Here's another example. When you are trying to sell your coaching, or you're selling your coaching, wherever it is that you're doing that, and it's just not working, right? You're just not making any sales. And when you immediately go to, "This must be because I have money blocks," or, "This must be because I'm too weird and nobody wants to buy from me." Right? So like with the money blocks, that could look like, "Let me put everything on pause while I do this deep dive into my relationship with money," or "Let me put everything on pause while I learn how to blend in with the rest of the industry," whatever that means.

The next example of this could be maybe you're very active on social media and your content just isn't getting any engagement at all, right? And you've decided this is like your main vehicle for marketing and for promoting your coaching. And often, I'll hear something in this situation, like, "Oh, I just really have some visibility issues, so let me go really like inward and work on my fear of being seen."

Instead of considering, you know, if this is my main way to market my coaching, have I studied this? Do I understand the algorithm? Do I know what type of content is engaging for my potential clients? Right? And like really looking at, like, how do I solve this?

Here's why I think many coaches do this. The main one, like main, main, main one, is I just think going inward, especially as a coach, right? Because we are programmed to love - to love mindset work, to love, like "Let me explore myself and how I'm creating my results."

Ep #251: Why Self-Concept Work Can't Solve Your Coaching Problems

So sometimes, even though it can be uncomfortable to think, "Oh, I'm just not smart enough," or, "I really have money blocks that I'm going to need to do a deep dive into," even though that can feel really uncomfortable, it, in many ways, can also feel much, much safer than really looking at the problem, whatever the problem is, and just figuring out how to solve it.

Right? Because if you think about like the content one, right? Nobody's engaging with my content, and you're like, "Well, it's just because I have visibility issues." Sure, that's going to feel uncomfortable to solve that. But it's going to feel probably more comfortable than saying, "Okay, well, I'm willing to try this a hundred different ways, a hundred different types of content. I'm willing to spend my energy researching how the algorithm works and understanding some different ways that I could be doing this."

It also is more comfortable to go inward than to fear or risk big fails. Right? So like if you make it about you and your self-concept, then now you have that to go work on. And that's like a great excuse to not do the thing that you thought you were wanting to do, right? And it makes it a lot easier to put that all aside, go work on your big like inner blocks versus continuing to do your thing, test the things, and possibly fail. But the failing, of course, is where so much of the learning is.

When you do this, it feels super productive, right? It feels like when you are pausing everything and working on yourself and coaching yourself and doing that work, it feels so productive. And especially if you're not creating a lot of the results you want to create in your business, it might feel even more productive than anything else that you're doing or that you could be doing that you're avoiding. But what you're really doing is you're avoiding the vulnerable work of testing and iterating and addressing the things that come up along the way, of course.

Right, again, I want to be clear, I'm not suggesting that you avoid it or that you don't do any self-concept work at all. It can be a very valuable piece of getting where you want to go. We can also trick ourselves into thinking that that's the most vulnerable work. But sometimes I question that. I'm like, "Is

[Mastering Coaching Skills](#) with Lindsay Dotzlaf

Ep #251: Why Self-Concept Work Can't Solve Your Coaching Problems

it really?" Because I think we actually are really good at thinking these things about ourselves. Most of us are anyway, right? To think, like, "Oh, I'm just never going to get this," or "This is just not meant for me," or somehow like making it about us. And then we go work on that. And yes, of course, that can feel quite vulnerable.

But what is actually, in real life, a lot, lot, lot more vulnerable is to say, "I'm going after this thing anyway, and I'm willing to fail. I'm willing to test. I'm willing to iterate over and over and over." Because when you do that, the things that you really do need to work on are naturally going to come up, right? And so in my mind, these two things kind of have to be done simultaneously.

And so, what I'm talking about when I'm saying this is when I see coaches really kind of halting all other work that they're doing because they think, "I need to do this like deep dive." Now, in a minute, I am going to point out some times when that might actually be a good thing to do.

But I want you to just really let that sink in for a minute. We think going inward is super vulnerable and should be commended because it's so vulnerable. And it is, that's not not true, but it also is a really great way to just procrastinate and stay much safer than you would if you let yourself just keep going and work through all the things as they come up without having to like fully push pause on something that you're working on.

Here's one problem with leading with self-concept work, is that you might be looking at the wrong thing entirely. Right? The real self-concept work that's going to move you forward is the things that emerge when you're actually working on solving the problems that you're having. When you are examining your pricing and you're saying, "Okay, well, does this make sense for my people, for my audience, for my potential clients?"

And doing some work comparing it to, like, what do other people in this niche charge, or just even thinking conceptually about where are my people? Like where are they in their life? And does the price I'm setting,

does it kind of like match where they are? Right? If they're like a stay-at-home parent and I only offer super high-priced coaching packages, there's going to be a hurdle there to overcome. So that is something that you could just see and solve for.

Again, of course, this is like a very generic example, but seeing it and solving for it and making some shifts might feel scary, and it's going to get you a lot further than thinking, in that specific example, thinking, "I just have money blocks, and I need to overcome them."

You can overcome all of the money blocks in the world, but if you're trying to sell, let's say, $100,000 coaching packages to teachers, that's probably going to be a big obstacle to overcome. When you have a client who's not getting results, and you immediately just think, "Oh, it must be that I'm not confident, or I'm just not a good coach," and then you kind of go inward or you go learn more, more, more coaching techniques before you've even like feel solid in the ones that you already have, that can feel very productive.

But the real work usually is going to be, "Well, let's really take a look at my coaching. What am I really good at? What are my strengths as a coach? What am I not great at? What about this specific client is creating the lack of results?" Those questions might actually feel a lot more vulnerable than kind of leaning on what might feel more comfortable, which is like maybe more learning or, "Let me just work on my confidence."

When you, for example, decide you are going to test different content on social media, that's going to give you an opportunity to learn so much, right? To find your authentic voice, to figure out how you like to engage with people, to create content that you enjoy. Versus saying, "Well, I just have a huge fear of visibility, and let me go work on that."

Sometimes when you redirect yourself and you really kind of pause the thing you're working on that is like on the outside, right, that people can see, that's moving you forward, in order to go do the inner work, I've just

Ep #251: Why Self-Concept Work Can't Solve Your Coaching Problems

seen so many people do this and then kind of come back and like, "Okay, I've healed the thing, now I'm ready to get back to work," and then it still doesn't work. And then what? Right?

This is the thing that I want you to avoid. Because when you go work on the thing and then you come back, it usually doesn't magically fix the issue that you are having. Right? It doesn't magically fix that no one's engaging with your work, even if you have somehow coached yourself or gotten coached around your visibility blocks.

The real insights are going to come while building and going after the thing you want and working on all the things that come up along the way. The - your confidence is going to increase when you're out there doing the thing, not when you're going inward and thinking about all the reasons you don't feel confident and coaching yourself on them.

Now, let's talk about a couple examples when self-concept work from the beginning is a really good focus. So the first one is when you're very consistently shutting down, freezing, avoiding, when you literally can't take the actions that you say you're going to take over and over and over. And you're always avoiding the same thing. It's always a thing that's coming up. Right?

And when I say always, I mean like consistently over time, not just because you're doing something for the first time, which I think is something coaches don't often give themselves enough credit for, right? Like, "Oh, right, I'm doing something for the first time. There's a learning curve here. That's totally normal." I don't think that is a thought that most coaches have often. Even as a coach, it's okay to be new at something. It's okay for something to feel super uncomfortable.

But what I'm talking about here is when even if you see that and you are completely frozen, right? You actually can't take any action. Not like you feel a little scared, but you take some action anyway, and you can keep

Ep #251: Why Self-Concept Work Can't Solve Your Coaching Problems

going forward. Like there's so much learning that can happen from that space. But when you're just actually shut down.

Or, kind of the exact opposite, when you're in what I would call, kind of strategy overdrive, which is like throwing solution, solution, solution at the problem with no results, like without moving the needle at all, which is probably going to show you, in some way, you're avoiding the real issue, which in that case, the real issue could be some self-concept work that needs to be approached.

But what's happening here when you're trying strategy after strategy, this is great. Maybe you're testing some things. But when you're doing it so quickly and you're not taking any time to explore, do any inward searching, and then you're just immediately moving to the next thing.

One example of this might be changing your prices over and over and over without any real kind of pausing, without saying like, "Well, what price just feels good to me to start with?" Or, "What are my thoughts about this price? Do I believe anyone will pay this price?" Without any pausing to examine any of that, you just keep changing your price, thinking like, "I'm going to somehow land on the perfect magical price that all my people are going to pay." That's not a thing, by the way.

Now, obviously, the strategy overdrive can show up in many different ways, but that's just one example. So that might not be your example. But in that case, and in the case of the complete shutdown, you do want to get super curious about what's underneath this, either with yourself or with a coach, or possibly even with a therapist, or any other person on your team who is going to kind of help you get curious about what's under it.

So here are some questions you can ask yourself that might help you in these situations, kind of like some, a quick diagnostic question you can ask yourself. When you feel yourself being pulled towards wanting to go inward, right? And thinking like, "Oh, I really need some more work on myself before any of this is going to work."

[Mastering Coaching Skills](#) with Lindsay Dotzlaf

Ep #251: Why Self-Concept Work Can't Solve Your Coaching Problems

Here are some questions you can ask yourself. First one, what am I avoiding? When I'm making this decision to do this thing, to go coach myself or to go inward, what am I avoiding? And just get curious. See what's there. Am I taking action that just isn't working? Or am I avoiding taking action? Those are two different things, and there's going to be a lot of information there for you.

Next question, what's the most practical first step to test this problem? Next question, besides my worth as a human or my needing to heal or my blocks as a coach, is there anything else that could explain what's happening or the results that I'm getting? Are there any other possible solutions? And then last question, is there any real-world data that I could gather that might be helpful here?

Okay, now, again, I want to be clear, I'm not suggesting that you put the self-coaching or the coaching or the mindset work or the going inward or the somatic work or any of the work you might be doing. I am not suggesting that you just ignore it and keep moving forward. What I am suggesting though, is that you don't stop your work altogether to go do that, unless it's very clear that's something that needs to be done. And I think those cases are actually pretty rare.

Okay, now, I know some of you might not relate to this concept all that much. You might be like, "Wait, what? I don't think I do that." And that could be true. Some of my clients, I don't see them doing this all that often, whereas some of them do trend towards leaning this direction before they're asking, "How do I just solve this problem?"

But if you're the coach who doesn't understand this concept very much and you're like, "Hm, interesting, I don't know," the other place you can look at this is with your clients. Your clients might also exhibit this behavior, and you just kind of want to be aware of it if they are.

So, oftentimes, when my clients come to me with something like this where I can see that what they've either already done or what they're about to do

Ep #251: Why Self-Concept Work Can't Solve Your Coaching Problems

is just completely turn inward and kind of shut off everything else, I'll almost like lead with strategy sometimes in a way that we're not going to avoid doing this work or doing the coaching, of course.

But when you lead with strategy and you can kind of see, "Oh, here's kind of the next best step," then I might say, "Okay, now what's really coming up for you?" And we start there, instead of just them being scared and then me following them to, "Okay, now I just need to go work on this money block." Instead of like, "Well, wait, why do you need to do that? What's the thing you're actually solving for?"

All right, I hope that this was super helpful. I know some of you probably needed to hear this. And again, if you didn't, that's okay, but also just take into account that your clients might come to you with this work as well.

So, just a quick plug for a couple of things I have going on right now. I am currently running Coach Unfiltered, which is a completely behind-the-scenes, three-month experience where you get to see me, but actually, I didn't consider this, but all these things I just talked through, you can see very good examples of me doing this, like doing the work simultaneously inside of Coach Unfiltered.

There are things that have come up where I've said like, "Whoa, I was frozen in fear today. Here's how I worked through it. Here's what I know is my next step. Here's how I solved it."

And I think it's been super helpful for me to just show that human side to coaches, to be like, "Yeah, this is what so many coaches are going through. It's just the thing you're not seeing all that often." And I've had a lot of comments that are like, "Oh, it's so inspiring though, to see you just keep going." Right? To see you like come up against this obstacle, and then you just solve it and you keep going.

And I think part of the reason I'm able to do that is because I just know like, "Right, I'm still human." These things still come up for me. It's not out of the ordinary for any human to have the thought, "This is too scary, I don't want

Ep #251: Why Self-Concept Work Can't Solve Your Coaching Problems

to do it," or "I'm not made for this," or "I'm not good at this," or any thought similar to those.

And I think it's been really powerful for me to just show people like, "Yeah, this is totally a thing that still comes up for all coaches." There's no world where you just go do the inner work and then it's just healed and solved forever. In most cases, the real confidence and the real way you move forward is by solving the real problems, not from endless introspection, even though introspection, of course, along the way can be super powerful.

All right, the other thing I have going on right now is applications for the Reimagine Mastermind, which starts September 10th, are currently open. And some of the stuff I mentioned here is actually, again, some work we do inside of Reimagine. We're consistently solving for like, "What if it's not you? What if you're not broken?" And we just need to reconfigure the way you work in your business, or we just need to make some changes to your - the structure of your offers. Not that everyone is getting coached on stuff like that, but it is something that comes up quite often.

We look at all the things that are actually happening in your business in real time, and we solve all of them. We just make your business more comfortable for you. We make it operate in a way that feels - I've been saying it kind of feels like an exhale instead of the *sucks air in* or the like holding your breath or, like "Oh, I just have to get through this part." It feels like a, "Oh, I love running this business." So, those applications are open through the end of August, and we will be linking this in the show notes.

We'll add the links to Coach Unfiltered and to the Reimagine sales page so you can get more information for either of those if you would love to join us.

All right. Thank you so much for listening in today, and I will be back here next week. Goodbye.

Thanks for listening to this episode of *Mastering Coaching Skills.* If you want to learn more about my work, come visit me at

[Mastering Coaching Skills](#) with Lindsay Dotzlaf

Ep #251: Why Self-Concept Work Can't Solve Your Coaching Problems

lindsaydotzlafcoaching.com. That's Lindsay with an A, D-O-T-Z-L-A-F.com. See you next week.