

Ep #253: Coaching Tools: The 3 Question Reset



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With Your Host

Lindsay Dotzlaf

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Hey coach, this is Lindsay Dotzlafl and you are listening to *Mastering Coaching Skills* episode 253.

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'm so happy you're here today and I'm going to try something a little new today, something that I plan to implement every once in a while, moving forward, part of the podcast framework that you're going to be seeing rolling out soon.

But here's what it is. Today in this short episode, I want to walk you through a simple coaching skill that you can literally use in your coaching sessions today or whenever your next sessions are. And you can adapt it, you can make it your own. There are so many options of ways that you can use this.

And before I dive into what that is, I want to tell you, like I said, this is part of a new format that I'm going to be rolling out. I want you to let me know if you like it. You can do that by leaving a review or by getting with me somewhere in my DMs, maybe on Instagram or emailing me, and just letting me know, hey, this was really helpful, or even maybe, hmm, didn't love that. But I'm also going to teach you something very specific today and let you know when you can use it.

So, if you have things like this that come up in your coaching that you're like, "Hey Lindsay, could you speak to this thing? Could you help me with this thing?" You can also send those to me and if it makes sense, I will happily include them in some of my upcoming episodes. Okay? So let's dig in.

First, have you ever had a client that you show up, you're ready to coach, you're so excited, and for whatever reason, due to maybe multiple things, the session just goes a little wonky or sideways or you just don't know what to coach them on? This honestly has been one of my most popular topics on this podcast, is what to do when you don't know what to do or when you

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don't know what your clients want coaching on or when they show up with nothing to coach on.

So this is actually going to solve that but in a very specific way. And it's also going to solve some other little, smaller things that show up in coaching sessions and I'll go through all of them in just a second. So instead of you as the coach feeling panicky, feeling confused, feeling like, oh my gosh, do I even know what I'm doing? Feeling doubt, any of those things and scrambling or making something up in the moment, I want to teach you a framework that will work so simply in many different scenarios.

And when I tell you what it is, just know that you will probably recognize some of the questions and you've probably heard me talk about this before, but in this instance, I'm using something I've taught before but in a very different way. So, I want to teach you something I'm going to call the 3 Question Reset. You can use this in any coaching session with any niche, with any client. All right? And again, always feel free to modify what I'm going to teach you. Okay? To modify my questions, to make them your own, all of that.

But here's what it is. It is just three simple questions that you can use at any point in a coaching session. You can even use it as the way you start every coaching session. But the benefit of specifically asking these questions is that it's going to help give you and the client a little reset or check-in during a session when it feels maybe it's not going how you think it should be going or you feel a little unclear or you as the coach are confused, and maybe your client is too.

Here are the three questions. And they're very simple. Are you ready? First one, what's working or going well for you right now? The second one, what's not working or not going well right now? And the third one is what is getting in the way of moving forward or moving towards your goal?

Now, you can probably see right away how, why this is a reset, right? It's going to bring us back to what is just actually happening right now. What's going well? What's not going well? What do you think is getting in the way?

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And you might even be able to see immediately how it's getting right to the point much faster than, "Okay, well what would you like coaching on around that?" which can be a great question sometimes, but this is just going to really help the client get clear and is not you doing the work, right? It's you helping them come up with the answers for these. It's really giving them some self-awareness and it really allows for a discussion afterwards after you ask the questions around, "Okay, now how do we want to move forward?" if that seems like it fits into your session that day.

So, let's talk about all of the ways that you can use these questions, the 3 Question Reset and all the scenarios that these might be useful. So I'm just going to go through them quickly and then I'll just give you a couple quick examples. The first one is when a client just feels stuck or they're unsure of what to coach on, right? They're just kind of like, "I don't know, I'm not even sure." Especially when things aren't working, maybe they feel a little frustrated. And this can be a really easy way to get them thinking strategically and really digging into truly what's working and what's not.

This also can be very useful when a client is just really down on their progress, right? When they're just feeling badly about the progress they've made, they're down on themselves, they're showing up very negative. Especially that first question, what's working or what's going well? And I would even prompt you to nudge them to find the things even if they feel small because that can be the first step in really pulling them out of the way they're feeling.

Or when a client shows up to a session and says the words that you all dread, "I don't have anything to coach on." This can be great. Just dive right into these questions. I promise you, it will bring something to the surface. Another one is when everything seems great. Everything's going great. They're just reporting to you, here are all the things that are going great. And it seems, okay, well where do we go from here? Again, these questions, they'll bring up something.

Another one is when a client is all over the place. They keep jumping from topic to topic. It seems they can't really focus. And a lot of times when this

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is happening, it's because the client will say one thing and then it reminds them of another thing and either they're spinning in like, this is all bad, or they're just really having a hard time getting their brain to latch onto something. It feels they're just narrating out loud without a clear direction. These questions can be really good to help with that direction, right? Where are we going?

The other one could be when you find yourself in mid-session and it feels like you're going nowhere. Maybe you're just going in circles. If you've coached for a while, you've probably experienced this. Some clients are really good at this where they just lead you in circles and you just keep feeling like you're coming back to the same thing over and over. These questions can really help break up that cycle.

This can also be really good when progress towards their goal has stalled. Maybe they were doing great and now all of a sudden they aren't, or for a while now they haven't been. These can just be good questions to check in with. These can also be great when a client shows up really in a highly emotional state or feeling overwhelmed and they're having a hard time thinking clearly. These questions can really ground them, right? Let's really just look at what's working and what isn't.

Or when you as the coach, when it feels like you are over coaching or over teaching or just in general doing way too much of the work, right? You're telling them things and offering things and they're not really taking any of the things and running with them. And you are either exhausted from it or you are just like, okay, this, something's not clicking here. This can be a really good way when you bring it back to these questions, it can be a really good way to help the client come up with some of the answers instead of just relying on you to tell them things.

So, if you've listened to my podcast in the past, you've probably heard me talk about evaluations. These are very similar questions, right? These are another way to use these questions very powerfully is just to do an evaluation. And that's kind of what this is. It's just a mini evaluation in the moment. Right? Maybe instead of an evaluation, I think of it as something

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bigger, something like, okay, let's really set aside a moment and work through this evaluation.

And they are similar questions, but when you use these questions in the way I'm suggesting in a session or in the middle of a session, you're really doing it to ground the client, to get them focused, to get you both on the same page, and it can really turn a session around. Even just asking these questions before you even coach on anything that comes up can be super powerful. It creates so much self-awareness for the client. So I know they sound simple, but don't underestimate the power of what they can do.

Here's what this might look like in a session. So I'll use one of the scenarios I just told you about and just give you an example. So you're halfway through the call, you can tell that the client's energy is maybe a little low, you're unsure of where to go next. It just doesn't feel, it's just not that session that feels super inspired and like, wow, we're really getting somewhere and you can just tell that's the energy all around.

If you pause and you say, "Okay, let's try something. Is that okay by you? Let's answer some questions, use this framework that I have that might help us figure out where we're going from here." And then you just dive into them, right? Hopefully the client will say, "Yeah, sounds good." Then you can say, "Okay, first question, what's going really well right now?" Obviously keeping it constrained to whatever you're coaching on, the coaching topics, right? And then they'll answer and then, "Okay, what's not going well? What's not working?" List all the things.

And maybe you take notes while they're answering. This is one time that I do actually like to take notes is when I just want the client really being self-aware, really thinking, really accessing their inner wisdom. I don't want them worrying about maybe taking all the notes. So I'll just be typing while they talk possibly. Then, after they've done that, then, "Okay, now tell me, what do you think is getting in the way of you moving towards..." and you mention whatever their goal is.

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When you do this and you get a session back on track. And by the way, it will probably also get future sessions on track because definitely there are things that are going to come up in their answers that are just going to give you some juicy nuggets of things to coach on.

But it's also going to, instead of having you looking confused and feeling frustrated and not sure where to go, it's going to have you looking super professional and you know exactly what you're doing, right?

Because you've taken control of the session. You've taken control of the situation. The client is going to feel so held and cared for in that moment and it's going to be so clear the goal you're working towards. It's going to create clarity. It's going to create a lack of confusion. It's going to create trust possibly with you. There are just so many good things that can come from this, so much more goodness, for example, than just talking in circles for an hour. Nobody wants that.

So my challenge for you is to try this this week. If you have any moments in your coaching sessions that feel off, feel wonky, feel unclear, feel all over the place, just take a moment, take a deep breath, remind yourself you know what you're doing, and then just ask these three simple questions and let me know how it goes.

Remember that sometimes very simple tools can be the best. They can be the tools that really resonate the most with clients, that create the most clarity and that really help everybody move forward. They do not have to be some overly complicated, wildly innovative coaching tool, although those sometimes can be great as well. Not overly complicated, but the innovative ones, right? But sometimes these simple questions can be the best way to get a coaching session back on track.

So, let me know how it goes. Message me, DM me, email me, tell me in the reviews, wherever you want to tell me, and I will be back. Let me also know what other coaching skills you would love me to address on this podcast. I'll see you next week. Goodbye.

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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.