

Ep #259: Find Your People: 5 Benefits of a Great Coaching Community



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With Your Host

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Hey, this is Lindsay Dotzlaf and you are listening to *Mastering Coaching Skills* episode 259.

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 glad you're here this week. I cannot wait to talk about one of my favorite topics today. It is something that I think is one of the most important things you can have as an entrepreneur and while you're building a business and as a coach, and I realized I really don't talk about it often enough.

The topic today is going to be why every coach needs community and what kind of the top five things you can get from being in a great community. And community can mean so many things. So, I'll just start by saying that.

But I had an experience over the last few days where I was in someone else's community, and I'll give you details on that in a second. And I just was so amazed at some of the things I noticed, how it allowed me to kind of get out of my own head and be focused on something else besides my own business. And again, I'm going to tell you a full story about this when I get to this part of the episode, but coming back from that, I'm freshly back, I've been home less than 24 hours.

And also, with a launch of something new coming, a brand new membership, which I guess this is officially the first time I'm going to announce it on the podcast. It's going to be called The Complete Coach, and I cannot wait to launch it for you because what I've realized, and you're going to hear a lot more about this. This is just a quick, you'll see why I'm saying this in a minute. It's not just a plug for the membership. It's why I also want to talk about community today.

Because over the years, I've had an evolution of my coaching practice. Right, I was a general life coach and then I was focused on coaching skills.

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And then as you've seen over the last year or so, I've been weaving in some business pieces as well. I've now run a couple business spaces, and I really noticed that, okay, my brand is no longer just coaching skills.

So what's going to happen in this membership, which is going to be my new signature offer, is I'm going to combine three pillars that I think every coach needs. How to support your clients, which is coaching skills, right? And coaching. How to support your business, so the business skills also.

And then how to support yourself. And what I mean by that in this context is the integration of your life and business. Right, like really running a business that enhances your life, not the other way around. Not, you know, having a life so that you can run a business, which is how some of you are approaching it.

And once I saw that, there's no going back, right? And I knew it had to be a membership. I'm super excited about this. You'll be getting many, many more details coming soon. But one of the main things that's going to be happening in the membership is there will be a big focus on community. Obviously, the three pillars, right, like that's a thing.

But when I think about the overall membership, one of the reasons that I want to launch it, that I want it to be a membership, that I want it to have the specific structure it's going to have is because right now, especially, I think community is one of the most important things you can have as an entrepreneur. So there will be some special community things happening in this membership that I've never done before, that I've never seen done before, that I am feeling so excited about.

So that's been on my mind for a while. And then, I went to Cabo to help a good friend, Priyanka, run a retreat for her clients. Kind of a long story, but basically, she was going and she was hosting this retreat. I was talking to her, she was a little stressed. She had invited her business manager or her VA, I forget the exact role, to come on this retreat, and it just didn't work out. And so last minute, she was going to not have any help. And kind of jokingly, I said, "I mean, I love Cabo. I'd be happy to go."

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Total joke, kind of. I mean, I do love Cabo. So that part wasn't a joke. And she came back a couple days later and, you know, said, "Hey, were you being serious? Because I actually think that could be really great." And so I went there, and I helped her. And I did think about my business, of course, but mostly, from the time I got up until the time I went to bed, my mind was on her business. And there's a reason this is going to be important.

I'm going to put a pin in that for now. And I'm going to dive into the things that I think every coach needs when it comes to community and why community is so impactful. Even if you're an introvert, even if you're the coach who's like, "I don't really need community. I don't need that many friends. I don't need to talk to people all day." That's okay. There are still reasons that you need community. And that community, like the way you engage in community can look like whatever you need it to look like. Right?

So let's just dig in. I have five things, and then I have technically six because at the end I have a bonus of like one bonus thing that community has done for me and that it could do for you too, but it doesn't, the last one kind of doesn't have to be for everybody.

So number one, one thing that's super important about community is that as an entrepreneur, most of us are just at our homes often by ourselves all day, running a business and just sitting at our computer. Or some variation of that. You might not be at your computer all day, but you're not often, not out in the world interacting with a lot of people.

And that can be quite lonely. You can feel isolated. You can just kind of be in your head all day and get used to that, and it can kind of be an experience that is like, "Oh, I didn't know, I didn't think about that when I decided I was going to just run my own business."

And now with the introduction of AI, I think from what I experience personally and from what I see for my clients, sometimes there's even less human interaction than before because now, those of you that use AI, you have a tool that you can interact with and ask questions and bounce ideas off of and kind of "talk to."

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I'm going to say "talk to" in quotes because remember, AI is not a human, right? Even though they can have real conversations with you, or what feels like real conversations, I should say. And again, no matter what type of human you are, even if you are an introvert, connection is a human need. And it is not at all a weakness to desire connection and to have people in your corner, to have people to talk with, to connect with, and to bounce ideas off of.

And clients, even if you are a coach who has quite a few clients who does feel like you're getting a lot of interaction, that interaction still is different. And you honestly don't want to rely on your clients to be providing the type of interaction I'm talking about, right? You need a place that you can vent, that you can find someone to help problem solve, that you can celebrate huge wins, right, all of those things.

And this is something that can be very hard for everyone, every coach, every entrepreneur. I know. I've talked to so many people about this, and this is the thing that comes up for so many coaches, so many entrepreneurs.

The second reason I think community is important for everybody is that it brings diverse perspectives that challenge your thinking. Especially when a community is built in a way that promotes that diversity, diversity of thought, diversity of beliefs, in a way that it's not just an echo chamber, but it's a place that you can go and say, "Hey, here's my challenge," and that you can get feedback.

And it might be different types of feedback that will just make you think differently. Some of it you might not always agree with, some of it you might agree with strongly, some of it might be, you know, even just people sharing your own perspective that can even just show you like, hey, you're not alone, even if it's not the most useful to get you out of your head or get you out of what you're stuck with.

But when you are alone and you don't have that sounding board, your thoughts can just be in loops, right, kind of the same thoughts, the same

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challenges, and you might not be able to solve them if you don't have that place to go to say, "Hey, someone help me out here. Give me all your thoughts about this." It also just exposes you to different viewpoints and approaches and experiences, which I think is super important when it comes to coaching because your clients are going to come to you with all of those different things as well.

And so when that happens, and you've already heard other people offering you all these different perspectives, now you might not be surprised or you might not think, "Oh, I've never thought about it that way before," or "I don't know what to do about this. I've never heard this perspective before." I love an anti-echo chamber energy. Right, like that energy in a community that isn't just everybody thinking the exact same, participating in groupthink consistently, but the energy of, "I don't know, let's explore it."

I love people that think differently in my communities. Like that is what I want. It is one of my main goals anytime I'm building a community. With the exception of, I do think there need to be some overlapping values. I will dig into this more later in a separate episode, but there's a difference between having different viewpoints versus, you know, sharing some common values that really help the community stick together.

I really think that diverse perspectives is where the best strategic thinking really happens. Because when somebody really challenges the way you're thinking, or if multiple people are challenging the way you're thinking, giving you different perspectives, not only does it help you see things in a different way, but sometimes it can even help you solidify your viewpoint. Right, when you see something you don't agree with, it can make it a little more clear what you do believe.

The next one, the third reason that I think every coach needs community, this relates to the story I was telling you at the beginning. It gives you a chance to get out of your own head. So when I was in Cabo, I noticed this thing where on the days where I was helping her run the retreat, I would wake up in the morning, I would get up, I would start getting ready, and I would start thinking about her and her business. What was on the agenda

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for today? What did I need to figure out? How can I help her implement her vision for the day?

And I started to notice how different that was than it feels when I am at home by myself getting up in the morning thinking about my own business. Right, because in my own business, all these doubts start to pop up, all these beliefs that aren't useful, all of these questions, all of the, "Oh, but what about this thing?" and then "What about this thing over here?" all the ADHD bouncing around, just going from kind of thing to thing.

But when I'm really just focused on her business, I can't do that because I don't know everything about her business. All I know is the goal of why we're there and what we're implementing today. And I would literally just get to work making it happen.

And it gave me such a good perspective on, wait a minute, what would it look like to just do this in my own business? Like what would be different if I did that instead of the stress, the anxiety, the things that sometimes pop up, not every day, of course, but when I have something big happening or when something's not working. And it was so fun that when I got back, I just thought, "I have to share this with you because it just feels really important."

The other thing that happened that was very similar is that when she had doubts, when she would say, "I'm just really worried they're not loving it," or "I just," you know, whatever she would say, small little doubts that we would obviously get her right out of, but I just noticed my thoughts were, "What, that's so silly. Of course that's not true." Whereas, of course, when I'm in my own head thinking about my own things, it doesn't feel so clear that the thoughts aren't true, which of course, is always where the coaching comes in.

So let's dig into this a little more, what that could look like for you inside community when you find a great community. Oftentimes, I encourage my clients to help each other, right, to help each other find clarity, to help each other do some peer coaching, to just show up for each other.

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And one reason, not only is it kind, and it's what kind of makes a community a community and all of that. But one major, major reason that I emphasize this in my spaces is because I know that when you spend time thinking about someone else's business or their problems or whatever, maybe it's not their business, but whatever it is they have going on, it can really give you some perspective for your own stuff.

Right, like, "Oh, if it's so easy for me to believe this over here, let me see how that thought can translate back into my own business." Or, "If it's so easy to help me talk my peer through a business plan or through their next launch or through how to sign a client or through this thing that came up in a coaching session. If it's so easy to do with them, how can I do that for myself?"

Plus, of course, when you're brainstorming and interacting with someone else, you're going to also get some amazing ideas for yourself, for your business, for your coaching. It can really help you step outside of the overthinking and overcomplicating spiral.

That's my favorite spiral, by the way. And by favorite, I mean the one my brain loves the most. We're just going to overthink, and then the overthinking creates overcomplicating. And then the overcomplicating means now we have more problems to solve, so we're going to overthink some more. Now, over the years, I've obviously gotten better at not doing it or catching myself when I do. But I still do love to go there from time to time.

It's such an underrated benefit of community in general. Right, like just showing up for someone else, not only does it help in all the ways I just said, but it also gives you little dopamine hits that are good for you, right? It helps you feel good, like, "I just helped someone." It helps you stay in that energy. Especially if you're brand new, maybe you don't have any clients or many clients, and you're like, "Okay, what am I supposed to do? I'm just sitting around all day, working on my business, do, do, do."

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It can give you that time to get out of your own head and to share things with someone else and to help someone else. And it'll just give you that boost that you're looking for that will benefit your own coaching practice in so many ways.

All right, number four. It will give you opportunities to practice, right, real life practice. So, in my communities, I encourage practicing coaching with each other or trying new things, right? Offering, "Hey, I want to try this new thing. Would anyone love to be my volunteer?" Now, I don't let people sell to each other in my communities. I mean, they can, they just can't do it - I can't regulate if they're selling to each other. But they can't do it like in the community on the page in the, you know, in the group.

And one of the reasons that I don't want them to do that is because I want it to be such a safe space to try things, be open to getting feedback, to refining their approach to business, to coaching, to all of it. It also helps you with real-time learning versus theoretical learning, right?

So for example, in the membership we're currently building, there will be learning, right? There will be modules, there will be things that you can consume. And I know some of you love to do that and you can buffer with that a little bit and you might go and consume, consume, consume because everything else is a little scary. But the next step from that could be practicing with someone. Someone who kind of knows like you're just learning and that's okay. That's where we all are. We're all just learning something.

When it comes to coaching skills specifically, you've probably heard me talk about this before, but I like to think about it like supervision, which is like if you are a therapist or you are in clinical practice, you know, a psychologist, something like that.

Oftentimes, they will come together and have conversations about their clients and kind of like, "Okay, not breaking confidentiality, but kind of saying, 'Okay, I have this client, this thing happened in session, I'm not

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exactly sure what to do," or "I didn't, here's where I went with it. What do you think? Would you have done something else?"

And I think with coaching, that can be so useful too. Right, to just get together to have those conversations with no shame, no like, "Oh, I did it wrong," but just like a, "Hey, here's what happened," or "Here's the thing that I wasn't quite sure how to handle."

And of course, I do this in coaching sessions as well, right, like I run The Coach Lab, and that's literally what we're doing all the time. And clients are always bringing things like that, and I'm always helping them. But it can be very useful. I'm not the end-all be-all of coach knowledge, obviously, right? There are so many things, so many different perspectives and different coaching approaches that people bring that might be useful for you to hear, something that maybe I don't even know, I wouldn't even think to say to you.

The next thing is, you just don't have to figure it out alone. Right, just having that thought, "I know I'm not alone. I know I'm not figuring it out alone." It kind of gets rid of the, "I should already know this," pressure. I hear this from my clients all the time. "Well, I should already know how to do this." I'm like, "Really? Why? You've never done it before. Why should you already know? That doesn't make sense."

Additionally, in so many communities, there's probably someone who's already navigated the thing that you're facing, right, the thing that's feeling hard, the thing that is really has you in it or feeling heavy. There's probably someone who's going to do two things. One, validate, "Yep, you're human. Here we are. I've been there before, totally get it," which alone can just relieve some of the pressure.

But then also, possibly help you navigate it. Right, if they've been there, done that, or at least at the very least, maybe tell you, "Well, I don't know the exact right approach, but here are some things I've tried. Maybe these will help you." Or, "Here are some things I've tried. Here's what didn't really work, but maybe you hear something in those, you know, in that list of

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things, it's like, 'ooh, wait, that prompted me to have another idea, another thought.'" Or like, "Oh, that didn't really help work for you, but maybe it would for me. It makes more sense for my niche, my positioning," whatever.

Oftentimes, when you're part of a community, also, your questions just get answered faster. Right, if it's just me, only me, one human, Lindsay, coaching all the people in my programs, it's going to take me a while to get to everyone. But when there's a community, sometimes, by the time I get to it, I'm like, "Look at these amazing responses. Look at these amazing answers."

Oftentimes, I'll still add something if I see like, "Ooh, here's a thought that no one else shared," or like, "Here's something I've tried before," or "Here's a question I have." But oftentimes, I'm pretty impressed with all the responses and with kind of all the nuance that gets pulled out in that situation.

I always say like full permission in all of my communities to just believe that asking for help makes you smarter, not weaker. Asking for help is a superpower that will help you move faster, help you get out of where you're stuck faster. I have decided my energy, kind of my branding, my part of my brand is like, you can always sit with us. You are welcome. You can sit with us. You belong.

And I think that that is kind of what I'm referencing here. It's like you never have to figure it out alone, whether it's with me, with someone else in a different community. Just know that hopefully, whatever community you are in, that you do have that feeling. Right? That like, "I can show up here. I do not have to figure it out alone. It's okay for me to ask for help or for me to show that I don't know some things. That's always okay."

Okay, those were my top five, but I also have a bonus one because somehow it feels like not as serious or not as important, but also, at least in my experience, one of the most important parts, which is funny.

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The last one, number six, is you might just find your people, like your real friends. I have friends and colleagues from communities that I have different coaching spaces and other spaces that I've been in.

Right, you can apply this literally to any type of community. It doesn't have to be a coaching community. But I have friends that I have found over the years of being an entrepreneur that feel like the people I'm closest to, like outside of my family, that feel like the people I am closest to because we have so much in common.

And what's really fun is they're like all over the world. Not just in my city, not even in my state, not even just in my country, but all over the world, which is so fun. And every time I'm with them, especially in person, I just have this feeling that's like, "Oh my gosh, you're my people. I need more of you all of the time."

Some of my very, very closest friends have come from communities that I've been in, and all different ones. I know I've referenced some that I've been in on this podcast before, so you might know those, but I've been in many a community, whether it is, you know, for my business, to learn coaching, certifications, but I've been in other coaching communities as well that have nothing to do with my business.

And I'm telling you, I have found some of my real, real people. And people who understand how weird the entrepreneur journey is, how all over the place it can be, how you can be on top of the world one day and then like on the floor, devastated the next day. That's dramatic, but sometimes that's how it feels. Right, so that one? That's a bonus, but it's like the cherry on top, but also, in my experience, has been one of the most important things.

And I just want you to consider, no matter who you are, no matter your personality, no matter if you're an introvert or not, this can be for you too. Because I see it happen all the time in my communities. People often say, for pretty much every offer I run, I often send feedback forms after, just like a few questions that my clients answer, and I love reading their answers.

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And one of the things that always lights me up, so one of the answers I get the most often, depending on, well, not even depending on the offer, really across all of the offers, when I ask what was your favorite part, often, one of the answers is the community. Sometimes people say, "I have found my people here," or "I'm leaving with friends that I ne - I didn't even know I needed."

And that seriously warms my heart more than anything else because you've heard me talk about this in previous episodes that I've done with some of the people that I've become so close with. It is one of the most important things when it comes to building my business, literally. Like, I don't know what I would do without some of them.

And not that it's guaranteed or that it's going to be like you're always in every community going to find your forever, forever, forever BFF. That's not a thing. I've been in some communities where I've honestly kind of felt like these aren't really my people, and that's okay. It's just not for me. Right, obviously, I didn't walk away from those communities with the best friend, the lifelong colleagues, friends. But for the most part, in many communities I've been in, that is a result that I have created.

And if you're like, "How do I do that?" The very first thing I would say is go into it thinking, "I'm here to find some of these people. I'm here to find my people." And like I said a second ago, like full permission to also sometimes say, "Okay, these are definitely not my people. Let me try again. Let me find a different community," right? Like that's okay.

So, like I mentioned at the beginning, this community feature is going to be one of I think the most exciting things about my new membership that by the way is launching very soon. I have no call to action for you right now. I have no button for you to click. I just need you to know what's coming because I want you to be ready. I'm also going to have a founding members offer, just like I did when I sold The Coach Lab, and it's going to be great and going to be short-lived. So keep paying attention.

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If you're not on my email list, maybe consider doing that. If you go find me, the quickest way is to find me on Instagram @lindsaydotzlaf. And if you click the link in bio, there will be options where you can join my email list because you do not want to miss this launch. I promise you. You are going to want to be part of this community. If you like this podcast, if you like the podcast, if you like me, if you like following me, then I promise you will love my communities.

And there's going to be a very cool link between this podcast and the membership, which I cannot wait to announce. There will be a very big reveal coming soon and an episode coming very soon where I will tell you all the details and all the changes and everything that's coming. And it's really hard for me to not spill it all right here because I am so, so excited.

Okay? So, I will be talking more about kind of how to know when a community is right for you, how to find your people, all of that. But today, I just really wanted to let you in on why I think community is so important for your business and for you and your mental health. All right? Thank you so much for being here, and I will talk again soon.

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