

Ep #90: The Reality of Group Coaching and Masterminds



Full Episode Transcript

With Your Host

Lindsay Dotzlaf

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Hi, this is Lindsay Dotzlaf and you are listening to *Mastering Coaching Skills* episode 90.

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 today. The first thing I want to tell you before we dive in is, we are on episode 90, it's what I'm recording today. And I just want to put a plug here at the beginning of the episode that for episode 100, or possibly two episodes depending on how many questions I get, I'm going to repeat what I did for episode 50, which is answer any questions that you have.

So I am going to put some posts on Instagram asking you what questions you have. But you can also email me, actually email my business manager Aqeelah at lindsaydotzlafcoaching@gmail.com with any questions you have, just title it podcast question, and I will answer as many as I possibly can.

They can be questions about my life, about my business, about coaching, about really anything. I am a pretty open book, I can't really say that there are any topics that would be off limits, although I'm sure we could probably find some. But any questions you have, literally any about anything, I will answer them.

So what I want to talk to you about today, as I'm recording this I am in the middle of a launch for the ninth round, the ninth of my mastermind, Coaching Masters. You have heard me talk about that mastermind on here, on the podcast. And I'm currently launching the ninth round which is so fun.

So I thought it could be fun to record an episode of the top things that I've learned from the last eight times I've run the mastermind. So this is going to be specifically for, I'm going to be specifically talking about group coaching

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or a mastermind experience. Which my mastermind has been anywhere from about 10 to 20-ish clients at a time. So that's the type of container that I am talking about.

And before that I had coached one on one for several years and only worked with one on one clients. So I'm going to talk a little bit about the differences and then just all the fun things that I've learned over the last eight launches. And I think there will be takeaways here no matter what type of coach you are right now.

So even if you only have one on one clients and you're like, I don't have a mastermind or I don't have a group, no problem, you're still going to learn from this. If you think you have groups coming up in your future, this is definitely for you.

And I'm also going to talk about a few things that if you are running groups now and you're having any drama about them, this might normalize some of the things that you see happening if maybe you haven't run it as many times as I have so you haven't seen these things happen or not happen over and over. So I'm just going to give you kind of some things that you can compare. So if you're going through some of this you can say, oh yeah, Lindsay said this is totally normal, it's not a problem.

One of the biggest things that I really worked on early on when I very first launched this mastermind and ran this mastermind is my thoughts about one on one coaching being better than group coaching. I know that some of you don't share those thoughts because you've told me, but I really did.

And, of course, I had spent the last, I forget three years, four years, whatever, coaching one on one and just getting really close with my clients and just being all up in their business, coaching them on everything and anything. And I loved that, right? And I sold myself so hard on why this is the best experience for them. And it is, it's an incredible experience.

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And so when I went, I knew it was time to transition into some sort of group setting because I was coaching on kind of the same things over and over and over. I also just really had, like in my heart was like all I want to talk about is coaching skills and coaching mastery. And I wanted to kind of transition out of coaching on all the things.

Side note here, of course now a couple years later I'm like, it could really be fun to coach on all the things. So there's not a better or worse, right? It's always better somewhere else. But one of the things that I really worked on so much is that group coaching is equally as amazing as one on one coaching. And, of course, two years later, now that I'm on the other side, I'm like, oh my gosh, group coaching is so much better than one on one coaching.

Now, neither is true, right? The only reason I feel like that right in this moment is because that's all I've been doing for the last couple of years and it's where all my attention, all of my love and everything has gone. So I want to be very clear, neither is better.

But the biggest thing that I want to share with you that I had to kind of convince myself of at first, and now as I'm headed into my ninth round I know to be truly, truly a thing and real is that group coaching is not a downgraded version of one on one coaching. Your clients get so many things, my clients get so many things out of being in a group that they wouldn't get in a one on one setting.

They get access to a group's thoughts, right? They get access to coaching, like listening to someone else get coached and it might be something that they really needed to be coached on and they didn't even have awareness that it was happening for them. And I could just go on and on and on. But the main thing I want you to take away from that is just that it is not a downgraded version of one on one, there are pluses and minuses to both. In some ways I do believe that group is so much better.

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Now, I have to say also it does depend on your niche. I think I talked a little bit about this in the episode where I talked about all the different styles of coaching. But I do think it depends a little bit on your niche. I think groups can be very different depending on what your niche is, who you coach, how you coach them, all of that, and what you kind of include in your coaching and what you don't.

So to go along with this, the next thing that I learned and truly believe at this point is that smaller isn't better. So the very first round that I did of Coaching Masters, my very first Coaching Masters round, which still, of course, like your first is always like I still just love them so much. I think we had 10 people in that round, or there may have actually been nine. Somewhere between nine and 11, we'll go with that.

And I just thought that that was the best, like that is like the sweet spot. And it's great, there's nothing wrong with having that number. But what I've noticed as I've run all these different rounds is that I actually really prefer the energy of the room with about 15 to 20 people.

Everyone still gets coaching, I never have people wanting coached that don't get coached. And it also still makes the room feel very full and very alive, even when there are a couple of people missing. And it just adds a lot of personality and a lot of liveliness to the calls and to the group, right? And there's a lot bigger chance that everyone in the group, their needs are going to be met, especially with peer coaching, right?

The more people in the group, because I do offer some peer coaching, or suggest that they do some peer coaching and we have a structure for that. But there's just a much bigger chance that there's going to be someone in the group that you really resonate with, that you love to be in community with, that you want to be friends with, that you want to be coached by. All of those different things are covered. So smaller isn't better.

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The next thing, and I, again, mentioned this a little bit when I was talking about the different styles of coaching a couple of episodes ago, but it is definitely not less work than one on one, at least in the beginning. You just are doing a different type of work.

So when I was a one on one coach I was spending hour upon hour coaching clients. I would coach a client for 45 minutes to an hour, and then have a couple of minutes in between and then get right back on the phone or on Zoom with my next client, and then a couple of minutes in between and then get on the next call. And I would just do that all day.

And of course I do, you know, when I had 20 clients or at some point I think I had like 22 clients maybe, my schedule isn't that full with the mastermind, especially now. But in the beginning it did surprise me how much work it took.

And I was just spending time doing different work. I was learning how to sell it, I was learning how to talk about it. But I was also just preparing for the calls and preparing for what are we going to do this week. I was preparing up front, I was creating a workbook right. So it's like the work was just different, just a different type of work.

Now, I will say as you go it definitely becomes less work over time because, at least if you're doing it like I do. Which is having the same offer and offering the same thing over and over with, of course, small tweaks, which I'm going to get to.

It does become less work because you don't have to do as much preparation and you don't have to do as much planning and you're not spending as much time outside of the call. But it definitely is still a lot more work than just that one hour every week. Or, you know, however long the actual group call is.

The next thing is I think I've been very surprised by how much I've learned personally every round. So just like, I've actually talked about it on this

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podcast that I teach an evaluation process. I teach that in the Coach Lab, first of all, I taught it here, I think, on the podcast, right? But I teach it in the Coach Lab and then we work on it even more extensively in Coaching Masters.

And so, of course, because I teach that I also use that after each round of my mastermind that I run. So every time I go through that, I'm really looking at like what went really well this round, what could have been better, and what do I want to do differently next time? And I never skip that. I think it's one of the most important things that I can do because it gives me so much guidance moving forward.

I'm actually about to do one right now as I'm finishing up the eighth round of my mastermind. And I'm always surprised because I'm coaching on, you know, kind of running the same mastermind over and over, I'm so surprised by all of the learning that I get from each round. And every round is a little different.

The next thing is, which might surprise you, I am always, always, always doesn't matter, no exceptions, always nervous for the first call. Every single time. And sometimes I'm nervous for the first couple of calls. Now, of course, once I get in there and I get really like settled into it, I do become a little less nervous.

But it used to surprise me how nervous I would get and now I'm just at a point where it's like, okay, this is the first call, I feel nervous. I put my hand on my heart, take a few deep breaths. All right, let's go. And there's just something about that first day. Which the way I enroll people into the mastermind is I don't do consults or sales calls and people are filling out an application.

And for the most part, most of the interaction that I have with them is through email. So if I don't know the client, a lot of times I have clients that I know are repeating clients, but the ones that I don't know, it's like, literally

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it's like I'm walking into a room of a bunch of people that I don't know for the first time.

I'm not nervous about the coaching. I'm just nervous, you know, just all the normal thoughts, what are they going to think of me? How am I going to do? Am I going to remember to go over everything I want to go over on this first call? Are they going to hate me? Am I going to make sense? Am I going to freeze? Just, you know, all the thoughts.

So I do just want to normalize that for you, that if you feel nervous and if you're like, "When is this going to go away?" It's totally fine, I still feel nervous too. And I have to say, it's funny, because in the Coach Lab I also do my calls on Zoom where everyone can see me. Like I don't do it webinar style like some programs.

At least at this point, during this recording, I don't do my calls webinar style. I do them like regular Zoom calls so I can see everyone and I love seeing their faces. But I get a little nervous every single week for the first like 30 seconds and then it's gone.

I do want to apologize, by the way, I am just a little hoarse. I don't know what's up with that. Just something that comes and goes, my allergies have been really terrible, so I'm guessing that that's probably why.

The next thing that I have noticed in groups is how contagious emotions can be. And I wanted, I debated should I put this in there, should I not? But I really want to normalize this in case you notice it ever happening to you because I have clients who come to me for coaching on this type of thing that are like, "I noticed this thing is happening in my mastermind, what do I do about it?"

So the first thing is, I think, to normalize it and to realize that emotions in groups can be contagious. So let's say in my mastermind maybe I'm teaching something and for whatever reason, whatever it is, let's say a couple people get very confused about it or very overwhelmed.

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I couldn't think of actually a specific example. And I didn't want anyone to think that I was calling them out. So I'm just going to say I'm teaching something, people get confused or are overwhelmed by it or they don't know how to apply it to their business. And next thing you know, like the whole room is feeling the same, right?

So if this is happening to you, just know it's totally normal. And instead of, like what I see a lot of people do is just kind of ignore it and just like, okay, we're just going to pretend like this is happening because I don't know how to handle it. I don't know what to do.

My suggestion for you is to just face it head on and to just say, okay, I see some of you are confused. Let's talk about this today. I've set the whole call aside today to really dive into this. Tell me what you're confused about, we're going to coach on it, I'm going to help you, we're all going to make it out together.

So that's the other good thing, right? Is that like if a negative emotion is contagious, positive emotions are also contagious. So it always feels like if one person, two people, three people are like winning and celebrating and all of that all the time, that can also be contagious. It helps other people look for, oh, what are my wins? What are my celebrations?

So although it can sometimes feel a little for straining when you have a whole group of people who's feeling, you know, confused or whatever the negative emotion is, it's equally as fun when you have the opposite. So just know that, just don't be afraid of it if this happens to you.

Trust me, I've tried all the ways of handling it and the best possible advice I can give you is just to face it and say like, oh, hey, I've noticed this, let's just talk about it. Let's get it out here in the air and coach on it, right? That's what we're here for. This is coaching.

And then the last one I want to share is that each round of the mastermind, and this is probably my biggest, craziest thing. Each round, every single

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round has its own distinct personality, which is really interesting because I have clients that repeat.

And so even sometimes when a few, let's say a handful of the same clients are in one mastermind. And then that handful is in the next mastermind, but there is now like a new mix of clients, that round of Coaching Masters itself will have its own unique personality.

The first couple times that I ran the mastermind I was so confused by this. I thought something had gone very wrong. I did not understand. Like the first round, my very first round it was a lot of clients who had already worked with me. So I knew them pretty well and going in I just knew, I felt pretty comfortable.

But then the next round, I overlapped them, so I sold them every quarter but they were six months long. So I always used to, I don't anymore, I used to always have two groups going at the same time. And so that second round, none of the people from the first round could join, right?

So it was all different people and it was all clients that I didn't know, which was amazing. But it was such a different vibe. And it was so noticeable, especially because I had the two groups going. So like one group was on Tuesday, the next group was on Wednesday. And it was just so noticeable how different. Not bad, like neither was better or worse, just so different.

And then the third round I ran I noticed, oh, that's crazy, it's like it's happening again, they're so different. And now I will tell you after eight rounds, every single round has had a different just group personality. It is very interesting. And I really, really wanted to tell you this because if you see this happening, I don't want you to panic like I kind of did at first, right?

I thought with that second, and even a little bit with the third round, I thought something has gone wrong, like what? Not because it was bad, but because it was just so different and I thought it was because I wasn't doing a good job teaching them or coaching them.

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Turns out, that wasn't true and we all got, you know, it all worked out perfectly. But I just really want to share this so that if, again, if this is happening to you, we can just normalize it a little bit. And now sometimes I just talk about it. Like the round that I'm ending with right now, I love them all so much and they're just very quiet. It's really interesting.

I'll teach something, I'll ask for coaching. And sometimes I'll have to like just sit there in silence for a little bit. I'm just like, okay, well, we're just going to sit here till someone wants coaching. And so, you know, it's just interesting.

Now, after I do that, of course, like three of them all raise their hand at the same time, we get right to the coaching, we move on, it's perfect. But it's just very interesting how quiet they are when that hasn't been my experience in the past.

The last thing that I want to share, I know already said the last, but for real this is the last one, is that every round gets better and better because of the evaluating, because of the tweaking and learning that I do every time. Every round gets better and better, but it doesn't mean that this round that I'm in right now is actually any better as far as the takeaways and the amazing moments that the clients have had.

I just think the delivery gets better. I get more succinct. I understand better what we're doing, which means they understand better what we're doing. And it's just so fun to hear people who I've worked with in some of the very first rounds, for them to still tell me, oh my gosh, I learned this in Coaching Masters or I took this away from Coaching Masters.

And it's so funny because it feels like it's evolved so much at this point, but hearing them tell me what their takeaways were from that first round or second or the third round, it's so fun because I'm like, oh yeah, they're like the same. I'm just better at delivering it now.

So just know that if you are going into a group now, if you're starting your first group or your first mastermind, or if you're in one of your first rounds,

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and you're like ah, this feels hard, does it get easier? Yes, it gets easier. Yes, you get better at delivering it. But the clients that you are working with right now or that you will be working with in that first round, they're still going to get exactly what they need out of working with you. Because that's what clients do.

All right, that is it. That's all I have for you today. Thank you so much and I will talk to you next week. Bye.

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