

Ep #187: When Saying 'Nope' Feels Bad



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 187.

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 am excited to deliver this episode to you and I hope that it's just super useful for you. I'm going to give you kind of a different spin on something I've talked about already and I'm going to give you just kind of an opposite way to think about.

So two episodes ago, episode I believe 185, I presented a question to you, right? I asked, what are you willing to do? It was to you, it was something you could use with your clients, it was just kind of bringing awareness, a question you can use to bring awareness to like if I'm doing the same things over and over and I'm not creating the results I want, what am I willing to do? What am I willing to try?

This episode, and if you haven't listened, go listen to that. But you don't have to listen to it to listen to this. They are similar, they're going to be linked, but it is not a prerequisite, you don't have to hear that first to understand what I'm going to talk about today.

So in today's episode I'm going to present the opposite, what am I not willing to do? We're going to think about that. And I'm going to approach it from a couple of different angles. The first one is just really what are some things that you're not willing to do?

And again, actually I should say this before I dive into all the ways we're going to approach this today. This is for you, right? It might be something you need to hear. I got a lot of messages from a lot of you about episode 185 where you said, oh my gosh, that's the exact thing I needed to hear.

So this episode might be for you, but it also, as usual, as almost everything I teach, you can turn it around and say how is this something I could use

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with my clients? How is this something I could explore with my coaching clients?

So we're going to approach it from examining maybe some things. I'm going to give you some personal examples of some things that I am just like, no, I'm not willing to do that and I don't really budge on it and it just feels super clear. And then maybe some things that I used to say I'm not willing to do that I've changed my stance on, and give you some personal examples.

And also thinking about when you are thinking, no, I'm not doing that, I want you to learn to follow that with but if I want the result that I think I will get from that, what am I willing to do? I think that's the piece that a lot of people don't explore, right? You might have thoughts that are like, oh, like I see this with coaches a lot.

I'll give some very specific examples in a little bit, but I see this with coaches where they'll come to me and say, oh, well, I heard I should be doing this, this, this, but I just don't do that. I'm not going to do that. And I'm like, okay. First of all, you don't know me very well because my approach is always, oh, I mean, I'm here to help you figure out your way. I'm never going to tell you to do something you don't want to do. Totally fine.

And also why does it bother you, right? Like when coaches say it with a very, and I'm sure you've heard this maybe with your clients, when it's almost like, no, oh no, like I'm absolutely – Like, they're a little defensive about it, right? I'm absolutely not willing to do that.

Usually the reason for that is because, so if you've ever done that with something it's because you want the result that it's offering, right? But you've heard, well, here's one way that you can create that result, and in your mind you're like, well, I'm not doing it that way. And there kind of becomes like, like, well, I'm taking the high ground. Sometimes it can be like a moral superiority situation, right? Where it's just like a righteousness of like, oh, I don't do it that way.

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But the only reason it usually feels bad is because you've heard like, here's a solution and in the back of your mind you're like, I want the result that that solution offers. And there's something about that strategy that I keep hearing that I am opposed to, that I'm just like against.

Okay, so let's go through a couple examples. So sometimes you might just have things that you're like, you know what? I'm just not willing to do that. That's just not on the list. I have a few things and most of these aren't 100% for me, but I'll just give you some small examples. And you've heard me talk about some of these before.

I'm not willing to do meetings early in the morning. Even when I was a brand new coach, I did not ever do client sessions first thing in the morning. Even if a client was like, I have to work, can we do it before I go to work? My answer was no. It was just so clear to me because, first, just at the time when I was a new coach I had little kids and that was just a hectic time.

I didn't have backup at the time. I wasn't making enough money to hire someone to come help in the mornings. My husband was usually getting up and going to work at the time. And maybe I had to take my kids to preschool or whatever it was, right? It was just like, there's too much going on and I don't have a good alternative.

And I was also very clear that that's just not my best time to be coaching. Like my brain is not totally on. It's a disservice to my clients. It's a disservice to me. I'm not going to enjoy it, but also my clients aren't going to get the best coaching. So I still have that rule now, I don't do early meetings, whether that's coaching, whether it's meeting with someone.

But of course I'll make exceptions, right? I am currently working with a contractor who lives in Australia. And obviously I'm on Eastern time in the United States, he is in Australia. We meet once a month, totally fine. I'll make it work, right? I'm not ridiculous. I'm not going to say like, no, I will only meet, like I chose to hire you, but I'm only going to meet at noon my time, which is like the middle of the night your time.

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No, that's an exception, right? And that's very clear. I love the reasons and I love the reasons that I don't usually do things first thing in the morning. Of course, there could be opportunities that could come up that it's like I have no control over the timing of, right? And I just get to decide, am I willing?

It's like an early morning flight. This is my nightmare. I'm not an anxious traveler. I love to travel, but I always get anxious the day before. I have tried to solve this many times in many different ways. And now I'm just like, oh, this is just part of how it goes. It's just part of my process.

I get anxious. I think I have 1 million things to do. Even if I've kind of packed ahead of time, it is like a, I can't control it. I still have to go through, make sure everything is packed, go through, redo everything. I might as well be packing at the last minute every time.

And I don't sleep well. And so then you add an early flight, something super early that I have to wake up for, now it's like, okay, if that's the case, because I don't always have control over it, right? Sometimes it's like, if I want the result of this, maybe let's say vacation or traveling to this place that's far away, lots of times the only option is a very early flight, right?

So then I just, I'm like, okay, well, I'm going to sleep terribly the night before. We're just going to assume that. Yes, I can try to go to bed early. It's probably not going to work. Just know that ahead of time. It just is like, okay, this is just how it's going to go, right? But it becomes a clear decision. Of course I want the result. Of course I'm going to do the thing. No problem. That's like one silly example.

Another example is a trend that's very popular right now is cold plunging or getting in some type of cold water in the mornings. I don't know when this was, but over the last year at some point I was traveling. I was with a friend, a friend and a colleague. And she was like, hey, this hotel has a cold plunge in the spa. And I was like, oh, no thank you. That's not for me.

And she was like, wait, what? You don't even want to try it? And I was like, no, it's not for me. I have no interest. And she was like, oh my gosh, do you know the benefits? And she started, and I was like, listen, yes, I know all

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the benefits. I've heard all the podcasts. I've heard all the health people talking about it. I've heard coaches talking about it. I've heard the early morning schedule gurus talking about it. I know lots of reasons that it's very good for you, and still no thank you. It's just no, no.

And what's funny is she said, but have you ever been in freezing water? Like it really does feel very good. And I was like, actually I have. I do know what it feels like. I have done a polar bear plunge years ago, which is like on New Year's day when you, at least where I live, it's where you cut ice, literally cut ice like off a lake and you run and you get in the freezing cold water and then you get out.

Yeah, it was fun. Great. I've been in freezing cold lakes or like glacier lakes while backpacking. I've been in them naked even, right? Like just to rinse off while backpacking or just for fun, whatever, when there's ice all around and you're up in the mountains. But to me, those are very different. Those are like, there's an experience behind it, right? I chose in the moment, yes, this is a result that I want. I'm willing to do this thing.

But for the most part, am I willing to wake up every day and get immediately into cold water? At this point, no. One reason is, and here's what I will invite you to do when you have stuff like this. I want you to explore, what are the reasons? And be very honest, right? One reason that's just like a silly reason is like, oh, that just sounds so uncomfortable. No, thank you.

But I also have a specific reason that does make a lot more sense, which is I have a tumor in my thumb. It is called a glomus tumor, you may have heard me say this before. And it is extremely sensitive to temperature change. It's benign, right? Like it's not the type of tumor we worry about. I even had it removed at one point and it has now come back.

And if you've never had one, I don't even know how to describe the pain that sometimes I get in my thumb if I just accidentally bump it on something. Some days it's just sensitive, if I brush it against something it will be blinding pain. Like the type of pain that's like, I've gotten sick from it

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before. I've blacked out for a second from it. Like it is pain that I don't even know how to describe.

That pain happens also when I go out in the cold. It's not quite that extreme when I go in the cold because going in the cold is usually gradual, right? I'm usually wearing a coat. Now I just take precautions. I have this electric hand warmer that I always carry with me. I just always have gloves, right? Like I know how to handle it, it's not a problem.

And why in the world would I get in a freezing cold tub when I know that this is the case? Could there be precautions? Maybe, maybe I could just keep my hand out, put like some kind of glove on with a hand warmer, just keep the one hand warm, right? I don't know. But the result at this point isn't strong enough for me to explore it, right? The result it's going to create.

And maybe if I had more information, maybe it would. I've been having neck pain in this very specific place in my neck. There's a lot of, for some reason, inflammation there. One thing I'm considering is cryotherapy, which is similar, right? Now, they can do pointed cryotherapy, which is what I'm looking into now. But there's also like cryotherapy where you just walk into the whole thing and it's like, I don't know, negative something. So that's an example where if I want the result badly enough, maybe I'm willing to do the thing, right?

So for you, I want you to consider, what are you not willing to do? And you might have some like the examples I just gave you, right? That are like, no, this just feels very clear. I love my reasons. There's no real reason like, yeah, I know what results that maybe it would create. And I also just still feel great about opting out of this thing, right?

But then there are things, and this is where I think these are the more interesting things to explore. The times when you think, nope, I'm just not doing that. You don't explore the reasons, or you do have a couple reasons, but they're more just like the reasons that just come to you. You don't explore any deeper, but you still really want the results that it could create.

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So I'll give you an example. This has to do with my coaching business. Years ago I was just like, I'm never doing a webinar. Never, ever. Like just no, it's just a no for me. Absolutely not. This was like, I don't know how many years ago, but it was pre The Coach Lab, pre podcast. It was so clear, so easy to just say, no thank you.

But then when I was like, but I really like the idea of having a bunch of people in one place where I could teach them something or coach them or whatever. But a webinar, ew, no. Webinars are too salesy. I just had thoughts that weren't even necessarily true, and they weren't examined. They were just thoughts.

They're too salesy. I don't like webinars, so why would other people like webinars? Just very unexplored, just these are just the truth of the universe in my mind so that I don't even have to explore the option of doing webinars.

But then over time, the want of the result became big enough that I was like, oh, you know what I could do? If I wasn't so closed off to it, which is what happens when you just tell yourself like, I'm not willing to do this. I'm absolutely not willing to do a webinar. What happens is you just close yourself off to it. You don't consider any possibilities. You don't think about it like, well, maybe I would, and I would just figure out my way of doing it.

You don't consider any of that when you're just closed off to it. But when you start to notice like, okay, but it turns out I really do want that result, maybe you even keep the thought, I'm not willing to do this. But then the question becomes, one, why? And get very clear and truthful. So with the webinar example, there were lots of other reasons that I just didn't want to do it.

It was like, I'll be really nervous. What if no one shows up? There were just fears, right? And it became very easy to just say, ah, they're just too salesy, I don't like webinars. That's way easier than just not examining any of the fears.

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So when you ask yourself why, you find all those reasons, right? And then you can also ask yourself, okay, if your reasons are strong enough and you're like, I really like these reasons, then you just ask yourself, okay, but what am I willing to do if I still want the result?

It's okay to say I am not willing to do this. Absolutely not. I'm never doing a webinar. We'll just stay with that example. It turns out I do them now and I don't hate them. So you can always change your mind. But let's just say I was like, I'm not doing it. And actually I did do this. I was like, I'm still not doing it, but I'm willing to try something else.

So instead I would host open coaching, like an hour of open coaching. And anyone could just come, sign up and just be coached by me. And it was like on Zoom, similar to a webinar or similar to a training or something, but it, in my mind, was totally different.

Now I still recommend doing this. It was great. I loved doing it. Something I teach inside The Coach Lab of like how to use coaching as a business skill, as a business asset. So it's something I teach. I think it's a great idea, but if you're scaling, if your business is growing, at some point that even becomes a little bit like not as effective, right?

But at the time I was like, okay, I still want the result, so what am I willing to do? Like, we will just take that totally off the table. We could use other examples for this, right? If I was like, the results I want is to boost my dopamine, have whatever cold plunges do, I don't even know. I should have looked it up. Like I know they have all the psychological benefits and they have all the physical benefits supposedly, right? They help with inflammation.

Okay, that's a good example. If I was like, okay, I'm not doing a cold plunge to reduce inflammation, but I still want that result. I could start investigating what else reduces inflammation. What's the other thing I'm willing to try? Maybe I try a change in diet. Maybe I try certain exercises. Maybe I get acupuncture. I don't actually know if that reduces inflammation. But I just could do some research. Like how else can I create this result? For any

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single result you want there's almost never one solution. So look for other solutions.

But this is the part where I see a lot of people stopping, is that absolutely not, I'm not willing to do that without finding another solution, right? I've had coaches that will say to me, for example, inside The Coach Lab, I teach a lot of things like, let's find your way, not like here's the one right way. So I don't get a lot of this in The Coach Lab, but what will happen is coaches will come in from other trainings, even specific certifications. And they'll say, actually I had this happen recently.

Someone came in and they were like, I learned at, I don't even remember where it was. It was like ICF, maybe, something. I knew what it was, like one of the bigger coach trainings. And she said something like, I'm not even going to get it right. She said something like, here's the very specific way they taught us to run a session and I hate it. I'm doing it and I hate it every time. And I don't want to do it, right?

And I was like, well, why would you keep doing it that way? And she said, because that's how they said I have to do it. And so I reminded her, you're an entrepreneur. You have your own, because she was, she had her own business, right? And this could be different if she was like working for this place or if she was turning these sessions in because they are going to be evaluating them.

But she wasn't. This was just like her and she's been doing this thing for like two years in her coaching practice that she hates. And she's like, my clients don't like it either. She had all these things. And I was like, what in the world, why are you still doing it? And in her mind, she's like, well, because that's just what they said. And I absolutely, like, she was very upset. She was like, I absolutely don't want to do it.

I'm like, great. Don't ever do that again. Now, what are other solutions? How can we create the same results, right? Like that's the piece. That's the part where a lot of you are getting stuck. I say you, a lot of you listening, also me, this is just a human thing, right? Where you're like, nope, not

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doing that without saying like, okay, but if I still want the result, what am I willing to do? What's the alternative? What am I willing to try? What else could it look like? Right. Like just really exploring that.

And when you have clients who are doing this, who keep coming back with like, nope, I still didn't do the thing, and we're mostly talking at this point about strategies, right? Or actions or trying something, doing something in the world. But you could also frame it as like one interesting question to ask yourself when you are like, no, I'm not doing that, you can say, what is it that I'm not willing to feel?

And if you go back to the episode two weeks ago where I was exploring, like, what are you willing to do? You could reframe that too. What am I willing to feel to create this result? That's always a great question, right? Like a lot of times, if you think about the webinar, right? When I was like, I'm absolutely never doing webinars. There was a feeling I was avoiding.

It wasn't just I'm like morally opposed to webinars, because I hadn't even considered what do I actually like about them? What do I not like about them? And how can I make it my own? I was just like, no, absolutely not. Instead of saying, oh, like what are the things that I think I'll have to be willing to feel in order to host a webinar?

I'm going to have to feel nervous, scared, doubt, right? Like all of that. And when you see those things, you can say, oh, I mean, I've felt all those things before, I could probably feel them again. And you can also ask yourself the question, if you're still not willing to do it, great, but what are the alternatives? And how do I implement those?

Sometimes, and let's frame this for a second as you coaching your clients on this, right? And they're like, no, I just am absolutely like, here's what I've decided. I'm not doing that. I'm not willing to do that. Okay, what are the alternatives? If they still want the result, right? What are the alternatives to still create this result that you want without doing this thing that you don't want to do? Let's list all the alternatives.

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And one of my favorite ways to ask this is like, some of them are going to be really bad, like you're not going to pick those. But that's okay. Let's just get them all out. Let's just come up with every idea we possibly can. Hopefully one's going to be great.

Sometimes what happens when you take your client on that journey or you take yourself on the journey, if you're anything like me and what happened with me and webinars is I was like, ugh, fine, I'll do them. Sometimes what happens is you come back to like, okay, wait, after exploring all of this, I can really see why this thing might be the best option. It might actually be the easiest option. It might be the option that I feel the most comfortable with, right?

But it might just take exploring all the other bad options or all the other options that maybe you also don't want to do to come back to the original one and say, okay, let's try it.

All right, I hope this was helpful. I know I got so much feedback from the other episode about what are you willing to do? And I was just thinking through this for myself, actually. The day that I'm recording this just this morning, I was thinking I had something come up that I was like, okay, well, what am I willing to do to create that result? And the first thing that popped into my mind was something I'm not willing to do.

And I sat with it for a minute and I was like, wait, okay. Am I really not willing to do that? And why? Let's explore it. Do I love my reasons? I did, by the way, and this is something kind of personal, it wasn't like a business thing. It wouldn't be entertaining or make a lot of sense for me to tell you the whole story.

But I did decide like, okay, yeah, I'm still not willing to do that, but I really do want that result. So what are the other options? Let me explore it. Maybe after I explore it, I'm going to come back to the original thing, but maybe not. Maybe I'm going to find something better for me.

I truly believe there is not one right strategy, one right way to do anything. And so just noticing those things, noticing, right, you see this, if you're

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paying attention you might be seeing this sometimes in the coaching industry where there's kind of this arguing about like, you shouldn't be doing it that way, or you should be doing this, or like, that's wrong or whatever.

And what I would encourage you to do is never hire, like if you're a coach and you're thinking about hiring a business coach or hiring any type of coach, don't hire someone if you know they have a strategy that's just totally against the way you want to do it, right?

Like if I was hiring a health coach and I knew from their marketing, like, okay, number one thing I teach, everybody sets up a cold plunge at their house and we do that every morning. Like that's part of my process. I would just be like, oh, that's great, and not for me, right? I wouldn't say like, oh, you are all doing it wrong.

But I do see that's what happens when you don't explore the reasons that you feel strongly that you don't want to do something. It can turn into like, and therefore anyone doing it that way is doing it wrong, which in my mind is really never true. They're just doing it a different way and it's just not a way for you.

Okay, I hope this was super helpful. I can't wait to hear your feedback, how you use this question, how you use it with your clients. And I will talk to you 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 lindsaydotzlafoaching.com. That's Lindsay with an A, D-O-T-Z-L-A-F.com. See you next week.