

Ep #192: The Power of Asking “What Do You Want?”



Full Episode Transcript

With Your Host

Lindsay Dotzlaf

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Hey, this is Lindsay Dotzlaf, and you're listening to *Mastering Coaching Skills*, episode 192.

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 have something short and sweet I want to talk about today. And I think this is going to be a really, hopefully, very powerful episode for you. Even though it's going to be fairly short.

I want to talk today about something that's been coming up for me a lot. It's been coming up a lot with some of my clients. And I think it's one of the most powerful questions we can ask as coaches. That we can ask ourselves. That we can ask our clients. And just in general, that as humans, this question is very powerful in our lives. That question is: What do you want? So simple, right?

But what I've been noticing a lot of lately in myself, this isn't even calling out people in the world, but in myself and in my clients, and with friends and friends who are coaches also, sometimes we forget that the first step of moving forward or taking action on something is really stopping to consider what do we want?

Now, most recently, this came up in my business, where I noticed that I was making decisions based on kind of, “Well, I said I was going to do this thing a long time ago. I committed to it a long time ago. So obviously, I just have to do it.” I wasn't questioning it, but I was really dreading the thing. Doesn't really matter what the thing was. Even if I told you, it wouldn't really make sense.

But it was something that was on my mind all the time. Like, “Ugh, I don't really want to do this. But I said I was going to, so I guess I will.” And what I realized recently... I went on vacation recently. I just had some time away.... one thing I asked myself... I had been thinking about my business

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and then thinking about the structure of it and all the things. And while I was on vacation, it was a perfect time to do that...

During some downtime, when I was just sitting... We were actually on a cruise... I was just sitting on the balcony watching the water by myself early in the morning, thinking, “Okay, I've been in business for almost 10 years. Let's just reevaluate. What do I want? What do I want my business to look like?” All of those things.

It was just really powerful noticing the answers that came to me. Some of the things were exactly what I have right now, what I've created, what I've built. And some of them were surprising. Some of the answers that came to me were things that I have maybe been pushing back for a while, that I've been resisting. That I have been thinking, “Oh, you can't do that. Stay in your lane.” And so, there may be some surprises coming because of this.

But I just think it is such a powerful question. And it's not one that we are used to answering. I want you to start testing this with yourself and with your clients. Just pausing and asking, “Okay, well, what do you want? What's the structure you want? What are the decisions you want to make? What do you want it to look like?” Any version of that.

You could also ask the opposite, right? Like, if you or if your client has a hard time accessing ‘what do you want?’ I think you'll be surprised, just asking that question, how many people have a hard time answering it. Because we're so trained to look outside of ourselves for the answers. But when you start asking that, you'll be surprised how many people just kind of pause and are like, “Oh, I don't know. I hadn't really thought of that.”

I notice this often when I'm talking to coaches about the structure of their coaching, or the way they have set things up. And sometimes it's like, well, that's just how it's been like since the beginning. Which is kind of what I was thinking, right? “Well, that's just how it's been. Obviously, it's just how it's going to keep going.”

But every once in a while, it's really good to just pause and say, “Okay, but in this moment, what do I want? What do you want?” Try it out. See how it

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goes. And again, if you have a hard time accessing that answer, or if your clients do... As a coach, you might be pretty well-versed in answering questions like this. You might be able to sit with it, and sit with the discomfort of the answers taking a minute.

But when you ask your clients, if they are not used to that question and they really struggle with it... and obviously, I wouldn't just ask it like, “Okay, what do you want” with no context. But within the context of whatever it is that you're working on; a new goal, a new whatever. Just asking, “Okay, well, what do you want?”

And if they really have a hard time accessing the answer, you could start with the opposite and say, “Okay, what do you know you don't want?” Sometimes that can really help narrow down ‘what do you want?’

And this is not just for business. I just gave that example because it come up for me recently. But this can be used in any context and with any topic. I actually, on the same vacation a couple of weeks ago, my husband and I got in a little bit of an argument, I guess, disagreement... Argument's a strong word. We don't have a lot of arguments... a little bit of a disagreement.

He actually caught me off guard. Because he just looked at me and said, “Well, what do you want?” And it was so funny. I kind of had to try not to laugh in the moment. Because as a coach, of course, these are the types of questions I ask all the time. And I'm used to asking my clients, but when it was turned around on me in that moment, I really realized that I didn't know what I wanted.

I was kind of upset with him. I don't even remember exactly what the topic was now, but it was a little bit upset with him. It was kind of like, I knew what I didn't want. I was just very irritated at something he was doing, and I was just kind of like, “Okay, well, I don't know. But I know I don't want that.”

It was very powerful. I just took a minute to think about, “Okay, well, what do I want?” And then, when I came back to him with an answer, the path forward was so much more clear. And we didn't even actually disagree

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about it. Right? It was like, “Oh, well, yeah. Okay, we're on the same page. Let's just go. Let's do it.”

And so, I just felt like I had to share this today because it's been coming up so often. And it's so simple, but it's such a powerful question. I want you to try it with your clients. I want you to try it with yourself anytime you feel... Especially if you feel like you're really being influenced by external things, right?

A lot of times we are like, “Oh, well, I read this book, and it said I'm supposed to do this. I saw this ad and it said I'm supposed to build my business organically. But then I heard this other person and it was like, you're supposed to run Facebook ads. And then, I was listening to this podcast, and they said... I was listening to Lindsey and she said this thing.”

It's easy to just hear something and think to yourself, “Okay, that's the answer. Here I go. I'm just going to move forward.” Versus, really pausing and asking yourself, “What do I want? What is the version of this that I want? What do I want this to look like for me? If I silence everything that's happening on the outside...”

And then you can always reintroduce it, right? Let's say, for example, in the example of me having a disagreement with my husband, with my partner, and then coming back and saying, “Okay, I thought about it, and here's what I want.” Now, there is always the chance that what I want isn't a match for what other people want, right? And I might care about that.

So, I might come back and say, “Well, okay, I thought about it. And here's what I want. I know that doesn't really align with what you want,” but that still gives you the starting ground for figuring it out. I think even if you don't go all in on the exact, to a T, thing that you want... Because maybe you're going to compromise. Maybe you're going to talk through other options when other people are involved... it at least gives you the starting point. And gives you the single-person awareness and clarity around what you want.

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First, I just think it's such a good place to start, right? Because otherwise, you'll go into the conversation, or you'll go into making the plan or the strategy, taking the actions not being fully clear on what it is that you want, what you're trying to create, what your version of it is. And it leaves a lot of opportunity for confusion.

And for looking outside of yourself for lots of answers; relying on someone else's opinion. Especially if this has to do with any kind of relationship or any kind of interaction that involves other people, or a decision that involves other people. Sometimes it really is a little unclear what you want and it can be a hard thing to answer.

So, if you come up against that, two solutions. First, ask yourself: What do I not want? I already said that. And then the other thing you can try is, if it just feels very unclear, especially if it's maybe a decision you're trying to make, you can always use the decision-making process. There's a whole podcast episode about that; you can go listen to that.

But even then, if it's still unclear, you can start painting a picture of ‘well, it could look like this, or it could look like this, or maybe I would choose this.’ Just kind of experimenting with what are even all the options. It will help you narrow it down.

And maybe you, the person listening to this, if you are well-versed as a coach, maybe you wouldn't really run into this where it feels very mucky. But when you're working with a client who isn't used to answering this question...

I find this especially with women. I am sure that there are men out there that also have a hard time answering the question, or that just aren't used to thinking about it in these terms. But especially for women, especially for women that were raised to believe they should be part of a family and do what's best for their family and for their kids, and all of that.

Not that that's a bad thing. That can be a great thing. But I think that is a way that we are socialized to think. “Well, it's not always just about us.” We always have to consider all these other people, circumstances, all of that.

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Or consider what will other people think. What will my friends think about this? What will my extended family think about this? All of that is great. That can all come in later, and you can coach on it. You can coach your clients on it.

But really just starting with that question and getting clear around it. What do I want? It's so simple, but very, very powerful. I hope this was helpful to hear today. I can't wait to tell you my “Coming Soon” announcement of a new offer that I've been dreaming up.

Speaking of what do I want, I'm just going all-in on an idea that I've had for a while. That has just been kind of lingering there. That I've been telling myself, “Oh, you're not that kind of coach. You're not really supposed to do that.” I'm going to leave it there, just be super vague about it, because I don't have all the details worked out. This feels very selfish of me to even mention it, but I'm doing it, anyway. So, there we are.

Hopefully, all the details will be worked out by the time I record the next episode, and I can clear it all up for you. But if not, just stay tuned. It's coming soon. Love you, mean it. Talk soon. Goodbye.

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. See you next week.