

Ep #193: 2 Things Nobody Tells You About Failure



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With Your Host

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Hey, this is Lindsay Dotzlaf, and you're listening to *Mastering Coaching Skills*, Episode 193.

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, how's it going? I'm so curious what's going on in your world right now. I am really discovering over the last few weeks... just a little peek into my personal life... I'm really discovering that it is tricky having teenagers; or tweenagers, maybe we should call them; and being home, them being home for the summer.

I'm sure some of you relate to this. But the number of times I'm asked every day, "What are we doing today? What should I do today?" They don't usually say, "I'm bored," I think they kind of know better. But they basically say that just in other forms. They just basically ask me, "What are we doing?"

Not my younger one so much. She's very motivated to go do all of the things, so she's pretty good at finding things for herself to do. My older one is a little bit more of an introvert. And so, I have to kind of remind her to do something besides just being in a room, and do something besides play games on her iPad, or things like that. When she is not in soccer season, she is very like, "Well, what do you mean? What am I supposed to do? What do you have planned for me?"

So, that's what I'm navigating right now. It has been a ride. It has been really great when we do have plans. They are at a really good age right now, as far as they're not quite teenagers but almost. So, they're very cool, like full adults. They're not full adults, but they can have conversations; they can have adult conversations. I just think they're so interesting. I think this age is very fascinating; they are almost 12 and 14.

And I think it's all fascinating. Lots of changes happening, lots of school changes happening this year, and big sports things happening. But on the

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days where there are no plans, like today... which is why it just happens to be on my mind... I mean, we have a list of things that they can do. And I always tell them, "Ask me again, and I'm going to give you stuff to do. You're not going to love it so much." And so, that's just what I'm navigating right now.

But that has nothing to do with what this podcast is about. Today, I want to talk about an interview that I recently did for a colleague of mine, Jasmine, Jasmine Myers. She is a business coach. She has a business called Women of Woo. I really love Jasmine. She's super fun. She's been a business coach for quite a while. Before it was even the coolest thing to be a business coach and everybody wanted to be a business coach.

She asked me to come do an interview. She's interviewing women who have made money in their business, who've had successful businesses, and just ask certain questions. But there was one question in particular that she asked me, that I, of course, answered when she asked and I've just been thinking about it ever since.

Really, when I answered it, I was like, "Gosh, this answer's kind of so cliché," but I've been thinking about it ever since and really like how important the answer is. So, I want to share it with you. This doesn't really have anything to do with business. Although, when I tell you it's going to sound at first like it has everything to do with business.

But then, the reason I'm sharing it with you, and the reason I'm sharing it on this podcast, is to really get you thinking about how to use this in your coaching. And how, really, so much of what we coach on is based on this answer that I'm about to give.

So, one question that she asked me is... Well, she kind of prefaced it with, "Okay, we know there's no secret to business, right? There's no magic wand. There's no just one secret. But if you could tell the listeners a secret to your business, to building your business, what would it be?"

And this is where I was like, "Okay..." I had the questions ahead of time, so I came prepared. I tried to change this answer, because I was like, "People

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are going to hate this answer because it feels a little cliché.” But then the more I thought about it, the more I was like, “No, this is actually a really important answer.”

So, my answer was that you have to be able to fail, but not just fail. Right? Like, that's not it. I think that we hear people say that a lot. And even you hearing me say that right now, you might be like, “Ugh, yeah, I know. I get it. I've heard that so many times, ‘I have to be able to fail.’ ” But I want to dig into actually what that really means and how you can use this concept with your clients, no matter what you're coaching them on. And how it's almost like the basis, I think, of all coaching.

So, for a lot of you listening, you're a coach. A lot of you are entrepreneurs as well, running your own business. And if you've been entrepreneur for a while you know that you have to be willing to fail as a business owner in order to move forward. And the faster you kind of fail and put yourself out there and get it wrong, the faster you're going to grow your business.

You're going to be able to course correct and even get better. Not even just grow your business, but get better at what you do, right? Because you have to be willing to practice and just do the thing, and not nail it the first time, and not be perfect the first time, and keep going anyway.

But there are two very important pieces of this that people sometimes leave out, right? I've heard this answer, of course, just like you have, so many times. You have to be willing to fail, but there are two very important pieces that have to go with the fail. Because when we just say “fail”, what I think some of you might hear, or some of your clients might hear, or some people might hear when you hear that is, “Okay, you have to just fail and then get up, and then fail again and then get up, and fail again.”

Oh, my gosh, I just had this visual. I don't even know what they are, those punching bags that are like... I haven't seen one in so long, but I feel like I had one when I was little. It was like a blow-up kind of animal and it had a weight at the bottom. So, it's kind of like a punching bag, but you could hit it and then it would pop back up. And then you'd hit it, and you could just

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keep hitting it or kicking it, or whatever you were doing with it, and it would just keep popping back up.

I don't know why that just popped into my head. But I think that's what a lot of people picture, right? You just fail, you get back up, you fail, you get back up, fail, get back up. But that's not quite it. And when you're in it, if you're doing it, I'm going to say "right", that's not actually what it feels like either.

What it really means to be able to fail, and what it really means when I say that, when I think about my business and building a coaching practice that is sustainable over time, is that I have to be willing to... if I was going to say "fail" differently... I have to be willing to try things. I have to be willing to get it wrong. And maybe even apologize or course correct later. I have to be willing to say the wrong things. I have to be willing to put myself out there and be made fun of.

I have to be willing for people to not like me, or not like the things that I'm talking about. Not even necessarily not like me, but just to disagree with me, right? So much of what I share on here is opinion, or just opinion over time of what I've learned from my coaching practice and the way I coach.

I have to be willing for people to disagree with me. I have to be willing for things to feel super-duper uncomfortable and do them anyway when I want to. When it's like, "There's a reason I'm doing this. I'm going to keep moving forward."

All of those things are what I mean when I say "fail". Not just have a typo on my sales page. Although, of course, that happens too. Things like that. I think when you're brand new in business, sometimes you think failing means you just didn't get the sale, or you didn't make the amount of money that you thought you were going to make. Or you have typos on your sales page, or you say something silly in a post. Or even just being able to post on social media that you're a coach.

And yes, those can be considered fails; and those are little ones. And as you grow, they just get bigger and bigger and bigger. So, you have to build your tolerance for it. For the discomfort of doing something for the first time

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over and over and over. Obviously, when you're doing something for the first time, over and over, then it's no longer the first time.

But as an entrepreneur, there are so many times that we have to shift, and we have to pivot, and we have to try something different. Even when something was working and now all of a sudden it's not. That's what I mean by fail when I'm talking about business, right? That's how I answered it.

And the other piece of it is not just fail, right? Not like that... I don't know, what are those things called? Not like the punching bag, animal thing, right? Not just pop back up and do it again, pop back up and do it again. But what a lot of people... Like the most important piece, and this is one of the main things I said in this interview...

One of the most important pieces is learning from it. Evaluating before you move forward. It can be easier to just fail like the thing that pops back up... fail-pop back up-fail-pop back up... without putting lots of effort and time into evaluating and really learning from what went wrong. Or what kind of went wrong, or what went a little bit wrong, or what went a lot wrong.

Sometimes it's so much more comfortable... Trust me, I know... and easier to just ignore it and just move on. "Okay, let me just pivot without learning anything and just keep going." But truly, in business, one of the most important steps is to learn from the fail.

Plus, that makes it worth it, right? If you don't learn from it, then don't fail. Don't put yourself out there. Don't do the hard things if you aren't going to learn from them.

Okay, so that was my answer in the interview. But now, I want you to think about that for just coaching in general; coaching yourself and also coaching your clients. When it comes to literally any goal that your clients have, your job as a coach isn't just to give them answers and say, "Okay, here's the right way. Here's a strategy, and if you just do this every time..."

Even if you're a business coach, right? I think, sometimes business coaches think this about themselves, and sometimes coaches tend to think

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this about business coaches. That, “If you're a business coach, you should just have a strategy that works every time.” That's just not true. That is just not what coaching is, and it's literally impossible.

Coaching is a social science, right? Any science that has to do with humans and human behavior, there's going to be so much variability. And so, what we do as coaches, we do our best to say, “Well, here's a strategy that works for me. And here's the strategy I've seen work for other people.”

But really, as coaches, one of our superpowers is... at least the way I coach is... I say, “Okay, here's something I know that works. Here's something else I know that works. Here's a handful of strategies or things I know that work. Now, let's figure out what your best strategy is.”

If you despise social media, your best business strategy maybe isn't to focus all of your attention on creating reels or dancing on Tik Tok, or whatever it is that you think you need to be doing. So, let me come back. That was a little bit of a rabbit hole I think that I just went down.

But really knowing that as a coach, your job, no matter what kind of coach you are, is to help your clients be willing to try the thing. To maybe make a plan, to look at all the thoughts, all the beliefs, everything that's coming up around the plan, and then to move forward knowing that it's okay if they mess up. It's okay if it doesn't work.

Yeah, it might feel bad, but that's where coaching comes in. Right? That's where so much of the magic of coaching comes in. Whether it is having a difficult conversation with someone, your client having a difficult conversation with someone they love, or eating the proper nutrition in order to be effective at lifting the weights that they want to lift, or being able to train for a backpacking trip with their kids.

Literally, anything we coach our clients on. Anything; just being able to feel more confident, or feel more calm, or have less anxiety, all of those things, any of those things. There's no, “Okay, here's the answer, just...” If it was that easy, we wouldn't need coaching. We would just be able to charge people to give them the answer, and just be like, “Ta-da, there's the answer.

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It was a magic trick. Now, go about your life, and you'll never have that issue again.”

But that just isn't how coaching works, right? So, so much of our coaching... I don't care if you're a corporate coach, a relationship coach, a business coach, a weight loss coach, a nutrition coach... whatever kind of coach you are, so much of your work is helping your clients fail and keep moving forward anyway, right?

Fail, make a plan, be willing to get it wrong, be willing to say the wrong things, be willing to not nail the hard conversation, be willing to eat off-plan and come back and still talk about it and get coaching on it, be willing to mess up the conversation with your kids. Whatever it is, anything that you're working on, just being willing to try and then possibly fail, and then come back and learn from it. Right?

That is absolutely the fastest way to move forward every single time. How fast? Can you go try it? And then, learn from it. Try it and then learn from it. It's so much of what I teach, even in The Coach Lab. It's the basis of basically the entire program. Which is, “Here are coaching skills, here are the foundational skills that every coach needs. I'm going to teach them to you, and then you're just going to go try them.” You have to do that. You can practice them.

You can practice in The Coach Lab, you can practice in other places. But no matter what, even if you're practicing, that's still trying, and that's okay. You don't have to practice with paying clients, or being willing to get it wrong with paying clients... Although, honestly, you kind of do as you move forward, because there's always a chance that that's the thing, right?

I even think about that with myself. I'm not a perfect coach, there's always a chance I'm going to get it wrong, that I'm going to not be the best coach one day, I'm going to say the wrong thing to a client, I'm going to upset a client, I'm going to not deliver on something that a client pays me for. But am I willing to try all of those things and correct whatever it is that goes wrong?

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Apologize to the client. Ask a different question. Sit in the discomfort of not knowing what to ask next; that still happens to me. If you're in The Coach Lab, you've seen me do that. Although, I will say it doesn't really feel uncomfortable to me anymore. It used to, but now I'll just say, "Oh, let me think, what do I want to ask next?" If you're in The Coach Lab, you literally see me do that. If you haven't, go watch some more of the coaching recordings, because I do that every once in a while. Right?

I'm just thinking through, "Which direction do we want to go?" Or I'll say, "Which direction would you like to go? There are a couple of different options here. Do we want to go this way, or do we want to go this way?"

So, I hope that this feels really useful. I think that this, although it is kind of a simple concept... kind of similar to last week, right?... Asking, just asking that question, "What do you want?" This is kind of a similar concept. It's simple, but it's not always the easiest. Especially if you're someone who's building your own business or running your own coaching practice.

Think about all the times that it feels hard. This is why. It's just that willingness to do the thing, to fail, to keep going anyway. And then, to learn from it, without shaming yourself, without blaming yourself, without any of that. Just like, "What am I going to learn from this? How am I going to do it next time? How am I going to move forward? What changes am I going to make? What am I going to keep? What did I do a really good job with?"

Alright, I hope this is useful for you. I cannot wait to hear how this goes when you apply it to yourself and to your clients. 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 LindsayDotzlafCoaching.com. See you next week.