

Ep #195: Why You Aren't the Perfect Coach (And That's Okay)



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 195.

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.

Hello, hello. Almost 200 episodes. That feels so fun to me. And if you've been around here a while, one thing you might know is that every 50 episodes I do a Q&A episode where you can send me any of your questions. I will answer them in an episode and you can get me to answer anything you want me to answer.

So we will put the link for that, if you would love to submit a question, we will put the link for that in the show notes. You can find it there, just click on it, submit your question, super easy. It can be anonymous, it can not be anonymous, whatever you want it to be.

And I can't wait to hear your questions, especially if you have listened to all 200 episodes or almost 200 episodes at this point and you're kind of like up on what I'm talking about and what I'm kind of about and whatever, and you have really specific questions that I can help you with. And they can be personal questions too, just questions about me, about my life.

I don't talk a ton about my life, not because it's super secret or anything, but just because it isn't what we're here for, is my thought. I will drop in little nuggets every once in a while. And I love when I see some of you in person or some of you that I know well and you kind of bring up something that I talk about in my life that's a little more personal, I talk about it on the podcast. And you tell me how much you love it and you remember it, which I always find so just exciting and fun.

So I love that connection. I love feeling that connection with listeners. So if you would love to submit any questions, even if they're silly questions or

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whatever, like deep, serious questions, whatever you want, click the link in the show notes and find them.

Also, I owe you a huge apology. I'm like on the verge of laughing while I say this because I did something silly last week. Sometimes I get really excited about new things and I get a little ahead of myself and I say things like, I'm launching a new mastermind and here's what it's all about. And we'll put the link in the show notes.

And then the link isn't actually ready to put in the show notes when the episode comes out. And I forgot to tell my team that I said it on the podcast. And so then a bunch of you start sending me messages because you're looking for the link. I am so sorry. It wasn't ready. And it wasn't, like me saying that it was going to be ready and that it would be in the show notes wasn't really in the launch plan that we had created.

So first of all, I apologize. Second, there should be a link there now and we can also put it in the show notes here. And third, the launch doesn't actually start, I don't actually know exactly when this will come out, but the launch is starting sometime around now. It might be open, especially if you're in The Coach Lab or if you're a previous mastermind client, then it's definitely open for you. We're opening the doors to those people first for just a short period of time and then opening it to everyone.

But we will put a link where you can make sure your name is on the list to get all of the information. And I do apologize it wasn't there last week. My team really loves me. Or at least that's what I tell myself when I make silly mistakes like that. I apologize to them. I apologize to you. But either way, I'm so thrilled that so many of you are excited about it. I can't wait for you to have all the information. I can't wait for you to join me.

I am really, really excited for this new space, for this new mastermind. It is something totally different, like the structure and everything. Having all of it like very planned out ahead of time, everything about it. I mean, I've coached on the topics quite a bit in other spaces, you know, inside some of

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my spaces, in The Coach Lab and the certifications, whatever. Like business always comes up because I don't really think that there's a way to coach on your coaching and on your coaching practice and completely leave all the business stuff out.

But this is the first true business mastermind that I have launched, and I am pretty freaking excited. So if you are too, make sure you're on the list. Even if you're not in The Coach Lab, if you're not a previous client, just make sure you're on the list so that right away when it's available to you, you can get the information.

It is going to be a small room. There's going to be about 10 to 15 spots total and that's it. We won't take anyone after that because it's going to be a pretty high-touch space, which is partially why I'm pretty excited about it because that's just the work I love to do with my clients, at least right now.

And yeah, I just hope that you're there, but you do want to get on the list so you can be sure you know about it when it's ready, because I have no idea. I might be selling it until it starts, or maybe it will fill quickly with just those limited spots. Who knows? Can't wait to see what happens, but I want you to be there if it sounds like a good space for you.

And if you have no idea what I'm talking about, you can go listen to last week's episode. And I do actually plan on doing an episode, it will probably be out next week, that's going to be much more specific about what it is and what we will be covering. And not just in the frame of me selling it to you, but also me kind of walking you through it, telling you how I made the decisions, how I structure the offer for your learning about structuring your offers.

So that's all the excitement happening. Send in your questions, go look for the mastermind link now, if you're looking for it, and whatever that third thing was I just said. I'm in this kind of weird mood today. I'm like, yeah, let's just jump on and talk about this thing real quick. It's going to be super

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powerful. So let's dive into the topic today. That was a long intro with lots of announcements.

What I want to talk about today is a super simple concept, but something that every time I talk about it, it kind of blows people's minds and like changes the way they coach and the permission that they give themselves around how they coach and how they talk about their coaching.

I'm going to ask you a couple of really simple questions and they're simple, but if you allow them to be, they can be very, I think, mind opening for you as a coach and very telling as far as what you're doing now and what you might want to be doing as you continue to talk about your coaching practice.

So my questions are, as a coach, tell me, and you can say it out loud as you're listening or just take a second, pause, and go through it in your mind, what are you really good at? As a coach, what are the specific skills that you're great at?

Now, the opposite of that, as a coach, what are you not so great at? So this might be, when I ask you this, what I mean is, so within your niche, whatever your niche is, what are the topics that you're great at coaching on or that you have really great strategies for, that you love coaching on, you love when your clients bring to you? And then what are the topics that when your clients bring them, you're like, oh, oof, I don't know. Like that's what's happening in your mind is like, I don't know.

Or, oh no, I'm like so in the pool, I can't even think about how to coach on this. Or, you know, just anything that isn't, oh good, let's coach on this, right? Any thought that doesn't take you right to like, great, let's dig in. And you feel good about it as a coach.

Sometimes, some of you think you have to be good at everything. I see this so often and at every level in all of my containers. I see this with brand new coaches. I see it with coaches that have been coaching for a while. I

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actually see it with some of my colleagues who've been, some of them coaching for a very long time. And they think they kind of have to cover the entire gamut of, like, okay, if I'm going to talk about relationships, I have to be able to talk about it from every single angle, every possible type of relationship. Like they think I have to be an expert at all of it.

And I think when you can kind of hone in on what you specifically are great at and what makes you great at it and that you love helping your clients with, that you feel fired up when clients bring it to you. I think that's useful for, well, in so many ways, but obviously it's going to make you a great coach because you're going to be really clear about it.

It's going to make your marketing better because you can speak to all of this in your marketing and you can be open about here's what I love coaching on. Here's what I'm great at. And here's what I'm not. And it can help on your sales pages and it can help just your confidence grow as a coach.

One thing I see happen often is that coaches think when, first of all, you're not clear about it in your marketing, what you're great at or what you love to coach on. And so then your clients come to you with something that is like, it's like not what I do. And a lot of times what happens is that instead of just saying, "Oh gosh, I'm sorry I wasn't clear about that. I don't actually know. I don't have a strategy for that." Right. I think sometimes clients want like, okay, what should I do about this? And they're kind of asking for advice.

And instead of when you know, "Oh, this is a topic I'm really great at coaching on," It's really easy to dig in. But when you don't have that thought and you are immediately like, "Oh no, not this," it's very interesting, what usually happens, what I see happen is the coach's mind goes straight to like, "I have to solve this for them." And they go straight to strategy straight to like, let me tell you what to do.

To me, this is fascinating, right? It's like in the other circumstance where the coach actually really does know what they're doing and they're so good at

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coaching on this thing, usually what they do is go straight to like, oh, let me ask some questions. Let me get curious. Let me dig in. And then in that case, they maybe could have actually given some pretty solid strategy, right?

On the other side, when a coach is like, "Oh no, I don't actually know what to do about this," what's fascinating to me that I've seen, and I've evaluated so much coaching. I've seen so many hours, like hundreds and hundreds of hours, I don't even know, of videos or audio of coaches coaching their clients in my programs.

And it's so fascinating to me when this happens and coaches, I can tell by their voice, they seem a little unsure and they go straight to solving the problem, which is so interesting, right? The thought is like, I have no idea. And then something along the lines of, yeah, we have to solve this. How do we solve it?

Now, I'm not saying, obviously, when you're coaching, like there are times that you're giving strategy. There are times where you're digging into the mindset. Like, there are so many different things you could be doing, right? But just notice, maybe think back to a time when something came up in a coaching session that you didn't really know what to do about or how to coach on. Or you're like, I have no context for this or no strategy for this.

So I'll give you kind of a couple examples and tell you about something I saw recently that kind of prompted my idea for this episode. Okay, so recently something that happened is I am on this email list, mailing list. I got an email from someone that I know talking about her mastermind that she was launching at the time.

Her name is Tarzan Kay. She doesn't know that I'm giving her a shout out right now, but her emails are brilliant. Turns out that's actually what she teaches. She teaches email marketing and doesn't just work with coaches, works with personal brands and course creators, according to her Instagram. I'm just reading what it says on there.

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But she is brilliant. If you don't know who that is, you should definitely check her out. Full disclosure, I don't know her super well. We've just been at a couple of events together and we've had several conversations. Hopefully I'll be having her on the podcast. I'm going to reach out to her and see if she wants to come on and talk a little bit about this.

But I was reading her sales page, which I thought was an incredible sales page and it was for a mastermind. And one thing that she included on the sales page, which I have never seen before, even though I've actually talked about this for a while, like really having a good understanding as a coach of what you're good at and what you're not good at, but I've never seen it just spelled out so plainly.

She had a section that said things I'm great at as your coach or something along those lines. I tried to go back and look at it, but I think she's not selling it right now, so I think I couldn't find it. And then it just listed it. It just said, here are the things I'm great at. And I can't remember if there was a section that was like, and here's what I'm not great at. But if there wasn't, there were definitely, some of that was definitely implied by the list of what she was great at.

And I read it so many times. I was like, this is genius. This is so much of what I teach. And I teach it in a way that's like, as a coach you should just know these things. But this really took my mind to like, oh, and you can really powerfully use it in your marketing.

Now this was very overt, right? This was like, I'm just going to list it. I'm just going to say, here are things I'm great at as a coach and list them out. You can use them in so many different ways. This is actually something that came up in my – I'm actually recording this right after I coached in the short offer I had this summer, the summer project, which I'm loving by the way. If I offer it again, you should definitely join it because it's so fun. The clients in it are incredible. We're having such a good time.

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But one of the things I coached someone on today is she's a business coach and she was talking about kind of differentiating between specifically what she does as a business coach. And so I just asked her, tell me what you're really good at. Tell me, like, who do you like to work with within business, right?

She already knows who she likes to work with, but like to really narrow it down. What do you love coaching on? What do you want to coach on all the time? What are you really great at? And she came up with the most amazing list. She posted it in our Slack community. And so I immediately responded. It was like, oh, all of these are posts, right? Like you can take each of these things that you're saying you're great at and turn them into a post and really own them.

And I want you to think about that for you. Obviously I'm talking about marketing in this situation, but it's also something that comes up in coaching sessions, right? And when deciding if a client is right for you or not. How many times have you said to someone on a consult or a sales call or whatever you call it, when you're having that first connection with someone, have you ever said to someone, "Oh, actually, I'm not great at coaching on that if that's what you're looking for." Because I'll tell you something, I have so many times.

Maybe not those exact words. I have said those exact words, but I've also said things like, "Oh, I mean, I'm going to be really honest, I've never actually done that before. So I don't have a really solid strategy for it. But if you are just looking for me to support you and to do coaching through it, like the mindset piece, the really understanding how to keep going if it doesn't work or what to do next or make decisions around it, any of that, I'm great at all of those things. But I don't have a strategy for this specific thing that you want help with. I just want to be very clear about that."

I can't tell you how many clients hired me because I said something like that. They were like, "I have never heard anyone say those words. Like everybody else just wants me to believe that they can help me with every

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single thing. You're the first person who's just said, oh, that's not my specialty." And then people would hire me because of it.

So I think sometimes the thought is like, oh, I couldn't possibly say, I can't possibly talk about like on a, I'm not suggesting necessarily that you would put in your marketing, like, I'm really bad at these things. Although you could, if it was done in the right way, I guess. But to just be very honest about it, one with yourself and two with your clients or potential clients.

I've even said to clients before in my masterminds and my advanced certification, you know, they'll ask for help with something and I'll just say, "Oh, actually, I don't really know about that or I've never used it before. I know someone who is great at that. I can grab you a resource, or I can have someone, if everybody's interested in this, I can find a guest to come in and speak to it." Right?

I think this is so much more powerful and so much more human, right? Just letting the human side of you show as the coach is so much more powerful than pretending like you're just the expert at all of it, which none of us are. That's just not a thing. You can't possibly be the expert at every single thing.

If you find yourself getting stuck in this, I want to offer you a few things that I've learned over almost 10 years of running this business and coaching my clients. Just some things that I have learned that I've really seen about this.

So one of them I already offered, right? That when I was doing consults for one-on-one coaching, and I was just super honest that like, hey, that's not what I do, it actually resulted in more yeses than nos. And just in general, in my consults, in my whatever it was, I was calling them, I think, consults at the time, I was always just so open and honest, right?

I would be very clear about this is what I can help you with. This is what I can't help you with. Or even if people were hiring me for one-on-one just life coaching and they were kind of like, I want coaching on a lot of different

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things. I would even say like, there are a couple of things I don't really coach on.

Or if we do some coaching around it, I'm definitely not going to bring strategy. I'll help you implement whatever strategy you are going to use or whatever you want to try. But I'm not going to show up like an expert in this area because I've never done this before. And I think it was just like, oh, she's telling the truth. Okay. Right. Like there's so much trust that's created when you're telling the truth.

The second thing is, I think it creates safety for your clients. When you're really clear about this upfront and you're never lying, you're never pretending like you're the expert in an area where you aren't the expert, it creates safety.

I think sometimes we think it's the opposite. Like I need to really be able to, I need to be there for them in every single situation and help them through everything. And maybe you can help them with whatever the style of coaching that you do is with different pieces of it, right? With accessing their emotions, with looking at their mindset, with all of those pieces, like you can probably still help them with all of that through any topic.

But if they are really wanting strategy and you pretend like you have it, or you bait and switch a little bit, which I know some of you do, where you pretend like, oh yeah, yeah, yeah, we could totally do that. And in the back of your mind you're like, I know what they really need is some mindset stuff, some mindset work. Like it's all in their mindset. But that kind of comes across as, you know, like they're going to expect you to deliver.

It's okay for a client to tell you, I really want some strategy on this, and you be honest and say like, oh, I don't really teach that. And then you can tell them like, here's what I will do. Here's how that will help. The more clear you can be about that, the more likely they are to be like, oh, you're right. That's actually the part that I need.

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The third thing is, so it creates safety. It builds trust and helps with that relationship. It also builds your confidence as a coach. And this is really important, right? It actually makes you a better coach when you are clear about what you're great at and what you're not great at.

And again, sometimes we think it's the opposite. Like, oh, if I just show up, like fake it till I make it. I hate that saying, but you've heard it, right? Fake it till you make it. Don't do that when you're coaching. Don't fake it.

Now, also the other side of that, because I know some of you will go too far the other way, don't sell yourself short, right? Like own and really own what you are good at and that those things are enough and super powerful.

The next thing is, it actually helps your clients create better results. This kind of goes in line with improving your confidence as a coach, right? Imagine when all of your clients are getting great results, of course, your confidence in coaching, in your own coaching, it's going to go up because you're seeing it. Oh, it works. Like it's just proof after proof after proof.

When your clients are getting better results because you're honest with them, right? Because you're like, here's what I can help you with. I'm really good at these things. Like if this is what you want, then let's go. That's going to help them create better results, right?

Your coaching is going to be more concise and more clear and more focused and all of those things. And they are going to take the coaching and do with it whatever they need to do, right? I'm being a little vague because this could go so many different ways, depending on what kind of coach you are and how you coach and all of that.

Versus if you pretend to be an expert at something and then you just kind of make up a strategy or like, I don't know, I've heard people talk about this thing, like you could try this, but you approach it like you're an expert, right? It's one thing to say, I don't really know. I'm not an expert at this, but here's some things you could try. Do you want to try any of these? I researched

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some strategies, here's one I found that I thought might be useful for you. That's totally appropriate, right?

You're still being really honest and showing that you know the client like, oh, I looked some things up. I think this one might be really appealing to you because of this, this or this. Versus pretending, like doing that same thing, but then pretending like you're an expert at it.

Because if they think you're an expert, they're going to keep coming back with questions like you're the expert and you're going to be very confused and the coaching might be a little all over the place, your confidence as the coach is going to go down. And that's not the best way to help your clients create results.

I hope this was really helpful. I know that this, it's like a really simple concept, but it's one that a lot of coaches get kind of in their head about and think I have to be an expert at every single thing. That's not true. I've been coaching for 10 years, I am still not an expert at coaching on every single thing.

I do think I could coach someone, like just if we're talking specifically sticking to coaching their mind, coaching their, you know, like how they are showing up for whatever it is that they're doing and the decisions that they're making and the awareness that they have and the goals that they're setting, all those things. I could do that on, I think, pretty much any topic. There are some that I just don't like to coach on, but I could.

But when it really comes to an expert coach that has a strategy to what they do, it's like I've been doing this for a while. I am an expert at this thing and I will help you, right? Like at relationships, at business, at whatever else you're going to be an expert at. Your clients will expect you to really be an expert at it, right?

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So just really seeing the side of it that like, here's where I am an expert and I'm human, I'm not an expert at everything. And here's what I'm not an expert at. So helpful. I want you to try it.

If you're listening and you're like, oh my gosh, I'm totally doing this. I know some of you are because I see it all the time. I want to put you at ease, lots of coaches are doing this. And I also want to say your coaching alone is enough. What you are an expert at is enough. Lean into that. And I promise you it will transform the way you coach and the way you show up to work with your clients.

All right. Hope this was super helpful. 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.