

Ep #204: You Are the CEO of Your Coaching Business



Full Episode Transcript

With Your Host

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Hey coach, this is Lindsay Dotzlaf and you are listening to *Mastering Coaching Skills* episode 204.

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, I am so happy you're here today, as always. And I wanted to let you in on a little series that I have been sharing with my list and I've been getting a lot of great feedback about it. I actually talked about it two episodes ago in episode 202 of this podcast where I kind of talked about some things that I see, some mistakes that I see coaches making as they grow, as they maybe scale their businesses or have more clients. Just mistakes that they make along the way.

And I dove into that a little bit in that episode, but what I want to do in this episode because this series has been a big hit amongst the people that have been downloading it, I've been getting a lot of great feedback. So I'm actually going to play you the first recording from that series. The series is called the CEO Series and it is all about aligning your mindset and strategy for growth in your business.

This is for you whether you have one client or 500 clients. Something that I talk about in this series, hopefully more than one thing but at least one thing I'm sure will really resonate with you. The five things that I kind of walk you through are really for every coach. I've seen so many coaches make these, I call them mistakes but honestly I don't even know that they're huge mistakes. They're just the kind of things that you might be missing or that you sometimes forget to check in with as you grow.

And as I mentioned a couple of episodes ago, they are things that can really start to affect your coaching if you're not on top of them, if you're not paying attention or the way you feel about your coaching practice and your business and your clients and all of that. So I think that they are very important. I cannot wait for you to hear them.

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So in this episode, I'm going to, like I said, play you the very first audio from that series. If you love it or if you want to know what the other pieces of the series are, you can go to the show notes, download it and listen to all of them for free. And I can't wait to hear your feedback. See you next week.

Hello, welcome to the first lesson in this series where I'm going to tell you some of the mistakes that I see coaches making. And as I go, I'm just going to give you little steps throughout each video that you can use that if you identify with what I'm talking about, that you can use to kind of correct it.

And I want to be really clear upfront, I probably already said this in the welcome video, but I do want to be clear. If you spot something that you're like, oh no, I'm doing this. It's not a big problem. These are literally things that I see most entrepreneurs doing to some extent, including myself, right?

These are things that just naturally happen as you're running a business. And if you don't catch them, or if you let them go for a while, they could create more issues in your business versus catching it earlier and starting to just correct it in real time or just creating awareness around it, right? So let's dig into the first one.

Now, this one, I think is one of the most important lessons. And you will actually see this kind of weaving through the other lessons, which is why I'm going to start with it and it's probably going to be one of the longer videos. Everything else will be probably a little bit shorter because this one, I really, really want you to hear. Okay?

So one of the big mistakes that I see a lot of business owners and coaches making is that you forget that you're a CEO. Now stay with me. If you're like, "No, I don't do that, whatever," don't turn the video off right now because it shows up in a lot of different ways. Let me tell you what I mean.

So when you become an entrepreneur, right? When you're a coach, I'm speaking mostly to coaches in this, but really any entrepreneur, when you make that decision, it is a decision, right? It is like, I am in charge of an entire business. I am going to run it myself. I'm going to make all the decisions myself. Everything falls on me and I'm in charge of everything.

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Now, of course you can hire help. You can hire coaches, right? This is not like anti having help at all or having support. I highly, highly recommend having support. But as an entrepreneur, when you make that decision, the second you decide that you are opening a business of your own, even if you're contracting in other people's businesses, you still own your business, right?

You are making every decision about how it runs, how every part of it runs. How you run the business. The clients that you work with, how you work with them, what you help them with, your values, which we'll get into in another video, all the things, right? Like every single thing is your decision. And this is great news and also scary news, right?

It's what makes being an entrepreneur and running a business so fun and such a good option for a lot of people. And it's also what makes it hard, right? Because for most of us, that is not how we're raised or what we're taught. If you think about at least in the United States where I am, and I know this is true for most cultures, most countries. This is going to be an overgeneralization, this isn't true, certainly isn't true in every part of the world or in every culture, but there is a lot of emphasis put on –

If you think about traditional school, right? It's kind of like, you do what I tell you to do. You get kind of constant direction. I have kids that are in middle school and high school, and I do think it's changing a little bit. I do think they're promoting a little more like think for yourself, learn to think for yourself than they were when I was in school. But even though, even as a culture, a lot of times in the United States we say we value innovation and individuality, but it's actually not a lot of what we teach, right?

We teach kids to be good at memorizing things, at following directions, at remembering the directions, and just kind of doing what I said, what the teacher said, right? And then if you go into the workforce, into the corporate world, there's a boss and there's people that are above you that are kind of saying like, here's exactly how you do this job.

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Now, depending on the company, that may vary, right? But a lot of places, I'm thinking about when I was in high school and college. I worked at a lot of restaurants and I loved it. I loved serving. I loved waiting tables, but every restaurant was different, right? Every restaurant was like, well, here's exactly how we do it here. It was like each place had their own culture, their own rules, their own way of taking care of the patrons, the people coming in to eat there, right?

So when you decide, I'm an entrepreneur, I'm a coach, I'm an entrepreneur, I'm running things, you are saying, I'm in charge, I'm making all the decisions. For some of you, that probably feels very exciting. For some of you, that might be like, oh my gosh, you're right. I hadn't thought about it like that. Or I haven't really spent a lot of time thinking about it like that.

Now, when you forget this, here's how it starts to show up. And I'm going to kind of go through kind of the problems that I see that it creates when you forget that you're in charge, when you forget that you're running your business your way, the problems it creates.

And then I'm going to give you some examples, one unrelated to coaching example, and then a couple of very specific examples that have shown up in my business and an example that I've seen with some clients. And then I'm going to give you some steps for how to change this for yourself, okay?

So here's why this is a problem. When you forget, when you're like, I'm an entrepreneur, okay, now what? Someone tell me how to run a business, right? It has you thinking, at first it keeps you a lot of the time thinking there's a right way and constantly looking for that right way. Like there's a right way and you should definitely find it, right?

Versus there is maybe a good way to do it the way you want to do it and to figure it out the way you want to figure it out. But there's not one right way for every business. Every business is so different. The possibilities are endless for what you can do with your business, as long as you're operating within the law, right, of your country, of wherever you are.

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As long as you're operating within all the rules that are put in place for businesses and certain types of businesses, outside of that, you get to do whatever you want to do, right? The possibilities are endless. When you forget that though, and you're like, okay, there's a right way, I have to find it, it can keep you relying on others. Relying on other businesses, relying on coaches and mentors and consultants.

Now, again, this is great. I highly recommend working with, like you don't have to recreate the wheel for every single thing. But when you kind of step out of this for a second, and I see this happening at every level of business, when you step out of this for a second, and you're relying on someone else and you kind of forget, like it's totally on me to build this thing, then you're kind of relying on someone else's business, right?

So if they make a big change, or if they have a shift in their culture, the way they teach things in their strategy that you don't like, or you don't agree with, it can be really hard and kind of have you spinning in confusion, right? It can also drag out your timeline, because if you're constantly searching for what's the right answer, it can have you kind of over investing and spending too much time looking and searching for the right solution, instead of just learning to have more trust in yourself and create more self-awareness.

It can keep you what we would say like throwing spaghetti at the wall over and over, seeing what sticks, but not in a good way, right? So as an entrepreneur, if you're an innovator, if you have all of these ideas, you might throw things out there that are ideas.

Let's say I have ideas for here are some trainings I think could be really useful, like this one, right? Those types of things, I might just keep throwing them out, seeing what resonates, what you love, what is really helpful for my clients, prospective clients, or just for the industry in general. That's great, because that keeps that forward momentum.

But what's not good is when you're searching for the right way, and that's the kind of thing that you're trying over and over, let me try this way. No, okay, I don't like that, or that one didn't work for me, let me try this way. So

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that could look like hiring a bunch of different coaches, trying a bunch of different strategies, changing things up all the time, changing your niche, changing the way you market. Changing all the things, but doing it very consistently without any awareness of here's exactly why I'm choosing to do it this way.

It also may have you showing up arguing with other people in the industry. This isn't just a coach specific thing, I see it in other industries too, right? But it can be a very, like one of my colleagues calls it, she'll say like it's rough on those Instagram streets, right? Because sometimes that's happening, like people are just arguing over like, what's the right way, which in my opinion is so silly.

To me, as long as you're doing it within, in my opinion, ethically and within the law, there's no right way. There's just a way that works for certain people, and then like a different way that works for other people, and different ways to help all the different people and all the different businesses.

So it can have you focusing on that, right? It can have you focusing on someone doing it in a way that you think is wrong, someone that has a different opinion than you, and it can just get you caught up in that instead of you being solely focused on like, wait, I'm running a business, none of that has anything to do with me. And we're all guilty of it, even me, right?

Like in the comments, just reading all the comments. Now, I'm not a commenter, but I do argue with all of them in my head. That's sometimes why I have to snap myself out of it and be like, this has nothing to do with my business. What is happening? Come back.

It can also have you using coaching against yourself, right? When you sign up for some method, a certain strategy with a specific coach or a specific way of doing things. And then instead of, like if you skip that step of creating, of first creating your own self-awareness and self-trust, then it can have you saying things like, "Well, I just need to coach myself into doing the thing," right?

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Instead of like the step before that is like, actually, let's figure out what you want first. And then it shouldn't be that hard, like you shouldn't have to coach yourself into doing the thing. Where coaching is super useful is to coach through a fear or to really see the way you're thinking about something isn't the most effective way to create the results that you want. Or there's something that you're thinking is like a fact and it's actually not. It's just an opinion and we can show you a different way, right?

But you should never be thinking, "Oh, I need to coach myself into using this specific method." That's just like a waste of your time, right? You're an entrepreneur. You're an innovator. You are someone who is putting new work into the world and you have to step into that identity. It's one of the most important things you can do as an entrepreneur.

Even down to creating awareness even around what's my favorite part of my business? Is it the coaching? Do I just like to own businesses? Some people love that, right? One of my good friends, she is a coach but really what she loves to do is own businesses. And then she hires amazing coaches to come in and do a lot of that work for her, right? Nothing wrong with that, but that's not for everyone.

For me, I'm like, no, the coaching piece is my favorite piece. The other pieces are where I love to hire help. I love to bring in contractors, find people to help me with the business pieces, right? With the systems and all of that.

Okay, so let's think of some examples. I'm going to give you some examples and let you think through them. First, I'm going to start with one that's totally not coaching, right? So just imagine you're starting a t-shirt company.

And I use this example because it's just simple, right? Like t-shirts, that can mean so many different things. And pretty much everyone probably knows what a t-shirt is. You probably bought a t-shirt for yourself, for other people. You've had interactions with t-shirts. It's like a similar or a common thing, right?

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So let's say you decide you want to start a t-shirt company. There's so many ways you can do it. You have lots of decisions to make ahead of time, right? Before you even put one t-shirt out into the world. You have to think about what kind of t-shirt am I going to make? Like what's the purpose of the company? Like what am I doing that's innovative or different than what other people are doing? Or what am I doing that's the same as other people? And that's the type of business I want to create.

What is my passion when it comes to t-shirts? Is it like am I selling expensive cashmere t-shirts? Did I say it right? For some reason, that sounded weird. Am I selling handmade t-shirts where I'm actually making each one custom, you know, picking out custom fabric and people send me their measurements and it's this whole like custom experience? Or am I buying t-shirts in bulk, hiring a company, a printer that prints designs on the t-shirts and I'm just kind of the one like setting up all those steps and then they're shipped to people?

And maybe, you know, am I selling very nice custom expensive t-shirts? Am I selling inexpensive like discount, more like bulk type t-shirts? So many decisions, right? Where am I selling them? How am I selling them? Am I looking to sell tons of them? Do I want to make 100 custom t-shirts a year? Do I want to sell 5 million t-shirts at a discounted rate, right? And or any of the options in between. There's no right answer.

Now, as I'm describing this, you probably have an opinion of what kind of t-shirt you like, I know I have an opinion. And you might have an opinion about what kind of t-shirts people could be making, right, or should be making.

If you have a value that's like sustainability, for example, you might think like, no one should be selling very inexpensive discounted t-shirts in bulk. Like it hurts the environment or whatever, right? It could be the opposite. No one should be buying expensive t-shirts, that's ridiculous.

Whatever your thoughts are about it, think about that for your business. The same is true for coaching businesses. They can look like so many

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different things. Some people are going to be running their business in a way that doesn't align with how you run your business. Totally fine. Leave them alone. Let them do their thing.

What's most important is that you know ahead of time, like before you just start looking to everybody else to say, "Okay, how do I do this?" You really sit with, okay, I'm an entrepreneur. I'm running a business. I get to call all the shots. I get to make all the decisions. Where do I start?

A couple of just quick examples within coaching. One thing that I thought of when I was thinking about like, what's an example of this in my business? When I started my podcast, *Mastering Coaching Skills* podcast, I have about 200 episodes at this point. I love it. It's my favorite part of my business. It's where most of my clients come from.

When I very first started it, I had an idea for it a little bit earlier, and then I waited to start it. I had a lot of advice from friends and colleagues and even coaches that was like, well, what are you waiting for? Just start it now. You just need to get it out there. Get it going. That's going to be the best thing for you.

But what I knew, I took the time and I said, wait, actually, I know that's not true. Because I had people telling me, oh, it's so easy. You can throw it together. You can do all the parts yourself. It's so easy. You can buy this book, it's going to tell you exactly what to do. Here's a website.

And what I knew, I checked in with myself and I was like, okay, here's what I know about myself. I don't want to do any of the tech. I'm not interested in that. I want to be able to pay someone to do that. That means I have to be making enough money that it makes sense to do that and it's not like a painful expense every month, right? I want to be able to solidly get support with this and pay someone to do all of the editing and all of that piece because that's not where I want to spend my time in my business.

I also wanted it to be a little polished. So some people just throw a podcast out there. It's maybe them taking voice notes on their phone while they're walking. Amazing, there's nothing wrong with that at all. That's amazing if

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that's what you do. I knew for me that it didn't really match my kind of branding or positioning.

A lot of what I teach is like, be good at what you do and I kind of lean into a value of excellence. And my definition of excellence is kind of doing the best with what you have. Or mastery, being great at what you deliver. So for me, the positioning of my podcast, I wanted it to match that. So I saw all of that. I was like, okay, here's all my awareness. Here's how I want to do this.

And then I just made a decision. Okay, here's when I'm going to do it. Here's how much money I need to do it. Here's my plan. But it became so clear, I didn't spend any time in confusion around, maybe I should start it now. Maybe I shouldn't. There wasn't any waffling in indecision for me in that. Don't worry, I have indecision in plenty of other ways, that just wasn't one.

Or another thing that I see happen all the time, so often, is coaches will come to me and maybe they worked with other coaches, or they follow other coaches, maybe on social media, or wherever it is, they're following them. And they'll say, well, but I heard, you shouldn't, blah, blah, blah. You shouldn't have more than one offer as a new coach. Or you should always start with free coaching, and just fill in any rule that you've heard about coaching from wherever.

And what I always remind them is like, guess what? This is your business, you get to do whatever you want. If that rule, rule in quotes, makes sense to you and feels great, absolutely, go for it. If it doesn't, there is another coach or another mentor, another consultant, who is going to teach you something totally different. Right? Like that is not the only way.

If there was one magic pill, one right way to run a coaching business, to build a coaching business, this would all be so much easier, right? People would just be selling, here's the one way, super easy, here are the steps, one through 30. All you have to do is do these, and you can make whatever amount of money you want to make. And it would just be so simple.

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Unfortunately, that's not how the world works. It's not how humans work. It's not how we operate. We're all so different from each other. And that's what makes entrepreneurship sometimes feel hard, right?

And then where this shows up a lot of times for experienced coaches is in some of the things that I just said, especially in sometimes over investing or putting too much weight on someone that they hire to show them like, here's the right way. But also it can show up in a way that you have maybe made decisions in your business that someone else kind of told you or helped you make along the way and you didn't check in with yourself quite enough, which is totally fine.

None of this is a problem. It can easily be turned around. And now you have things in your business that have to be undone or unraveled because you don't love the way they feel. They don't align with how you work. They don't align with your values or maybe the decision that you would have made if it had been more clear to you.

Now, I'm not saying any coaches are doing anything wrong. I mean, some coaches are doing stuff wrong in my opinion, but that is not the point here. The point here is just you really taking ownership that you are a CEO, you are a business owner, you are an entrepreneur. And the most important thing you can do, the very first step, which is what we're going to get into next, the steps on how to start to turn this around if you see this coming up for you, is you have to start with awareness.

You have to start by asking yourself, what do I want? I'm in charge here. If I'm in charge, what does that mean? It's kind of like, for those of you that have kids, I remember when I was a parent for the first time when I had my now almost 15-year-old daughter. I remember when we left the hospital, I was like, wait, I just get to take this baby? You just let me take a baby? I mean, I know it's my baby, but I just take it home and then what? Where's the manual? And they were like, oh, everybody laughed and I was like, no, but for real. Someone tell me what to do.

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It's kind of like that, right? You are an entrepreneur at every level, from here on out you get to make every decision. Even if people don't agree with everything you do, even if some things feel uncomfortable, some things fail, they don't work. The great news is the better you are at this step, at creating that awareness for yourself, at asking yourself first, right? This is just the first step, asking yourself first, what do I want?

What do I want my business to look like? How do I want to run this? What are the values I'm leaning into? What's my end goal here? What am I working towards? All of that is on you to at least create that awareness, but the great news is that you're a coach. Don't forget this, you hopefully know how to create awareness. It is what you do with your clients.

And the better you are doing this for yourself, the better and better and better actually of a coach you will be too for your clients, because you'll see why this part is so important, right? And you will help them, you will help your clients create more self-trust, more self-confidence, instead of just having them always relying on you to tell them what to do, because you're a coach, that's not your job.

It doesn't mean you can't have strategies and you can't say like, here's how I do this thing. Here's how I create this result that you're looking for. But you're going to just, like the better you are at doing this for yourself and always just having that pause and saying, what do I want first? Start there.

Okay, so that's step one. Step two, once you see that, then you see where am I stuck? What do I need help with? Where would I love support to create it in this way? Now, this could be anywhere from, oh, I don't even actually know what the options are to make this decision. I don't even know what I'm deciding between. Okay, great. Like that's where you find support. What are the options?

So support could literally be searching on the internet. It could be hiring someone to teach you. It could be anything in between there, going to a webinar, right? Watching this video series. But when you see it, then you

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can be so specific about this is what I'm looking for. Here's the support that I want. Here's the strategy that I want someone to teach me, right?

This isn't about, okay, now it's all on you, you have to do it on your own. But it is all on you that you have to make the decisions that align with you, how you work, who you are in the world, what your values are, all of those things, right?

And then the last step is once you're clear about what's the support you need, then you can find it, right? It might be that you decide to hire me to help you in your business. That's part of why I'm doing this series. It could also be, I got exactly what I needed from this video, right? It could be, oh, okay. I love what Lindsay's doing, but that's actually not the support I need right now. I need someone to teach me how to run Facebook ads. I need someone to teach me this very specific thing.

That will have you moving forward faster in a way that feels better to you. And when I say faster, that is like whatever speed you want it to be, right? Because again, you get to make all your decisions, which means you also get to decide what your goals are. Your goals might be, I'm a coach. I work with 10 clients a year, period. That's my dream business. That's all I'm going to do. One-on-one clients, 10 clients a year. That's my whole business.

It could be, I work full time. I love my job. I'm not quitting it. And here's what, like I love coaching. I want to do this. Here's what I have capacity for as a side gig. It could be, I have big goals. I want to make a big impact. I want to make a huge splash on whatever my niche is, right? I feel so passionate about it. People have to know I'm here to help. I want to work with as many people as possible. How do I do that?

But knowing those things first will keep you from kind of that shiny object syndrome, right? The like, oh, here's that next new thing that I need. Here's that next new thing that I need. Here's that next new thing that I need. It will keep you focused on, actually, here's my path. And sometimes you hear something or learn about something and you're like, I didn't even know that

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was an option. Okay, let me. But then you can even still then take a step back and say, like, does this make sense for me right now?

Now, listen, I am not trying to talk you out of investing in hiring a coach, in getting the support you need. I think it's so important and amazing to do that. But creating that clarity first will just make it all so much more fun for you. It'll make it, you know, have you building a business that really deeply aligns with who you are and how you want to show up to work every day.

All right, so hopefully this is helpful. Quickly, again, step one, create that awareness. Ask yourself what you want. Step two, once you are clear on that, figure out where you're stuck. What do you need help with? What's the question? Where are you unsure of how to move forward to create that thing that you want?

And then step three, find that support if it's something that you need, right? You might not even, the support might not necessarily always be hire a coach. It might be to hire someone to help you in your business, right? It might be a free resource that you could find. It could be like there's so many different ways to move forward. It could be actually I have everything I need right now, I can just keep going.

All right, I hope this was helpful. Come back soon for the next video and let me know how this lands. If you have any questions, feel free to email me at any point and let me know. Otherwise, I'll see you in the next video. 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.