

Ep #214: The Key to Connecting with Young Coaching Clients with Jill Gerlach



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 214.

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'm so happy you're here today. First of all, I have an interview for you today that is so fun. I can not wait for you to listen and to learn from Jill.

But before we dive into that, I want to remind you that you should join us next week. If you're listening in real time a week from today, on December 10th at 1pm Eastern to go through your planning for next year, for 2025. A big picture workshop where we are going to, I'm going to help you get really clear about your vision, your future goals, and then create a year, a plan of a year that is going to get you closer to what you're dreaming of.

So, if that's you, join us. We will add a link in the show notes, you can find it now. You can get registered and you can join us. It's going to be so fun. You'll even have a chance to get some of your own guidance and coaching if that's something you're looking for. So hopefully I will see you there.

But today I am interviewing someone who I am forever grateful for, to just extend the theme from last week's episode, forever grateful because she has worked with my daughter and she coaches teens and kids and what she does is so amazing. And I can not wait for you to dive in and hear all the goodness that she has to share. She is such a genius and I'm so grateful that she's here today.

So let's not wait any longer. Here you are, my interview with Jill Gerlach.

Lindsay: Hello, hello. I am so happy to have you here today. Why don't you go ahead and introduce yourself. Tell everybody just who you are and what you do.

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Jill: So I'm Jill Gerlach and I own Compass Coaching, which is a life coaching for teens and adolescents. And I'm so excited to be here with Lindsay. I'm a little starstruck still and really, really grateful for this opportunity.

Lindsay: I love it. And I think we should just start by telling everybody this is take two. We have recorded once already. I had some recording and computer issues and now we're rerecording. So when you say still, I feel like that's probably why because you said that last time.

And I think it's just important to know if there's anything that we just have a little laugh about or something, it's like, oh yeah, we kind of already talked about that. But that's okay. We've decided the second time is always better and it's going to be great.

And I'm so excited for everybody to get to hear from you. I've talked about you a couple times on the podcast in some of the episodes, specifically in the episode about third party coaching, I think is what we ended up naming it but, you know, kind of when someone else is paying for coaching for someone. And that's what we're going to be talking about today. Not that specifically but how you coach kids and teenagers, which is amazing.

Jill: I love it.

Lindsay: Good. Okay, so the other thing maybe I'll say this because we had to – Last time we recorded I kind of had realized, oh, I should probably set this up. But just so everybody knows, you have worked with my daughter. It was the most amazing thing for us. It was incredible. She loved you. Also I should probably say I have full permission from her to say that on the podcast and to be open about that.

So I'm just so glad you're here. You changed our lives and people need to hear from you.

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Jill: Oh, well thanks. And I'm so excited that she was willing to share that because I know she's kind of on the more reserved, quiet side. So it's exciting to hear that she's okay with that.

Lindsay: She is, although I'll say, and I mean maybe part of it is age, part of it is maybe working with you, part of it maybe there's just lots of pieces to it. But as she gets a little older she's becoming less that way, which is really fun.

Jill: That is fun. She has so much to offer.

Lindsay: Yeah, she is a very cool kid, for sure.

So anyway thank you for being here. And let's just dig in. I think the first thing maybe to talk about is just kind of your background and how you got into coaching and why kids, why teenagers.

Jill: Yeah, so I started in social work and that led me to school counseling. And I was a school counselor for close to 20 years at a middle school. I absolutely love school counseling, but as education progressed it started to kind of pull away from the counseling piece. And it was more geared towards testing and academics, which are great and super important.

But my purpose and passion has always been working one on one or in group settings with kids and mental health. So I started my company in 2021 when Covid was running rampant and I just started noticing how many kids were suffering and struggling with anxiety or socialization and just adapting to the new world that we just threw at them.

So I felt I needed to do more. So I started this and I have done both jobs up until this year. In May I officially resigned and focused solely on my coaching company. And I've worked with five year olds all the way up to 19 year olds. And boy, girl, transgender, non-binary, all the things, anybody is welcome.

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Lindsay: I love that. And too, what you just said about the testing and that it was kind of getting you away from the kids. That's so much of the reason that we actually ended up hiring you because my daughter had just really quite bad anxiety around some testing that was fully coming from just pressure she was putting on herself.

But then it was so fun just to see – Like that was kind of the step into how we got there, but it was so fun to see all the other things that came up during your coaching with her.

Jill: Oh yeah we cover the full gamut. There's so many aspects to talk about, especially in today's world with just being exposed to so many different cultures and things that we have so many opportunities to explore all kinds of thoughts and feelings.

Lindsay: One thing that – I didn't share this with you. I'm not sure if I've ever shared this with you actually. Maybe I have but I don't know, you might remember it if I did at the time. But one thing, it's just such a small thing but it's such an example of the change that happened when you worked with my daughter that I'll never forget, I think it was actually last summer towards the end of the summer.

She said I'm just going to go to the pool. We have a pool in our neighborhood and it's just like down the street. And she said I'm going to go to the pool. And I said, oh, okay. Amazing. Just by yourself? And she was like yeah, well I'm going to take a book. And I was like, I'm sorry, what? You're just going to go to the pool and just read a book? And she was like, yeah, I mean, Jill said that that's fine if I do that by myself.

And it was just one of those moments of like in my mind I'm like, of course it's fine. But it was just so out of character for her to just go and not care if her sister wanted to go or if a friend wanted to go or if anybody else wanted to go. For her to just say like, yeah, I just feel like I just want to do that. Go sit in the sun, it just sounds nice.

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And I know it sounds so simple but it was like a big shift for her.

Jill: It was a big deal. We spent a couple sessions on that and just the judgment that she thought would be in place for walking in by herself. And so we had to do a lot of work around that judgment piece and that confidence piece. So when you told me that she did that, I was over the moon excited.

And it's one of those things that she didn't recognize it as such a huge accomplishment until we celebrated. So it's so important to celebrate the small moments as well as the big moments. For me that was a big moment.

Lindsay: Yeah, well, it felt so big to me and I don't think I would have even, you know, it was weird how surprised I was by it because, again, it feels like kind of a small thing but just to see, just for me to realize in that moment like, oh, this is really out of character for her. And she felt so great and confident doing it.

And I think she stayed there for like two hours or something, which of course I texted her a few times like, hey, you have sunscreen on, right? Because we aren't, we're pretty pale people. And that's just continued, like she still is, she did it this summer, it's one of her favorite things.

Jill: I love it, and hopefully she'll use that as a frame of reference anytime there's another uncomfortable judgmental thought in that head of hers.

Lindsay: We have used it, I've brought it up because it is such a specific thing of like, remember how you used to think this about going to the pool? And then you just went and you did it and then you loved it and now you do it all the time, it's like part of what you do.

It is such a good reminder for me and for her around like, oh, yeah, maybe people aren't thinking about me as much as I think they are.

Jill: Yeah, I think we all need that reminder every once in a while.

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Lindsay: Of course. Which of course I told her that so many times, but just being her mom, it's a little different coming from mom versus really learning it in a different way from someone who she saw as an authority or more of like an expert, right? Like, oh, Jill taught me this thing. And I'm like, oh, I mean I've only told you that how many times? But so great.

So maybe let's just start there, we're going to go in a little different order maybe than we did last time but I think the power of teenagers, kids, any age that you're working with, but just the power of them hearing it from someone else or hearing some of the things from someone else, is that something you see often?

Jill: Oh yeah, that's a huge barrier sometimes, too, of just getting clients in the door because parents will say, well, this is the only thing they need help on or they tell me everything. And I do believe they tell them a ton of things, but it is hard. Like even myself, I had my kids with someone and it was so hard to put my ego aside and realize they're going to be more vulnerable, more open with an unbiased, non-judgmental person versus myself, and that's what I want for them.

So it's really hard to release those reins but it's so rewarding and so wonderful when you start to see the progress they make and the comfort they have and the emotional regulation they gain. So yeah, it can be challenging, but once you see that, and hopefully that happens in the first session. Like when I do my free consultation, hopefully they leave feeling some type of relief. That's what my goal is.

Lindsay: Yes, and even just to have that space to say – Even if you have a kid who, like my daughter, is pretty open with me as far as I know, at least my older one is. I don't think my younger one, well she's a different character. But even for her to just have that space that was just the time set aside to just talk about those things when you're not in the day-to-day of the crazy family schedule and all the things that have to get done and all the things.

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Not that we don't make time to talk, but there's just something about having that. I think about that with most coaching really, but especially for kids and teenagers, it's just so important and it was really so useful for her, I know that.

Jill: Yeah, and one of my favorite topics is the things that we are thinking that we're not even aware we're thinking. Like just building that awareness around how you're talking to yourself or what thoughts you're having throughout the day, no matter how bizarre.

I always like to ask, what's one of the craziest things you've thought that you've never told anyone? And it's really fun to see where they go with that question.

Lindsay: I bet you get some crazy answers to that question from kids.

Jill: Absolutely. When I think I've heard it all, something else pops up. I'm like, oh, that's fun.

Lindsay: Okay, so one thing I think that's interesting to think about in the coaching that you do is just how sometimes you are dealing with kind of a third party, which again I brought this up on my podcast. But I think it would be interesting to hear from you where it's kind of one person is paying for the coaching and then one person is receiving the coaching.

And this happens in lots of different coaching relationships but obviously definitely happens with your clients. And I'm just curious like how do you deal with that? How do you think about it? How do you kind of navigate that relationship?

Jill: Yeah, having been in school counseling so long, it's kind of just a natural thing to talk with both the parent and the child. So I found that it's really important to have that free consultation to meet with both the parent and the child to make sure I'm a good fit and make sure they feel comfortable with me and that I can offer the services that they need.

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I want to be very clear that I am not a therapist and that I don't do specific types of therapies. So if they have a severe diagnosis of some kind, then maybe I need to refer them to someone else. I always want to try and help with that referral process. I don't ever want to leave them just hanging and say, oh, it's a no, because at the end of the day we want to help this child.

So I will spend time with both of them, and typically it's the parent that takes the lead on the conversation about what brought them to me. But then I kind of assess how the child is doing in that conversation. If they are head nodding or engaged, then I can ask some questions in that moment. If they are shut down and withdrawn, then I know that we need a little more time for an icebreaker.

And then once I build that comfort, I ask to speak with the child by themselves to try and just explore what their thoughts are and offer them maybe some quick little tips and tricks that can help them in that moment with whatever they're dealing with. And then I bring them back together and we talk about my services.

I don't ever ask them to sign on the dotted line during that session because I feel like it's so important for them to go home and talk about the child's comfort level, if they feel like I'm a right fit and things like that. So I always circle back around with them and just see where we go from there. So that's kind of how it works.

Lindsay: Yeah, I love that. And I know I've already told you this and you kind of touched on something else I was going to ask too, which is kind of how do you know when to consider something, you know, a service that isn't what you do, right? Like how you kind of navigate that, which you answered a little bit just now too.

But one thing I did with my daughter before we hired you, is we talked to the pediatrician first. We actually already had an appointment with her like the next day or within a couple days of her having just some really bad kind of panic and anxiety around some testing and some school things.

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And we talked about therapy, I talked to the pediatrician about a coach, she was very open to that. We especially loved that you were a middle school counselor. That felt like really an expertise that was like, oh, she's going to really understand all the things that my daughter was going through because that was the exact, you know, kind of her exact age range.

But yeah, so we talked to two therapists and then we talked to you and I totally let her make the decision. I really was like what do you think? Like how did you feel about it? And she was like, oh, Jill. For sure Jill. Just like hands down, which didn't surprise me, actually, because of the –

And I think I've already told you this too, but I couldn't hear what you all were talking about, but I could just hear her talking on that very first call when you were just getting to know each other after you and I kind of chatted. And then she was on Zoom, just like we are now. And I could just hear her talking and it was like, oh my gosh, she's actually talking. She's like saying the things. And she can be quite quiet sometimes, so that was so fun.

Jill: I always love the challenge of a quiet kiddo. I will get them talking, don't worry. Because it's not about me talking, I'm the last person that needs to be talking. It's all about them and exploring what's going on with them.

Lindsay: Yeah. How do you – This is a new question. We have not talked about this one but since it came up I'm just curious, do you have any tips for people listening that are like, oh, maybe they might even have adult clients like that, right? Actually I get this sometimes in The Coach Lab, like I don't know what to do. I have this client who's just really quiet. It's really hard to bring them out of their shell. What would you say to that?

Jill: Gosh, I mean the best thing for me is always just to stay curious. Like I just come with an arsenal of questions.

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Lindsay: Oh, my listeners know that was the right answer, by the way. I talk about curiosity all the time. I say it's like the cure for so many things that come up in coaching sessions.

Jill: Yeah, and not only that but you can ask questions in so many different formats to get to the point where you're trying to go. So especially with kids, staying curious has just served me so well and it's so fun to explore with them. And with kids you can get really silly and creative. They're not opposed or so limited by such rigorous thoughts or restrictions or anything like that. So it's really fun to get creative and silly sometimes with my questions.

Lindsay: Yeah, one thing that comes up sometimes in The Coach Lab is someone will say, well, I'm trying to really dig in and get in there and get kind of deep and my client just doesn't want to do that. I often have to remind my clients, like we're used to that as coaches.

We've done it so many times. We've probably had our own coaching, a lot of us. We've seen other people get coached. We are sometimes in group calls getting coached in front of other people, right? Like we have just become more comfortable, I would say, than your average person at just getting right in there, opening up, like just laying it all out.

And I'm curious what your experience is with kids. Like do you think they're harder to get to open up about some of this stuff, or is it actually easier once they kind of trust you?

Jill: You definitely have to build that trust. And some kids it takes a lot longer than others. But I do find that they're willing, it's just scary. And so if you build that security around it, that there is no judgment, I'm not going to have that shock or come at you or anything, it's just a conversation about thoughts. Once you build that safety and security, they tend to open up.

I've had some that it's really, really challenging. Especially in the school setting because you're meeting with all different types of students with

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different experiences. But I do find that they're willing, it's just they don't know how. And sometimes in their families they've been taught to stuff it all down or we don't talk about that or whatever the circumstances.

So it's very unsafe in the beginning to talk about those things. But we just build that safety and security and we seem to, I don't know, I just enjoy it. I love those little challenges. So they're not really challenges to me, it's part of the process and I enjoy it.

Lindsay: Yeah. Well and I love, I mean your background, I think, just makes you so perfect for this because I'm sure you've been having similar conversations for years and years just in a different capacity. So that's amazing.

So when it comes to when you just said trust and safety and security, I do think there's an interesting piece of, especially being a coach for kids and for teenagers, piece of like a parent maybe wanting information or wanting to be involved and wanting to know like, well, what did they say? Like what do you talk about? How do you navigate that personally in your practice?

Jill: Yeah, so I make it clear that there are three areas where I have to report to the parent or to authorities. And that's if someone's hurting them or they're hurting themselves, abuse, neglect, those types of things. But I do let the parents know every other conversation is just between me and the child.

Now, I do offer – So every four sessions I have a session with a parent to touch base to make sure we're making progress, to see if there's any things that pop up or that they feel aren't being addressed that need to be. So we will talk about things, but I always ask the child before that session what are my no-goes and what are things that you want me to say.

A lot of times there's not that many no-goes, it's more of can you help me explain this to them? But those parents that are heavily involved and want to take the reins all the time, I just look at it as it's their baby. They want to

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make sure things are going in the right direction. And we're both working towards the same goal, so there's no need to be resistant.

It's just helping them learn how to separate a little bit and still have the comfort of knowing the child is safe and comfortable talking to them when they're ready and then talking to me about it as well. So I hope that made sense.

Lindsay: Yeah, that made perfect sense. And I mean I've also been on the receiving end of you doing this, right? Where we would talk I think maybe once a month, like every four weeks throughout the coaching.

How long do you work with your clients? I can't remember.

Jill: Six months.

Lindsay: Okay, yeah, so throughout the six months we would talk like once a month, right? And I just really appreciated that. It was mostly me saying, like telling you things. I don't know if that's how it always goes, but I know you would say like Charlie said I could kind of share anything. Do you have any questions?

And usually it was just me saying like, oh, actually no, but I have some wins. Here's what I've noticed and also here are some other things I'm noticing and if she's not bringing them up, those could be topics of conversation. Just because I know her well enough to know she's not always going to bring up all the things.

Jill: Yeah, and that's super helpful to guide me. And then also I always provide the student and the parents with my cell phone number so if something should come up in between sessions they can reach out at any point in time. I've had several take me up on that. And I love offering that service because life doesn't happen just once a week, it happens throughout every day. So we want to make sure I'm available and accessible in those moments that they might need.

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Lindsay: Yeah. One thing I will say just from the parent's perspective, just in case anyone is listening and they are going through anything like this with their kids, is for me it just felt like such a relief and even an opportunity throughout the week when something did come up and maybe she would be quite anxious and maybe spiraling a little bit.

And we would talk through it, of course. And I was always open to having any conversation with her, but sometimes it was nice to be able to just kind of comfort her and then also say, hey, make a note of this. This is something you could talk to Jill about.

It just gave, that kind of allowed me to like not not address it because, for sure, but for me to just be the parent and just hug her in that moment. And even though my coach brain was still there and kind of, oh, this could help or this could help, it really just allowed me to just love her be her mom and know, hey, you can also talk to Jill about this.

Jill: Oh, it's such a good team. I love it.

Lindsay: Yeah, I didn't actually, you know, I prompted this by saying we've had to record this twice but I have been thinking about all the ways that it really helped us and I think that was, for me personally, that was one of probably the biggest things for me, is to just be able to say, oh yeah, definitely bring this to a call with Jill. And right now all we have to do is just process this and feel it and that's okay.

Jill: So great.

Lindsay: Yeah. I don't know if you've ever thought about that, but listen, put that in your marketing. Like seriously, right? It felt like such a gift to me to just know that I didn't have to, that I could kind of tell my coach brain to be a little quiet, because it can be on overdrive. I think most coaches experience that in their lives when it's not clients, not anyone that you actually have any right to say like, oh, I can help with that sometimes. And that just really stood out to me through those six months. So, amazing.

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Jill: Absolutely. I love that.

Lindsay: Okay, is there anything else that you wanted to add when it comes to deciding is this client right for coaching? Do they maybe need a different type of service? Like how do you approach that?

Jill: Yeah, so it's very different since I have such a broad spectrum of ages, you know, the younger ages I kind of took for granted because of Covid everything was virtual. So when I started doing this everything we were doing it that way. And then whenever we were released from the reins of Covid I mistook how much kids need that connection and they want to meet in person.

So I had a lot of local clients that I would meet in person, especially with the younger population. So, you know, five, seven, ten, they really need that one-to-one in person. It's hard to engage a kiddo in that age range online when you're not gaming. And I have some games in my toolbox, but not as entertaining as Fortnite or whatever.

But in middle school and high school, they do great either way. So I've had clients in California, all the way to here in Indiana. So that would be the only other piece that I would add, is just making sure that I'm a right fit for the age range if it is a virtual situation. So I'm in southern Indiana. So if you're local, I'm happy to meet in person.

Lindsay: Yeah, I love that. I remember, you know, Charlie was old enough that she kind of, of course she missed out on some things, but school wise although could be what fed into some of the anxiety that she was having kind of a year or two years later.

But she was kind of old enough, but my younger one I definitely sent her teacher just love notes all the time, just like I don't know how you're doing it. Just thinking about meeting with one kid over Zoom versus however many kids where, you know, 25 or whatever it was second graders. I was

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just like this is, I don't know how you're doing it I'm sorry. So yes, I can imagine.

Just watching her, it was like, oh, what's going on over here? Like you know, whatever. And so I'm sure that it was very different trying to engage with the younger ages over Zoom, although I guess they're probably a little more used to it now than most kids would have been. But yeah that was a lot, I'm sure.

So now you meet with most of your clients in person?

Jill: Right now most of them are in person, yeah. But either way works for me and I'm super flexible. In fact, some of my local kiddos I have relationships with in the school settings and they'll let me come in and meet with them in school.

Lindsay: That's so fun.

Jill: Yeah, it's really great because, one, if there's issues in school I can address them in real time. But also if the parents have restrictions like they work second shift and they can't transport their kid, I try to be as flexible and mobile as possible.

Lindsay: So good. And I remember you saying, and me being so shocked and delighted for you, I think you said this, that your school was very supportive of what you were doing.

Jill: Oh yeah. Yeah, they let me use my office for a while before I resigned.

Lindsay: That's what I thought. Yeah, that's amazing.

Have you ever considered coaching not kids?

Jill: No.

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Lindsay: I love it. Because most coaches listening, I bet, are like, I can't even imagine. But every time I talk to you I'm like, no, you love it so much, I can't even imagine you coaching adults.

Jill: Yeah. Yeah, absolutely not. I am not that kind of coach. I have always worked with kids my whole life. It is definitely my purpose.

Lindsay: You know what's funny is so many of the thoughts you have about kids, I have such similar ones about adults, about just like coaching women. I think it's so fun. I think our brains are amazing. Like all the things that you find fun about kids, I'm like yeah, this is still true, maybe just in slightly different ways.

Jill: Yeah, different ways.

Lindsay: Have you ever coached adults?

Jill: Huh-uh.

Lindsay: Okay.

Jill: Well, I take that back. Yes, because working with parents, sometimes it's helpful to point out that they receive discipline in a different fashion. So I definitely have, especially when I was in social work, I was there to help families be successful. And a lot of it required the parenting style to alter or tweak or something like that. So I can offer that information and help coach them on that. But yeah, that would be the scope.

Lindsay: And tell me what you love about coaching younger minds. Like what's different about it, do you think, and what are your favorite parts about it?

Jill: Oh, they're just dreamers. They're so willing to explore any and all options. They don't have those limitations that us adults have already created from experience. And they adapt to change. I know some of our kiddos, especially students that have autism, don't deal with change well.

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But in the big scope of change, they deal with change on a daily basis. They're learning and growing every single day, and so change isn't as scary to them and trying new things isn't as scary to them. So that's really fun for me, is to explore just all the silly, goofy, but yet creative and wonderful opportunities they can have to resolve issues or improve relationships or whatever.

Lindsay: Yeah. When I hear you say that I think, okay, maybe it would be really fun to coach kids, especially because last time some of the examples you were giving, I think you actually said something about they're such dreamers last time as well.

And I didn't realize this but I thought about it after we recorded, that I feel that word was used against me when I was younger, like a lot. Because I was quite smart, I had great grades. It was like you're going to college, this is what you're doing. Kind of like stop being such a dreamer. Like stop changing your mind, just pick a major, like get with it. Kind of like get with the program. And so I love that you said that's your favorite part.

Jill: Yeah, and I think the example I gave was a lot of times kids will come and say I want to be an NFL player. And they're a junior and never played football before and it's like, oh okay. I'm not going to tell you no because you're dreaming and you're hopeful and we're not going to squash that. We're going to look at what our opportunities are and how we can grow in that or make that happen or where else could it take us? Maybe not football but maybe sports medicine or broadcasting. So we'll get real exploratory with those things.

Lindsay: Yeah, like what do you love about that dream, right? Like what are the things that draw you to it? Even though we might know that it's probably not likely that that's going to happen if you're already a junior or senior in high school, but maybe.

Jill: Maybe. Who knows? Could be a Tiger Woods in the making. Who knows?

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Lindsay: Yes. Have you, and I don't even know if you can answer this because it could be maybe something you can't share, but is there anything that's ever come up in sessions with kids – And I haven't asked you this before, by the way. This is just a new question. Is there anything that's come up in sessions that you have just kind of been like, what? Or it just shocked you. I just feel like kids are a wild card, like things could happen that you aren't ready for.

Jill: Oh, absolutely. Oh my gosh. I mean if you think about it, for 20 years I worked with 800 students in my building, so I have heard and seen and dealt with so many different personalities. It's been a whirlwind. I should have written a book, honestly. It's been so fun.

Lindsay: It's not too late, by the way.

Jill: True.

Lindsay: Speaking of dreaming, not too late to write a book. Let's do it.

Jill: True, true. But yeah, some kids want that wow factor, that shock factor, and sometimes you know they're saying it because it is their truth or a real situation. So having known them enough, I know how to gauge the conversation if it is a shock factor versus if it is a raw moment for them. So it definitely requires me to be on my A-game at all times with them because you don't want to get that wrong. Oh my goodness, you don't want to misread those moments.

Lindsay: Yeah, I could see that. Have you ever had a moment in a session where you've kind of caught yourself reacting in a way you didn't want to react or kind of like telling yourself get it together? Like I can't show this, this can't come out in the session.

Jill: Oh, you mean being human?

Lindsay: Yeah, well that's kind of why I'm asking, because this is something that comes up in The Coach Lab. I'm like, oh wait, you mean you're a

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coach and you have a human brain? Of course. Now usually it's like what I hear a lot of is like a judgment or a, you know, whatever. But I can just imagine working with kids that it might be more like shock or surprise by something they say or just something might catch you in a way that maybe adults aren't going to shock you like that, usually.

Jill: Yeah, oh my gosh, yes. But I do find that sometimes it's really, really helpful to point out to them that I am human. And I'll apologize, if I got it wrong or misread, I will apologize. I have no issue with saying, hey, I messed up on that, let's try that again. Or let's revisit that or something like that.

So yes, I have definitely gotten it wrong, which is why I think I get it right more times now because I've learned throughout the years.

Lindsay: Wait, it's almost like you just have to practice and practice and practice. And then also it's okay to just admit that you got it wrong and try again.

Jill: Yeah. And what I've found is they appreciate that so much. I'm not this stiff, regimented person that sticks to a script. Oh my goodness, no. So if I get it wrong, we'll fix it and move forward.

Lindsay: So many of my clients want a script and I always am like, absolutely not.

Jill: I've never liked scripts. In my master's program they tried to give us scripts. No.

Lindsay: I think that for what I've just found, at least working with my clients and this is what I kind of share sometimes is that having those human moments actually has the ability to create so much more trust with your clients in the moment. Is that true with kids as well?

Jill: 100%.

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Lindsay: Maybe even more so with kids.

Jill: Truly more so because a lot of times we adults don't apologize to kids very often. We don't own our mistakes very often, but yet we hold them so accountable to them. So when they see that, it's like oh my gosh. It's usually a wow factor for them and a growth moment for them too, that yeah, as an adult I make mistakes and I'm not perfect but we'll get it right eventually.

Lindsay: That's one of my favorite thoughts. Everybody just needs to take a second, let that sink in, hear it again. It's okay to be human. It's okay to apologize and say you got it wrong even if you're working with adults.

Jill: Yes.

Lindsay: Do you have anything else? Like what have we missed? is there anything that we haven't talked about that you were hoping that we would? I think we got through it all that I have on my list, but is there anything we missed?

Jill: No, I really feel like we covered it all.

Lindsay: I feel like last time we talked about snot, and I don't remember how that came up.

Jill: You were asking me about –

Lindsay: When I said we had to re-record this you said, "Oh thank goodness, next time I won't talk about boogers." And I was like, oh, just wait.

Jill: I love that you brought it up. When you talked about building awareness with a younger population. I think it was the processing and understanding.

Lindsay: Oh because I said – Yeah, that's right, which I think this could be great to just mention. We touched on it a little bit, just like the differences. But I think I had asked you one thing that I had heard is that around the age

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like 11-ish, 11, 12 is when kids really start to kind of have self-awareness around, oh, I'm having a thought. Like those meta thoughts like, I'm thinking this thing. Or just cognitive awareness maybe, is that what we're going to call it? Is that what you would call it?

Jill: Yeah, of course. Yeah, and I do agree.

Lindsay: Is that true and how does that – Because I know you coach kids younger than that, which blew my mind, actually, when I found that out. I didn't even know that there were coaches that did that. So that's amazing. But speak to that, like what do you – And why did boogers come up when we talked about it last time?

Jill: So yeah, I absolutely agree with that. And I think that's why middle school is so hard. We're around 11 when we enter sixth grade and we start to absorb and recognize those judgments of ourselves and other people. We're aware of those thoughts so much more. So absolutely on point with that.

And then we talked about how do we build that awareness and work with the younger population? So it's more like talking with them about examples, and so that's when it came up. I was like, oh, so if you're sitting in class do you see anyone else picking their nose and eating it? Things of that nature, like do you notice anyone else acting this way? And if not, what can we change or tweak within ourselves and why do we have that impulse to do so? So, yeah.

Lindsay: It's so good. You thought we were going to get away without talking about it and I'm like, how about we just talk about it extra instead.

Jill: We really highlighted that.

Lindsay: But these are the things I think that make hearing interviews like this relatable. Now, most people are probably thinking, well, boogers probably don't usually come up in their coaching sessions. But there are things like that with adults that people are like, this weird thing comes up.

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And I'm like this actually isn't weird, I think it comes up for a lot of coaches in a lot of situations.

So, just normalizing boogers. That's what we're here to do.

Jill: Totally works. The kids love when I throw in zingers like that. Anything with body noises or anything, they get a kick out of it.

Lindsay: Charlie would probably just roll her eyes. But my younger daughter, she would be all – Any body humor is a yes for her. She watches all the older movies with my husband that are just ridiculous, that I don't enjoy at all. They bond so much over it. It's hilarious.

Okay, here's a question that I totally forgot to ask you last time. And I'm trying to remember to ask all my guests this and I've forgotten every once in a while, but I'm curious – This is going to be a little different for you. So I usually ask is there anything that you coach your clients on often that you find yourself still working on and still working through?

And so I'm guessing that you still have an answer for that, but I do think it's interesting since you coach teens and kids. But is there anything that comes up often in your session that you are like, oh yeah, I'm still working on this too?

Jill: Gosh, I feel like all of it.

Lindsay: Yeah.

Jill: Like confidence, like public speaking. Doing this podcast is definitely out of my norm, and so it's those moments that make me so relatable with the kids when they have to give a speech or something like that. Body image, absolutely, is a hot topic for our kids. You know, they compare themselves so much and I get it because I do the same thing. Judgment and self-esteem, I mean all of the topics. I feel like I'm always a work in progress on these things. So once again, I'm human and I enjoy showing them that I'm human.

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And if it is something that they're struggling with and think oh well you don't deal with that because you're an adult, I definitely show them, oh no, it's just that I've figured out how to navigate with it, through it, or overcome it, you know, those things. So yeah.

Lindsay: That's so good. I feel like I have those conversations a lot with Charlie where I'm like, oh yeah, this comes up for me. And I'll give her an example and she just kind of has this like, wait, what? Like oh, this doesn't just go away, it's not just because I'm a teenager, it's just something that's there that we get to work on forever.

Jill: Yeah, forever. I think life would be a little boring if we didn't have things like that to work on.

Lindsay: Of course, yeah. Well thank you so much for being here. Is there anything else? Have we missed anything? Before you share where they can find you, is there anything that we have left out?

Jill: No, we thoroughly covered it.

Lindsay: I think we nailed it. I do think the second take is better. We did a great job, I'm so proud of you because I know you were so nervous the first time. So I was like great news for you, you get to do it again. So I appreciate you so much. Thank you for agreeing to come back and do it again, all over again.

Tell everyone if they loved this or if they have kids or teens and they are maybe like, oh, this is really interesting, I hadn't considered talking to a coach, where can they find you? All the places, any place you want to share.

Jill: Yeah, so having just left school I haven't gotten creative and, you know, tech savvy and created a website or anything like that but I am accessible on Facebook, it's Jill Goodman-Gerlach. I'm on Instagram as Compass Coaching, so you can message me through there. I always take referrals

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from friends, and any way that you can access me please do so, because I am taking new clients.

Lindsay: I love it. And we will link all those on the show notes, so if someone is driving or listening in the shower or wherever they're listening, you don't have to stop and write that down. We'll put it in the show notes, you can just go click and find Jill. She's incredible.

And this came up again last time at the end and I forgot to ask you about it. Just quickly tell me about referrals. Do so many of your clients come from referrals? I feel like they probably do when thinking about kids and teens.

Jill: Oh absolutely. Yeah. Yeah, and I think that's why I have more local clients right now because it is referrals, especially from schools and things like that. So yeah.

Lindsay: I tell everyone, whenever they're talking about having a hard time or their teenager is having a hard time. I'm like, okay, I'm a coach. I'm very careful in my life, I'm not like telling all the people that they need coaching all the time, even when I want to. But that's one area that I'm pretty like, listen, look into therapy, look into coaching, get them the help. It makes such a huge difference.

Jill: Yeah, if they can master all of this emotional regulation now, imagine where they'll be as adults.

Lindsay: I would have had to go to a lot less therapy, I think, if I had just truly had that awareness and just that support as a younger person. So, so grateful for you, thank you again for doing this and I will talk to you soon.

Jill: Thank you so much.

Lindsay: Of course, bye.

Jill: Bye.

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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. That's Lindsay with an A, D-O-T-Z-L-A-F.com. See you next week.