

# Ep #217: How to Prepare Your Coaching Business for Extended Time Off



## Full Episode Transcript

With Your Host

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Hey, this is Lindsay Dotzlaf and you are listening to *Mastering Coaching Skills* episode 217.

To really compete in the coaching industry, you have to be great at coaching. That's why every week, I will be answering your questions, sharing my stories, and offering tips and advice so you can be the best at what you do. Let's get to work.

Hey coach, I am so happy you're here today, as always. And if you're listening in real time and if you celebrate Christmas, Happy Christmas Eve or Merry Christmas Eve or whatever you say, right? If you are listening almost in real time, but just a few days later, I hope you had the best holidays. If you celebrate Christmas or other holidays that are around Christmas, I hope that you have been enjoying your time.

And I just wanted to drop in with just a quick note today. This is not going to be a long episode because again, in real time, you might be busy. You might be hopefully enjoying your, maybe some time off, enjoying some time with your family. And that's actually a little bit of what this podcast is going to be about today.

I want to talk about one of the best things that I've ever done for myself in my business, which is taking time off. And obviously that's like, duh, right? It's great to take time off. Everybody needs a rest, all of that. But I'm going to just dig into something really specific. So even if you aren't listening around Christmas time or around winter holiday time, this is going to be hopefully helpful for you.

So a couple of years ago, one thing that my business manager brought to me was like, hey, why don't we just kind of close for two weeks in the winter? I can't remember if that's exactly what she said, but she kind of presented this idea. And it was so funny because I had had this idea in the past. I had been taking time off here and there around the holidays, but it was always kind of where can I fit it? What works this year?

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And her and I, we created a plan where we just completely close, my company closes for two weeks around the holidays. So the last week of the year and the first week of the year. And you can do this in a lot of different ways for us, what we decided is to close completely.

So we will both check our emails every few days, right? We'll put on automated messages that say like, hey, thanks for contacting us. We're on a break or, you know, whatever they say, we'll be back XYZ. But we do check our emails just in case there are any client emergencies or anything that needs to be handled right away.

But outside of that, we don't do much for those two weeks. I can't even actually think of anything else that we do for those two weeks. We cancel all calls, even in The Coach Lab where we have calls literally every other week of the year. Those are the two weeks that we don't have calls.

Now, this is not how you have to do it, right? There are lots of options. You can, you know, choose to do it differently, but that's just what we decided. We didn't even want to be – Even if I had someone, let's say I wanted to be off, but I was having someone fill in for me for those calls, there's still a lot of behind the scenes work that has to be done, right?

Someone has to make sure that person can log into my Zoom. We have to make sure the call is recorded, that the recording gets posted, that we are troubleshooting last minute, like paying attention to what time it is just in case we're getting messages like, hey, I can't log in, or the call won't start, or messages from clients, the links not working, right? Like any of those things, you still are kind of a little on call when you have all of that going on.

So that's the way we do it. We just close completely, but you can take this concept and use it any time of year. This obviously doesn't have to just be for the holidays. I also think about this if I'm going on vacation and I just know I really want to be completely off for that week or whatever.

So there are lots of reasons that this really worked for me, right? Obviously holidays, it just seems to be a very busy time of year. My daughter's

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birthday is actually on Christmas Eve. Today, actually, I guess as this is coming out. My birthday is in December also. And then we have all the holidays and then New Years and the kids are off from school and it's just a busy time of year.

And I love, while my kids like to still spend time with me, I love to have some time off so that we can go do fun things. And I don't have to plan around, you know, oh, I have to work for a few hours today or work a half day, or, you know, I have work today, but maybe we'll do it tomorrow. I just don't even have to think about it. So that has really been, it is like one of my favorite things. Not my favorite thing in my business, obviously time off isn't my favorite, but it's one of my favorite decisions that I've made.

And I'm just going to give you some arguments for why it's really powerful to decide this ahead of time. So as you're thinking about your schedule for next year, I just want you to look at the calendar and say, are there any times of year that I would love to be off or as off as I possibly can be? And what that looks like might depend on a couple of things.

It might depend on how consistently you need money coming in. Although there is a kind of hack for that if you are someone that needs money coming in consistently. It might depend on, do you work? Is it just you running your business or do you have people helping you? There are plenty of things. It might depend on your niche. Some niches that time of year might be one of the harder times to take off. I can't think of a specific example, but I'm sure there are some.

So just take all of those things into account, right? And really think about what would work for me. So whether it's holiday time or planning around maybe your anniversary or some kind of special date every year, or just knowing you like to have two weeks, a month, however long off maybe in the summer, or there's a certain week of the year that you always go visit family or friends or just anything like that, right?

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If you aren't doing this now, I suggest, even if you're a new coach, I suggest you just start thinking about it. It fuels me so much for the rest of my year. And here are some really great reasons that if you plan ahead, why this can be so beneficial for you.

First, and this is a huge recommendation, I urge you to plan as far ahead as you can, right? So right now, if you're listening to this in real time and it's around the holidays 2024, and you're thinking about your calendar next year and you're like, oh my gosh, I'm obsessed with this idea. I would love to implement this a year from now. Now you have an entire year, like, you know, it's coming. You have an entire year to plan, right?

So you get to plan anything you want to plan. Anything from deciding to take the time entirely off, or maybe you decide I want to be off, but I still need some of my content going. I need emails going out. Maybe you have some big end-of-year promotion that you do. It allows you to set up as much of that as you can to be automated, right?

Maybe you can schedule the emails. You can create all the content ahead of time. You can record podcasts ahead of time, whatever it is. It just allows you to think ahead and plan for it. It might not be perfect. It might not be like a hundred percent of time off, but if you do it that way, at least you can know, okay, I have all of this stuff planned ahead that I could have.

Now my only job is to maybe, you know, let's say you have a promotion happening. You have to pay attention to your emails each day, respond to a few emails, making sure people aren't asking questions about whatever it is that you're selling. Because maybe you've scheduled all those emails to go out, but you're wanting to pay attention to if there are any questions. And let's say it's just you that works in your business and you're the person that has to do that.

Okay, but that's still way less work than maybe doing all of the work that you would have been doing otherwise. It also allows you to build those

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times off into your client schedules. So a lot of you listening, maybe you just work with one-on-one clients. You can know way ahead of time.

So maybe you sign six month contracts with clients and let's say you're scheduling a call in September. This can be literally a conversation you have when they hire you, right? Hey, just so you know, I take these two weeks off. No one will even bat an eye about this, especially when you're telling them ahead of time.

Or maybe it feels super uncomfortable to just take all the things off the calendar, but maybe you decide I want to work only half time, right? Whatever it is you decide, you can just start planning, implementing, and communicating all of those things way ahead of time so that when it comes, it's like, oh yeah, we knew this was coming. And maybe, hopefully, fingers crossed, the most uncomfortable thing about when it actually gets there is forcing yourself to be off.

I'm pretty good at this now, but I used to be quite bad at it. And even now, it's not like if I have a good idea or if I have some creativity flowing, it's not like, oh, you're not allowed to do that. You're not allowed to think about that. I might pull out my phone, open up my notes app and just take a bunch of notes so that when I get back to work, I can be ready to dive in, right?

For me, this type of thing is never like black and white. It's not like, oh, you're not allowed to think about that because then the way my brain works, I will just think about it obsessively, right? So maybe I'm like, let's get it out of my brain and onto paper. Or let's say I'm home by myself for a day or whatever, my kids are busy and there is some work to do and I feel like working, amazing. Maybe I do that, right?

So it's not black and white, but just planning ahead, knowing what's coming, communicating it with your family, maybe with your team. This is another huge benefit of doing this, is now your team maybe gets that time off if that works for you. Maybe not. Maybe you alternate. So maybe they do work when you have that time off and then they get different time off.

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But I love that my whole team gets to take the time off. I mostly have a business manager, I love the idea of her just having those two weeks off as well and not even having to think about what's next, what we're doing. Although knowing her, she'll probably be thinking about it still a little bit, but that's okay.

It also allows you to, you know, maybe if you have something that you know you need to schedule or something that you've been putting off, maybe you save it up and you do it during those times off.

So for example, I'm having a surgery this year at the end of the year and it's kind of a major surgery because so it's going to take a few weeks of recovery. And it actually worked out really well to know, I didn't necessarily do this on purpose, this was just a really good available date that they had, but then it turned out to actually relieve some pressure on me of recovery time. So I planned it kind of right before those two weeks, then I'm going to be off for two weeks.

So I'll just be home, my family will be home. It'll be a nice time. Hopefully it will be anyway, after those first couple of days that'll probably be a little rough. And then I'll get to enjoy the rest of the time off and not have to think about work at all while I'm recovering and just allow myself to fully rest and have that little bit of recovery time where if you've had surgery, like after surgery sometimes you just feel a little fuzzy for a bit after anesthesia.

So it can also allow you to do things like that. We've also added, don't worry, I've added a little time onto the two weeks so that my business is kind of coming back and it will be running, but I will still have a little bit of time off.

So I hope that this is useful. I just want you to consider it. Think about it. It doesn't have to be holidays, right? Just because I'm recording this on Christmas Eve, it felt like an important message. I'm not recording on Christmas Eve. I'm recording in November, but thinking about Christmas Eve, it felt like a very important message to share with you.

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And so I want you to think ahead. Again, it doesn't have to be holidays. Maybe it's a week in the summer. Maybe it's a different time, right? Just think about it and think what that would change for you if you started making those decisions in your business.

I hope this helps. And I will talk to you next week. All right, goodbye.

And just one quick note I want to add here to the end. Stay tuned a few weeks from now, because I'm actually going to be having an interview on here with a good friend of mine who talks all about how she plans for longer leaves in her business, like maternity leave, for example. That's what we'll be talking about.

So if you're like, okay, great, love this short episode, stay tuned because there's another episode coming with way more tips on how to plan for taking longer periods off in your business.

All right, that's really it this time. 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](http://lindsaydotzlafoaching.com). That's Lindsay with an A, D-O-T-Z-L-A-F.com. See you next week.