

Ep #269: 9 Pieces of Unconventional Coaching Advice I Would Give Any Coach



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With Your Host

Lindsay Dotzlaf

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Hey, this is Lindsay Dotzlaf, and you are listening to *Mastering Coaching Skills* episode 269.

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 are here today. And if you're listening in real time, Merry almost Christmas if you celebrate. Today, I wanted to give you a little gift, and I prepared an episode that is completely unattached to anything else that I really ever talk about.

I'm going to tell you nine pieces of advice that I would give to all coaches, and all nine of these are quite unconventional. And these are all things that I practice myself. So, hopefully, they're going to feel helpful to you, and I'm just going to dive right in.

So, here we are. Nine pieces of advice that I would give you, that I would give any coach. And really, as I'm looking through them, I'm thinking probably any entrepreneur because they are all pretty important in my opinion, obviously, and they aren't things you hear very often.

Or maybe you do hear some form of them, but you maybe don't hear them in the way that I'm going to present them. All right? And what I urge of you as you listen is that maybe not all of these resonate with you. Maybe you even disagree with me on a few of them, which is, by the way, always great. You should not agree with me on every single thing I say.

What I would rather you do is listen and just maybe you hear one or two that really spark something for you, that really help you see something that you're like, "Ooh, I've been doing this thing, and it's been really, you know, maybe kind of tough on me, and it would be useful to adapt to this different way of seeing it or this different way of thinking."

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Okay, so let's dive in. Number one piece of unconventional advice, which, before I even say it, I debated which one to start with. And I chose the one that might feel the most controversial to you, especially if you have followed me for a long time. Okay? So the most controversial, but also the one that's going to sound the most your typical business coach expertise kind of advice, except it's going to be a little different.

Okay. So number one, convince yourself that you love to sell.

Pausing for dramatic effect.

I'm serious. Convince yourself that you love selling coaching. Convince yourself that selling is the service. It's literally how people get helped by you. It's also literally how you get to do the thing that you want to do so badly, assuming you are working for yourself. It is how people know that they can work with you. It is how people know exactly what you offer. And it's how you get to do the thing that you love so much.

And when you tell yourself you hate it, then you avoid it, or you try it, whatever that means, while telling yourself that you hate it, which means either fewer and fewer people get to experience your coaching, and also you're just building that muscle that says every time I write this sales post or email or sales page or whatever, I hate it. And that's just not useful ever. The real work when I say convince yourself that you love to sell is finding your way to sell.

So not adopting someone else's script that maybe feels gross to you, not adopting sales tactics. Like I hate that word when it comes to selling. I guarantee you that there are things in your life that you love to sell. When you tell your best friend about your new jeans that are so amazing that she has to have, that is selling. It might not feel like selling because it just feels like talking about something that you love so much. And that is one way you can start thinking about selling coaching.

And do I think this will happen overnight? No, probably not. If you are a coach who like tells yourself you don't love to sell, this is something I've

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been working on, honestly, myself, is just practicing like, "Oh, I love to sell," because it's not something that I used to think or believe or tell myself. And recently I've been helping some of my clients reimagine, think about how to write better emails. And one of the biggest things that comes up for them is, "Oh, I don't want to be salesy."

And I said this recently and some of them were like, "What?" I said, "Oh, yes you do. You want to sell coaching, right?" So you do want to be salesy. Except you don't want to be salesy in the way that you're thinking about it. So whatever that means to you, when I say convince yourself that you love to sell, what I mean by that is let's get rid of the way you're thinking about selling and let's find the way you do love to sell. Because selling is actually how anyone knows that you can help them.

Number two, pay yourself from the beginning. So, I know, you might be like, "Wait, but what? I'm not even making money in the beginning." So, that's fine. If you aren't making any money, when you become a coach, when you declare that you are a coach and you don't have any money to pay yourself from, maybe this one becomes pay yourself from the time that you have your first client.

And when I say pay yourself, it could literally be paying yourself twenty dollars a month. Like pay yourself something regular. Why is this so important? Because it creates the identity of I am a business owner and I'm getting paid for my services. I have just seen way too many coaches not do that. And next thing you know, it's a year or two years later and they still haven't paid themselves.

So they're either still working full-time and running this part-time thing, working so many extra hours outside of their regular full-time gig and not paying themselves for years, which in my mind I'm like, why would you do that? So much extra work, you could just not do that and just work your regular job and not be working all of those hours, right? Or they have someone else who lives in their house who brings in more money and they

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don't stress over needing to pay themselves. I just think it's a really bad habit to get in that is like, "Oh, I'll pay myself later."

When you learn to pay yourself from the beginning or as soon as you can, it builds the expectation that your business is supposed to support you. That actually is part of running a business. So many coaches wait till they're making enough, I'm going to say in quotes, in air quotes, and they just never develop that relationship. And even if it's twenty dollars, it's literally not about the money. It's about that mental signal to yourself, right, that you're sending to yourself that's like, "I am making money from this business. I am supporting myself with this business."

And even if you don't have to pay yourself enough to support your entire family, consider paying yourself, like I said, twenty dollars, or it could be enough to cover one bill, or enough to, you know, pay for one specific thing in your life. Even though I invested so much in the beginning back into coaching and back into finding that support, like that coaching support for myself, this is one thing, I don't think I've ever talked about this, but this is one thing that I have done since the beginning of my business, or since at least since I had my first client, that felt so important.

And I don't think then I knew how important it was, but now looking back and then also coaching so many other coaches who aren't doing this and that just let it go for a long time, I can just see how important it was that I set that precedent that this is a business that pays me. It is really a lot of work to run a business if it doesn't pay you at all, especially over the long term.

And even if, even if you're listening and you're like, "No, no, I don't need the money. I could just coach for free. Like I just love it. I love helping the people and I love it so much that I would just take free clients." Amazing. But guess what? You still have to sell, again, in air quotes, your coaching and your time, because just because it's free doesn't mean people will just automatically want it.

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And so let's just say you're running an entire coaching business where no one is ever paying you and that's your whole plan. Pay yourself in some way. Like get creative, find a way to pay yourself even if it's not with money. I don't think this probably is the case for most of you or any of you. But just in case you're like really pushing back, just consider that.

Okay, number three piece of unconventional coaching advice is don't believe everything you see or hear on social media. And maybe when you hear this, you're like, "Yeah, Lindsay, duh, I know this." But I'm going to get specific, okay? So when you follow other coaches, successful coaches, I just want you to know this thing.

You may have heard me mention this previously on an episode, but I just want you to consider that all of these successful coaches that you are following, sometimes they might be posting more from their aspirational self, not their Tuesday afternoon self. So sometimes they're teaching what they're learning in real time, not what they've mastered. And I want to be very clear, I do not think they are doing this on purpose to deceive anyone.

Even if you think about your marketing, I'm guessing you probably do this in some way. I've talked to many of my clients about this because I've seen it. Not everyone is showing all the behind the scenes and all of the real life things, but where it gets a little blurry is when more successful coaches are doing it and then they are teaching it like it is a, you know, "Here are the rules that I live by," but then their behind the scenes not really doing it. It's more aspirational.

Again, I don't think they're doing it on purpose to lie to you or to deceive you. I think they really are in the flow and that's where the content is coming from because that's what they are working on. But it's just really important that you see it not with rose-colored glasses on, right, that you just don't believe it and internalize it and compare yourself to it and make it mean all the things about yourself.

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Because when you compare your reality to their curated version, you will always come up short. And interestingly, I think that this one is the easiest one to know logically. Like most of you listening are probably like, "This is not unconventional and I already know." And also, there's a good chance you're doing it still and it just feels so real when you're actually in it, when you're scrolling Instagram or TikTok or LinkedIn or wherever and seeing the examples that you are in real time comparing yourself to because they feel so true.

Okay, number four. Get in rooms with your clients, not just other coaches. I have seen this in so many different spaces in so many different coaching programs. So if you're hearing this and thinking I'm calling you out, I am not. This is a industry-wide situation, okay?

So for example, if you are a relationship or marriage coach, go to, I don't know, seminars or workshops where people are working on their marriage. Prioritize that over going to your fifth coaching gathering of the year. I know that it feels maybe more fun.

You have friends, colleagues going, you relate to the coaches, but just imagine if you're a relationship coach and like Esther Perel is coming to town and teaching a two-day workshop or an immersive, whatever it is, and you go there and not only one, do you learn from her, but then you two build relationships and mingle with everyone that is there who are literally there to work on their marriage or their relationship.

And you're going to be there to meet all of them. That is going to be probably a little more outside of your comfort zone, but so much more beneficial to you and your business than just surrounding yourself with coaches all the time. Or if you coach artists, go to an artist workshop, seminar, whatever it is that again, A, you're going to learn from and B, is going to surround you with your ideal clients.

Because whoever's putting on the thing, the main thing, they're not available to, like if you're a one-on-one coach, that person on stage is not

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available to take on all of those clients, especially the ones that want the deeper one-on-one help. Not only that, but it's also going to put you in the position to be hearing what they are actually talking about in real time and it's going to keep you connected, right? Connected to your real clients versus in that just kind of coaching echo chamber.

You will become such a better coach because you're learning with them and not just always consuming more coaching content. And this is literally coming from someone who is creating coaching content for you, right? So I'm even saying sometimes, of course, I want you to listen to me, I want you to follow me if I'm your jam, but sometimes I want you to prioritize being in rooms full of your ideal people.

Okay, the next one. Number five. Learn to see photos of yourself and hear your own voice without cringing. Now, half of you may have just checked out because you just thought, "What are you talking about? I do not like photos of myself or my voice is terrible, and that is just a fact." What I will tell you from experience is that, nope, it's actually just a skill.

It is a skill that you can learn by practicing and by doing it over and over and over that seeing photos of yourself and hearing your own voice is a thing you can get more and more comfortable with over time if you decide that it's a skill and you want to learn it.

Literally for myself when I started this podcast, I was so freaked out about my own voice. I recorded a couple example episodes and I almost didn't have this podcast because I thought my voice is terrible, I can't do it. I think I even messaged my podcast producer who I had just hired and said, "Should I hire a voice coach?" And he was like, "What are you talking about?"

And it's just so normal. And I do think part of it is just exposure therapy. Like the more you hear it, the more you see photos of yourself, the more you're like, "Oh, that's just me." But if you don't know it's a skill and you just

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always think like, "Oh, this is special to me. Just inherently, I hate how I look or I hate how I sound," then you won't ever try to work on it.

You won't ever get on the other side of it and that will always be a painful thing in your business because no matter what type of marketing you do, no matter what type of coaching you do, there will be plenty of opportunities for you to see yourself in a photo for you to hear yourself in a recording. And so I just really urge you to get on the other side of that.

This is actually something I plan to teach on in the next year because it's something I had to work so hard on for myself. And so, you know, expect more of that. But just know when you decide it's a skill that you can learn, it makes it so much more actionable instead of just drama filled.

Okay, number six. This is one of my favorites. This changed so much for me in my business. Stop looking at who unsubscribes from your email. If you have an email list, I want you to imagine from this moment forward that you never, ever look at who is unsubscribing from your emails.

This is a self-torture that literally changes nothing and actually makes your content worse, in my opinion, because when you are worried about it, and especially in the beginning when you have fewer followers and you know a lot of them, maybe some of them you're really close to, maybe they're your family, your best friends, whatever, when you see one of them leave, it can have you creating content that is super safe and super directed towards those few people that you don't want to see leave your email list when really they might not be your ideal clients.

My guess is they're probably not. I am not kidding when I say it's probably been over seven years since I've looked at who has unsubscribed from my email list. Your mind might be blown right now. But this was a thing I was tortured with for a while that I just cold turkey was like, "What if I just never looked again?" Now, I'm not saying never look at unsubscribes, although, in general, that's also not a practice that I partake in.

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I do think it can be important if you have a lot of unsubscribes or something weird happens on your list out of nowhere, but even then, you can just look at the number and not the names. And I can't wait for you to implement this. I want you to message me five years from now when you tell me this completely changed your life. This is your actual holiday gift right now. Never again look at who unsubscribes from your email list.

Okay, number seven. Next tip. Know that making money and having or stewarding money are two different skills and remove all the shame from it. So you can be amazing at generating revenue and still be learning how to manage it. Or the other way around. You can be amazing at managing money and not know so well how to make it, how to generate the money, how to generate the revenue. They are completely different competencies, right?

Selling versus financial planning or selling versus just sitting with money in your account might be the most simple way to say it for those of you that are newer. I remember when I first started making money and I would just see money in my account and I would think like, "Oh my gosh, I have to spend it. I should hire a coach. I should hire this. I should do this thing. I should do this thing."

And it's one of the biggest skills I've had to learn throughout my business. I've always been fairly good at making money even before this business, I had a different one, and I was great at making money there too, but I have never been taught how to manage money. So that is something I've had to learn along the way. So don't beat yourself up about not being good with money, right? Again, this is one of those things like, this is not a personality trait. This is just something you can learn.

Okay, number eight. Stop talking about what you do at every social function like your money depends on it. It's exhausting for you, and people can feel it when you are on, right? Ironically, here's what I will say, I rarely talk about what I do at social functions unless someone asked me. And when I'm just present and having so much fun, people always get curious and they ask

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and they're very curious about me and what I do, and they come to me. That has happened for years and years.

If I could just like take that skill and give it to you, I would, because it's probably one of the top skills that has worked for me as far as signing clients in my business. And I know if you go listen to so many other podcasts or, you know, all the other voices out there, they're going to tell you, you know, always be talking about what you do and have this elevator pitch and all of the things.

And what I will say is just being out in the world, having more fun in your life, might be one of your best marketing tools without thinking I need to be telling everyone here what I do. The other thing it does, because I'm all about balancing, whatever that looks like for you, your business and your life, is that it takes you out of just having fun. I can't tell you how many clients of mine I have coached on, "I was at this event, you know, I was having so much fun with my friends, we were doing this thing, and, but I couldn't quite figure out how to work in what I do," right?

And I'm like, "Why are you trying to do that?" And then it ruined the whole event for them or the whole night, or at least pieces of it, or it made them not present for what was actually going down. I urge you to figure out how to just be you showing up in the world, having fun, doing your thing. And then when you're on, if you're at a networking event, of course, you're going to talk about what you do.

But at your friend's birthday party, that's like not the place to practice, unless, of course, you're just having so much fun and people are interested in you, and they get very curious, and then you say it, but even then, you're not pitching them. You just tell them what you do, like you're a math teacher, and then you move on. They will find you, they will follow you on social media, and it will be so much more intriguing to them if you aren't trying to verbally vomit on them every time that you're around people out in the world.

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Okay, the very last thing. This one is definitely unconventional. Last tip is, travel. Expand how you see the world. I don't care if it's locally, regionally, globally, but it makes you so less likely to assume that everyone thinks the way that you do. It makes you such a better coach. I swear by this. Like I travel, I love to travel. I love being around people who aren't like me. I love learning about all the things.

And when you see that there are all these different ways to live in the world, it makes you kind of question, like, "Oh, wait, is my idea of the right way to live? Is it actually true?" There's a really good chance if you travel in any form, that you'll come to know, like my way isn't the right way. There are all these amazing things happening in the world.

Also, full permission to have a life and invest in experiences, not just your business. It's so important. I, when I was making this episode, I really sat down and thought like, "What are the top unconventional things that have really moved my business forward?" And I will say, I think I've captured all of them here. And this last one might be one of the most important. Now, I do love to travel, but even if you don't, make sure that you're just out in the world experiencing different things with an open mind and an open heart and just learning from what's around you.

Okay, friend, I hope you enjoyed this episode, and I will see you again next week. Bye.

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.