

Ep #272: Why You Don't Need to Have It All Together to Show Up for Your Clients



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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 272.

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 coming at you today with a pretty vulnerable share, but I knew I had to record this episode in real time because something happened for me today that I was able to really see so many of my clients in the situation. And I thought, oh my gosh, I need to share this for so many different reasons.

So this episode is for all coaches, but it is absolutely for you if you have ever looked around and thought, everyone else has it so pulled together except me. Or you have felt like you needed to show up as someone other than yourself so that you can be taken seriously. Or if you've ever had a client tell you how amazing your coaching is and how incredible their results are, and maybe you smiled and said, thank you, or interrupt them and deflected like I did. You'll hear this in a minute. While a voice in the back of your head said, if only you knew.

This episode is for all coaches, but it's especially for the coaches that are hard on themselves and that have a hard time thinking things are going well.

Something happened today that I want to tell you all about. So first, a little context. Today, as I am recording this, it is December 16th, and I just hosted day one of the 2026 planning workshop. So when you're listening to this, it is in January of 2026 or later, and so I'm recording this about a month before. And literally today is the day I hosted day one. So there are two days, two 90-minute workshops. Today I hosted day one and I'm just popping on after the workshop to share what happened.

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Also for context, I have had personally a rough month or so. And because of the personal things happening, it has affected my business. And as you know, if you've been listening, I just launched a new membership, which has been so fun and amazing for the most part, except the part where I feel like I'm constantly behind.

So a couple weeks ago, my husband hurt himself and had to have surgery last minute that we were obviously not planning for. Also, just a few other personal things happened that are rare. I also lost my voice for over a week and I've been sick for like three weeks.

And my birthday was a couple days ago, as I'm recording this, and there was so much going on, so much nonsense, that we didn't really do anything. And we actually had a huge snowstorm, so when I took over and I planned for friends and family to come over for my birthday, it actually ended up getting canceled one person at a time saying they couldn't come, which I totally get, right?

Now, all of these things, none of them are a big deal on their own, but the last month to month and a half, it has just felt like thing after thing after thing, which is really rare for me. Sometimes I say that when you make a big choice or make a bold move, the universe says, prove it. And that's what I feel like is happening right now. I launched a membership that I've been thinking about and creating for the last two years and the universe is like, oh yeah, show us what you got.

It's a little ridiculous sometimes, but it does feel true in the moment and it actually makes me feel a little bit better. It makes me, helps me be able to step up to the plate and say, okay, I'm ready. What do you have? Let's go.

So because all of these things are happening, in my business, in this brand new membership where I've promised all this new content in the first few months, I am feeling behind, I'm feeling defeated. I'm thinking every single client I have is mad at me. And these are really rare for me at this point in my business. Literally what I teach, right? Like how to be a great coach.

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And I rarely am thinking any of these thoughts about myself and my business.

And so while they're showing up over the last month, it has been especially hard on me even when I made them a promise that I haven't been able to deliver on and not only was it not because I wasn't prioritizing it, but at one point for almost two weeks, it was because I didn't have a voice that I could use to record the content that I wanted them to have. It felt so out of my hands. Now, of course, I could go back and do things differently, plan things better ahead of time, yada, yada, right? But that is not what this is about.

Okay, and for just one more piece of context, today I hosted, like I said, day one of the 2026 planning workshop, and this is a workshop that I have hosted for the last, I think three years. So this is not something I've never done, but I did make some changes this year and I planned to use it to then sell The Complete Coach for the final launch of 2025.

So I'm about to share something really important if you're the coach that looks around and thinks, oh, everybody has it together but me. They all know what they're doing. Look at them go, and here I am just not knowing what's happening, or any form of that.

Okay. So now with all of that context, I want you to come into today as I'm recording this. Present day, here's what happened. So the workshop started at 2:00 p.m. and around 1:00, I pulled up all of my notes and the workbook we created and I started just questioning myself, which is weird. And I started looking over everything and thinking this is too complicated and really kind of pairing it down and editing, which ended up being great. I'm glad I did it. It was just weird that I was feeling so heavy about it.

So I was cramming in my lunch. I felt literally like I was cramming for a test, which is very rare since, I don't know, 20 years ago when I was in college, which I often crammed for tests. But it just brought me back to this feeling of like, here we go again. This is the part where you really mess it all up. And about 10 minutes before the workshop, I looked up how many people

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were registered, see that there are a couple hundred. First, I was shocked and immediately felt even more unprepared.

So 5 minutes before the workshop, here's what I did. I decided I needed to change my shirt three times. Now, you may have heard me talk about this on the podcast before, but when I am feeling overwhelmed or stressed, I just need something soft. I don't even know, I need something that isn't bothering me, nothing weird can be touching my skin. So I took off my rings, I took off my jewelry, and I put on a few different shirts, literally 5 minutes before. Okay? Ended up wearing a super soft sweater.

And 1 minute before, I sat down at my computer, I took a few deep breaths and grounded myself and I thought, I need to find a thought that will get me through this. Because I noticed or I realized after changing my shirt multiple times, oh, I'm really overwhelmed and I haven't acknowledged it. And I'm about to head into this workshop and I don't want this energy to transfer to them.

We're about to plan the next year for a couple hundred coaches and the last thing I want is for them to feel overwhelmed or for them to feel me feeling overwhelmed. That's the worst case scenario, actually. At this point it had nothing to do with selling anything. It was just like, I can't infect them with this overwhelm.

So I took a few deep breaths and I found a thought, and the thought was, if nothing else, all I have to do, all I get to do, is show up and listen and serve them for the next 90 minutes. And then on top of that, there was like a, and I have planned for this. There's no need to panic. I know what I'm doing. I've done this for years. So those were all kind of like the supporting thoughts. And I wrote down, all I have to do is listen and serve them for 90 minutes on a post-it, which I will share with you. And that is exactly what happened.

Now, that doesn't mean it was just perfect. So I get on and then all of a sudden my Zoom room starts to fill. Next thing you know, it's like continuing

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on to a second page, right? There are lots of people on. I felt a little in shock. And if you're listening and you are on, you may have noticed I was a little kind of discombobulated in the beginning for sure.

I still felt unprepared even though I was so prepared. And I still felt shocked even though I knew how many people were registered, but thank goodness I had a Post-it note and I just kept looking at it and it literally got me through the whole thing. I still felt uncomfortable the whole time, but just seeing that thought like I just have to show up and listen and be here for them.

So here's what happened. I delivered the workshop. It was not perfect by any means. I made some mistakes. I went back and forth according to the timeline I had set for myself. So here's what happened at the end.

So I was determined to finish in 90 minutes because I wanted to end on time for the people that blocked off that 90 minutes and then had other things. So I did. With 2 minutes left, I said, and if anybody wants to stay on, I haven't had the chance to take many questions or do much coaching today besides the few people who've shared throughout. And I can stay on for an extra half an hour. So anybody that needs to go, amazing. Anybody that wants to stay on, I'll be here for 30 minutes and we can answer any questions.

And someone raised their hand. So I called on him. And instead of asking me a question, he said, how dare him, he said something like, I'm so grateful for you and these workshops. It's so clear how much you care and how much value you're giving us, something like that.

And then he said a few more things, and I did something that I actually can't believe I did. I interrupted him before he stopped talking. I think I was so surprised and so, it was so in conflict with how I was feeling throughout the whole thing that I couldn't even let him finish. So shout out Kyle, you're the best. So grateful for you. I love everything you said and I'm sorry that I didn't let you finish.

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Now maybe you have more context. Hopefully you hear this. And it's such a good noticing for me as a coach to realize, oh, the reason some of my clients, a lot of my clients deflect compliments or can't hear compliments from their clients is because their thoughts about the current situation or about themselves are so far from what the client is saying that it literally can't compute in your mind. And that is the experience I was having in that moment.

So I deflected, a couple of people, like we laughed about it. I apologized. A couple people chimed in the chat saying similar things. And at that point I had to just release and like let go and know and believe that what they were saying is true to them.

And then a couple of my membership members started talking about the membership, one out loud and one in the chat, which I wasn't prepared for at all. I had decided I wasn't even pitching the membership because, like on day one of the workshop, because I was in such a weird head space. And so I just decided to put it off till the next day. And what happened was, they kind of ended up semi pitching it for me, which was of course incredible and I'm so grateful. But I couldn't even absorb that in the moment.

And I know some of you, my clients, were on and you probably had some thought like, I wish I could do this. I wish I could just get on here and deliver like this. And I just want you to hear what was going through my mind the entire time. Things like, this isn't good enough, this isn't your standard, you weren't even prepared to get on today. It doesn't matter how much you prepared, you're still unprepared, right?

Like all of these thoughts, which at this point in my business, they are rare for me, but it did take me back to when I used to have them. Which reminds me so much of why I coach my clients on what I coach them on. And maybe some of my clients, maybe some of you did pick it up. Maybe you could feel that energy coming from me. So I just want to confirm if that's you that you were right. I was having a rough time.

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But that thought, all I have to do is listen and serve these amazing humans for the next 90 minutes. That thought really transformed the whole experience for me and allowed me to pull through in a way that I probably wouldn't have been able to otherwise.

But don't worry, we aren't done. So that happened. I get off of the workshop. And maybe let's say, I don't know, between 15 and 30 minutes later, I checked my email and I have an email from someone that was on the workshop. And I'm not going to read the email because it's pretty personal, but I'm going to give you a couple highlights that started the email.

Here they are. Thank you, Lindsay, for the workshop and your calming presence. Okay, first, that blew my mind because inside, I felt so anxious when we started, I did calm as it went. So then I started to feel more like myself. But just know, her words did not match my experience for the whole thing.

Then she says, I received exactly what I needed today. The tears came and I released some heaviness from sadness. I now can see why I am where I am in my business, 6 and 1/2 years in.

Okay, I'm not going to read the rest because it's personal. But this is the email that took me out. I started crying immediately. I started just releasing all of the pent up energy and frustration and sadness and not good enoughness that I have been, I think holding in for the last month or so.

I kept reading the part over and over about 6 and 1/2 years of being stuck. And this 90 minute workshop helped her release something. That felt so powerful for me. That felt like this is why I'm here. This is why I do this work. This is why I think coaching is so powerful. This is why I will never give up or let those voices inside tell me that I have to stop or that I shouldn't keep going. Because I know if I look outside of the last month and a half, I know that I am here to help people, to help them release all of the shoulds and all of the things they've been holding on to that maybe they've

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heard all of the goals they've created because they've been told they should. And that is part of my work.

And really remembering that has drawn me so much more into my purpose and my mission as a coach. And as I'm recording this, will help me show up differently tomorrow and maybe more prepared and not feeling overwhelmed or anxious or heavy. But who knows, maybe also just knowing if I do feel that way tomorrow, I'm going to get through it and it's still going to have the impact that I hope it does.

And my biggest takeaway from that email is her experience wasn't because I created some fancy amazing extensive framework. It was because I created safety and I asked questions, and then I listened and I let them talk and think more than I did.

So after this email, I really sat with myself for a minute. First I cried, I processed all of the things. And then I had some realizations which I jotted down because I didn't want to forget them.

The first one was, I almost charged for this workshop this year because I've done it for the last three years and this one is more extensive. We have a pop-up community. It's happening over a couple days and I almost charged for it because I thought, this is so much effort. And I'm so glad that I didn't. I decided at the last minute that we weren't charging. And I also made some other changes like added community.

And so much of that was just about me listening to my gut. And me literally looking at my values, which I have written out, and one of them is generosity. I've discovered that generosity is so important to me in so many ways. And I wanted to be sure that that showed up here. So I decided not to charge literally at the last minute. I thought this may have been a mistake. I have a lot going on. Should I even be here doing this? Is it even going to create money? Is it even going to have people signing up for the membership?

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And after hosting it, what I know and can say fully, honestly is, who cares? This is part of the work I love to do, and part of having this podcast when I started it is because I want this free work out in the world. And so when I think about the workshop, I think even if nobody signs up after tomorrow, it still feels so worth it for me. Even though I was busy, even though it was a lot of work, has been a lot of work, I still feel amazing about it and we're only through day one.

And then I think there's something about me showing up soft, literally and figuratively, that really helped everyone there resonate, maybe not everyone. Maybe there could have been people there who did not love the workshop and they just haven't told me, which is totally fine, of course, always.

But even me just knowing I need to soften, I need to change my shirt so it's softer. I need to show up in this openness and willingness to listen. And I don't need to show up with expert energy. I just need to show up and be here for them and take them through these questions that I've already prepared. And then just be willing to listen to what they say and what they need.

I do think it changed the energy of the workshop and the way I was able to show up. Because I was just honest about where I was with myself instead of trying to be someone else, instead of trying to pretend like I wasn't feeling that way. Or instead of thinking this isn't the right way and I quick have to shuffle around and dance around and do some gymnastics in order to prepare myself for this call, instead I just sat in the quiet, took deep breaths, changed my shirt into something softer, and reminded myself that they just needed me to listen.

And if I'm honest, this does feel like a lesson that I learn in different ways over and over and over. So if you're listening and you're thinking, uh, I relate or I have these things that keep showing up for me, I just want you to know, just keep listening to them, follow them like follow the guidance of what your body and your experience and the reality is telling you.

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So to close, for coaches who feel behind or who think they need to have it all together before they can show up for their clients, I just want to tell you, you don't. You just need to listen and be there and show up with some sort of plan. Your presence is so much of the value. You just putting all your stuff aside and being able to show up and listen. That is actually the value for your clients or potential clients.

And I also want to say, I am actually still sitting with this. Like I said, I am recording this the day of the workshop and so I have zero results from selling the membership. I have no idea how this is going to turn out. And I'm still feeling honestly a little wobbly about it. But I thought it was important that you actually hear me in this state versus the after where everything is either rainbows and sunshine or doom and gloom.

And I want you to know that I also am intentionally taking a moment to celebrate myself. I'm pretty bad at this sometimes. If you're my client, you know. This comes up often in my communities and guess why? Because like attracts like, right? And I can be quite bad at this. So I am taking a moment this evening to celebrate myself. And I wanted to share this all with you right now while it's fresh.

Thank you for being here. I appreciate you so much. If you're listening in real time, welcome to 2026 and I can't wait to see what happens for all of us this year.

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.