

## Ep #275: Why I'm Allergic to Coaching Best Practices



### 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 275.

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 glad you're here today, as always. Today I want to talk about something that has been a hot, hot topic in all of my various coaching containers recently, which is my allergy to best practices. Okay, let me tell you what I mean. I want you to think about the marketing advice that you hear as a coach. Maybe you see it on Instagram or on TikTok or wherever it is that you are scrolling.

And specifically, I want you to think about the advice that you see or the programs or trainings that you're being promoted that sound something like your coach marketing best practices, or the secret to marketing yourself as a coach, or the proven formula for... Or anything that's like that, right? The one way, the winning strategy.

And I want you to think how ingrained it maybe has become to you, just pause and think for a second, that there really is one single right way that you should be marketing your business, your coaching practice. And have you ever tried following some of this advice or maybe even buying the programs or buying the courses?

You try following the advice and you look around and you think, this is working for everyone but me. And it has made you miserable or made you really question, am I even supposed to be here doing this? Am I right for this? Or maybe you've tried that proven strategy and you really thought, like, what is wrong with me when it didn't work?

Today we're talking all about why this happens and why it's not your fault. And side note, I've been in this cycle before. And I've watched dozens, actually hundreds probably, of clients be in this exact cycle, and I have some thoughts, so I want to share them.

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So come back to that training or program that's promoted as the secret or the best practices or winning strategy. And I want you to just start considering when you see that, that can sometimes be code for, I have the one right way to do it and I'm going to show you. Now, before I tell you what I believe is wrong with this approach, first I'm going to tell you when this messaging actually isn't a problem. So when it's very specific, right? When it accounts for at least one trait or variable about specific people, and it gets specific, then it's maybe not a problem.

So for example, if something is called like best practices for marketing your business as an introvert. Okay, great. That's at least taking into account that not all humans are the same, that you have this special quality about you. Or another example is the secret formula for effective coaching over Voxer. All right, that's specific. It's still not perfect, but at least both of those examples are taking into account that you're not maybe doing the exact same thing that every single coach is doing.

But let's dig into when it is a problem. It is a problem when it's a blanket statement. And it sounds like guru advice meant for everyone. And when there's no acknowledgment that different people might need different approaches.

So for example, the only marketing strategy you need as a coach, or the proven formula for making 100k as a coach. When you hear those, you can tell, and I want you to start picking these out. I want your brain to start doing this when you see them, showing yourself how often you're reading things like this. And I want you to think, there's no way that there's only one marketing strategy that you need, or only one proven formula for making 100k. That's lumping all the people together.

It's a problem because it's assuming everyone is the same. It's assuming everyone is struggling in whatever area it's helping you with, with the exact same things. And the biggest problem I see is that it assumes that everyone has the same brain, the same personality, the same preferences, the same lifestyle, same culture, the same circumstances.

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I could go on and on, right? It's just making so many assumptions. Or assumes that if you don't and if there is something weird about you, it's okay because you're going to fix that before you come into their program and use their method.

Oftentimes what's happening in this situation is it's turning, here's something that has worked for me, or here's something that has worked for me plus a handful of clients into, here's the only way. And when you read the marketing that looks like that, it makes you think, ah, this is the way and I should know it. And if I don't, then I'm failing.

And here's where it becomes an even bigger problem. When you make it mean that you are the problem, when you see something like this or when you try something like this and it doesn't work for you. When it makes you feel like maybe you are broken or that it will never work for you, or that everyone else can figure this out except for you. This can create a cycle that lasts for years. I've seen this last for years. I have coached so many coaches out of this cycle, and it's so painful. It's very heartbreaking for me to watch as a coach.

And real quick, I'll share a personal example when it comes to something like this. So when I was a newer coach, there was a coach that I followed. I don't actually even remember who it was. I just remember it was a coach I followed and she was hosting this challenge, and it was a 100-day video challenge and it was like to go live on Facebook, I think, for 100 days in a row.

And when I tell you that this challenge took me out, it really took me out. Not because I was incapable of ever going live. And honestly, at the time, going live, it was something kind of new, so it was even a little different than now because most people weren't doing it, and so it kind of stood out when you did it.

So I committed to it, 100 days. And by like day seven, I was so, so miserable. My videos were pretty terrible. I never knew what I was talking about. It just, everything about it, it just put me into kind of a tailspin every

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day, and I would spend so much of my days procrastinating and trying to decide what I was going to talk about. And it just took up so much brain space and so much of my time instead of me just posting and doing the things that were actually working and that I already knew worked.

So that's just one small example, but I just wanted to share it so you can hear, first of all, it's not a you problem. We all have experienced things like this. And that sometimes these can come in tiny packages and sometimes they can be these bigger overall marketing trends that we buy into.

Here's the cycle that I see so many coaches get stuck in. Tell me if this sounds familiar. First, you follow the guru or the influencer or whoever it is. Then you buy the product or you sign up for the challenge. Then you do what the guru says over and over and over because it's working so well for them, right? Like look at all those testimonials they have.

And then it doesn't work or it makes you miserable, even maybe if it is working a little bit. And then you compare yourself to all the people who it is working for. And then, here's where it gets really tricky, is you double down on this advice, on believing that it's the right way. This is called the sunk cost fallacy, right? You've already invested your time, your money, your energy.

So instead of pausing and reevaluating, you keep going. You don't question, is this right for me? Is there maybe another way? You just keep going. So you keep going and you keep trying, and then you start to really be pretty hard on yourself. Again, instead of questioning, is this right for me? You just try, try, try and then be harder and harder on yourself. And then you start the cycle over again with either the same guru or a new one, but a similar strategy. And then you're just harder and harder on yourself each time it doesn't work.

And I don't know if you can tell by listening, but this is never the path to a successful business or to raving clients. You absolutely can never hate yourself or judge yourself into business success as a coach. I just want to know if that sounds familiar.

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Here's what is actually happening in that situation. You see some advice online or in a program or wherever you are, and you start following advice that just simply isn't made for you. You're trusting someone else's guru energy, which can be quite convincing, over what you know about yourself.

You know yourself better than anyone else can. You try to fit yourself into someone else's neurotypical, maybe extroverted, possibly American, maybe works from home with no kids or doesn't have a regular job blueprint. And you're wondering why it just doesn't fit for you. And you can fill in all of those descriptors with whatever makes sense for you. That's just an example.

Overall, you're just making it so much harder than it needs to be. And here's the sneakiest part. There's something called the fundamental attribution error. Yes, that's a psychology term. But here's the definition. The fundamental attribution error is simply when you explain other people's success and you credit external factors, right? The method or the strategy. But then when you look at your own success or lack of success, you blame internal factors. So it's yourself, your discipline, your self-worth, any of those things.

So when you see a method and it's working for someone else, you credit the method. But when it doesn't work for you, you blame yourself instead of questioning the advice, even if it might be great advice for some people. But you just never pause to consider that maybe it really just isn't for you.

And I want to be very clear, this can show up even when you are creating some results. You can be making money in your business and still be miserable. I don't know if you know that. All because you're forcing yourself to do something that doesn't fit. You're forcing yourself into a mold that isn't for you.

So here are some examples. One I already gave, showing up live on socials for 100 days when doing it once completely and utterly drains you. Being consistent with a strict schedule but fighting against it every single day and week and dreading it every Tuesday because that's content day or

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whatever you decided. Going to networking events when you started your business because you don't want to leave your house for the most part. Writing weekly newsletters when you'd rather be having actual conversations with people.

I see some of you mentally raising your hands right now. I just know as I read some of those examples, you're like, oh my gosh, that's me. Which one of those hits close to home for you, if any of them? Or do you have some of your own?

I want you to think about the last marketing strategy you tried that felt like a slog. Not in a like, I just didn't feel it or I just don't feel like it, so I just don't show up kind of way, but something that truly felt heavy and draining and like you were fighting against yourself the whole time, every time. Was it actually a fit issue? Or was it just hard because it's new?

Those are two different things, and I want you to be honest. I'm going to ask again. Was it a fit issue? Or did it just feel hard because it's new? Hard because it's new, fine. Keep going. But if it's a complete fit issue, consider finding something that doesn't drain you or that maybe even feels pretty fun.

And here's an important note. Discomfort doesn't always mean that it's not for you. I don't, I want to make that very clear. I'm not saying that everything should feel easy. I'm not handing out permission slips to never do hard things because if you're building a business, that's not how it works. Discomfort is part of building a business, period. But the difference is, does it drain you because it doesn't fit how you're wired? Or does it feel hard because it's new and you haven't done it enough times yet?

Again, those are two different things. One is a fit issue. The strategy itself doesn't match how you work. One is just the discomfort of learning something new. It's unfamiliar, so you're just building that muscle and it takes practice. And sometimes you might even have to try something a few times before you know which one of those it is, or a lot of times. And you get to be honest with yourself about which one you're dealing with so that



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you can solve it. And sometimes you may not know right away. And again, that's okay.

Here's a reframe for you. What if the goal isn't to find the best practice, but to find your practice? What if the answer isn't to be more disciplined, but to find a better fit? Let me tell you what's possible, because I've seen it happen over and over and over with my clients and this is literally some of the most fun work that I do.

Here's what happens when you stop forcing it. You will actually start to show up consistently. Not because you've just magically become more disciplined, but because it doesn't drain you. You stop dreading your marketing and start seeing it as just connecting with people in whatever way feels good to you.

And again, then you become more consistent with it over time. You have energy left over for actual coaching, the part of your job that you always love, at least most of my clients say that. You might start to experiment a little more because you're not exhausted from the last thing that you forced yourself to try over and over and over. And you trust yourself. You truly start to trust yourself. You listen to your instincts and you listen to your own judgment.

Over time, business then starts to feel like something you get to do instead of something you have to show up for and just survive. It doesn't mean everything is easy, obviously, but it really can help you stop feeling like you're pushing a boulder uphill every day. This is the way sometimes my clients describe it when they come to work with me.

So, I'm going to tell you more about this next week, but I want to briefly mention something I've been working on over the last at least six months or maybe more, is something I've created called Coach Archetypes. And they are designed to help with exactly what I'm talking about. Coach Archetypes are something that I share with my clients inside my containers that help you figure out how you just naturally show up in the world. And then they help you plan your marketing from there.



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You might have one main archetype or you might have two that are tied. And the archetypes take into account your personality, what you enjoy doing, how you prefer to show up. A couple quick examples is that maybe you love real connection and one-on-one conversations. Or you love spreadsheets and strategic planning. Or maybe presenting and teaching is your main thing.

These all are connected to different archetypes. And again, you can have more than one, most people do. But the point of all of it is that once you know what your archetype or archetypes are, you can stop fighting against yourself and lean into the activities that already feel more natural to you.

So, I'm going to circle back to the archetypes next week, but here's what I want you to know for this week. Even if you never work with me, I want you to know this. Whatever came up for you as you listened to me talk about following gurus and online experts, it's not your fault. And I mean this.

If you have tried things and they haven't worked, I promise you, it's not your fault. As long as you truly gave them a try, right? If you showed up and you did the work and maybe you're still doing it now, you're doing it over and over and over and it's just not working. You have to stop blaming yourself, because that cycle and the self-blame will create exhaustion. And that is not a character flaw. It's just what happens when you follow advice that was never built for you.

And yes, absolutely, if you are running a business, you have to be showing up in some way. You have to be out in the world telling people about what you do. I'm not just completely letting you off the hook. But if you are showing up over and over and over and you're exhausted, whether it's working or not, maybe consider you're just following some wrong advice or wrong strategies or strategies that just weren't made for you.

So find something that resonates with how you work and trust yourself more to know what you need. Lean into your strengths instead of constantly trying to fix your weaknesses. That's the plan for 2026. And really anytime after, or before.

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Okay, so if you're resonating with what I'm saying today, I have a couple options for you. First, if you're listening in real time, I actually have a training happening today called the Anti-Guru Marketing Approach. But you have to be quick. It's at 1:00 p.m. Eastern, today. The day this podcast comes out. I know most of you as you're listening, that has probably already passed. But if it hasn't, go to the show notes, the link is there and hop on in.

The second thing, if you aren't listening the day this episode came out, go to the show notes, click on The Complete Coach and it will give you an option to join the waitlist. And if you join the waitlist, you'll be the first to know about future trainings like this when they are happening. So do that now so that you don't miss out on it next time and you don't have to hear it at the very last minute on the podcast.

And I also have an awkward ask for you. So I have noticed a big uptick in my listeners recently. I think it's because I've been leaning into exactly this type of content that I'm talking about today. So, if this resonates with you, I have a small ask.

First, share this with a friend, a coach friend or an entrepreneur friend who just needs to hear some of the things. I've been getting a lot of feedback lately in my inbox and I really appreciate it. To me, that means this content is resonating and I would love for you to share it.

The other thing is, I would love if you left a review. It'll take like 30 seconds, maybe in iTunes or in Spotify. Just click the stars and if you're up for it, even leave a few words about the podcast, about what you like about it. It really helps people find it, but it also helps me know what's resonating, what you want to hear more of. Okay? Thank you so much for listening today and I'll see you again next week.

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.