

Ep #284: Experimenting and Evaluating in Your Coaching Business with Mary Okon



Full Episode Transcript

With Your Host

Lindsay Dotzlaf

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Hey, this is Lindsay Dotzlaf, and you're listening to Mastering Coaching Skills, episode 284.

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.

Lindsay: Hey, coach, I'm so happy you are here today. Today I am interviewing my client and friend, Mary Okon, and she has so much wisdom to share with you. I cannot wait for you to learn all of the things from her. We are going to talk about how she approaches experimenting and evaluating in her coaching practice. And she's going to give you so many incredible tips. I don't even know where to start. I'm just going to let you listen. So, with no further ado, let's dig in.

Hello. I am so excited you're here today. Tell everybody who you are and what you do.

Mary: Hi, I'm Mary Okon. I'm a life and wellness coach who helps clients with mindset and self-care so they can achieve their goals, all while showing up great for themselves, their families, and their careers because success doesn't have to come with sacrifice.

Lindsay: I love that. And I love the idea of success not having to come with sacrifice. It's so much of what I teach, and it's probably one of the things, one of the reasons you like being in my spaces, because I think that's super important.

So, maybe before we kind of dive into some of the things we're going to talk about today, I think people just might love to hear, like, how did you become a coach? How, like, why are you here? How did you get here?

Mary: Yeah, so back in the start of COVID, I was super burnt out, so I started going on a whole wellness journey. And I started with work-life balance, then I started eating healthier. Then COVID was not ending, so

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you feel like everything's out of your control, work, this, that, everything. So I started to get more serious about my weight loss because I decided I could at least control what I was eating. And in that, I found out about mindset work, and then I was just hooked on all of it.

And through that whole process, I beat burnout, I eliminated my chronic migraines and I have lost a bunch of weight and kept it off ever since. So I was like, how do more people not know? So I left corporate, got certified and started my business to help others learn how to balance it all without the burnout, without feeling like they have to sacrifice one part of their life for another.

Lindsay: That's amazing. So if people are listening and they might have the same question that just came up for me, which as I was hearing you say that I related to some of those things, especially like the chronic pain and migraines, did you say chronic pain? Is that what you said?

Mary: I had migraines every day for years.

Lindsay: The chronic migraines. And did you shift those with mindset work, or were you using like other tools at the time, and mindset was kind of the thing that was like fueling all of it?

Mary: So it was all mindset and self-care. So I actually fired three neurologists in the process of all this, and then finally cured it myself with the mindset and self-care. So it was lifestyle changes, stress management, eating better, taking care of myself, learning to rest. So the combination of all of it.

Lindsay: And when you say self-care, for sure, some people right now are thinking like you cured migraines with bubble baths. And so what, I mean, probably most of my listeners are not thinking that, but just in case, when you say self-care, what does that mean to you?

Mary: I mean learning to rest, learning to take breaks, learning not to be so hard on myself and beat myself up over little things, and movement.

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Movement was a huge thing I didn't know I needed or would enjoy. So now I love biking and walking, but it allows me to process my stress, process emotions, all of that, but then helps you regulate yourself and just show up better everywhere.

Lindsay: I have this picture of something that you posted in the, I think in the membership community maybe the other day that just touched my heart so much. And I can just like picture it happening because you're so lovely and delightful. You said, so you walk all the time is my impression. I don't actually know how much you walk, but I feel like you take multiple walks a day. Is that true?

Mary: Sometimes, yes.

Lindsay: Or you just are very committed to the one walk and it just so happens that sometimes it's like after our calls or whatever because I just know sometimes you're like, and now I'm going for a walk. And can you just tell them what happened the other day because I just think I'm like, wouldn't the world be such an incredible place if we just all did this?

Mary: Yeah, so I was out on a walk and I was like, I walk through the neighborhoods around us. And I was going around like the cul-de-sac and I went one way and I watched this lady and I thought she was just bringing her mail back from her mailbox. And then when I came around, I saw her again. And I'm like, okay, and she's like, "You inspired me to go for a walk." And I'm like, oh. And I'm like, okay, so I talked to anyone. So I'm talking to her and I'm like, "Well, are you okay if I walk with you?" She's like, "Yeah." So okay, so we walk a little bit and she's like, "You know, you just go back there to your subdivision, I'll turn around." I'm like, "Well, let me make sure you get home safe."

So we went as far as she wanted and then we went back, but it was just super nice because I got to learn about her life and her experiences and we just connected, but it was wonderful to get to meet someone new and to inspire anyone in any way to get out in the fresh air and move their body

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and just have that connection with someone. So it was really nice to meet her, made sure she got home safe, and definitely I'll stop by some other time soon and see how she's doing.

Lindsay: I just seriously love that story so much. I think it's so fun. And when you said she, the first thing she started with was like, you have inspired me to go for a walk. Did she just mean because she just sees you walking all the time? Like she sees you walking by?

Mary: I think just that day she saw me out there walking.

Lindsay: Oh, okay, I love that. So good. She was like, a walk. That might feel nice right now.

Mary: Yeah.

Lindsay: I love that. Oh my gosh. I just have such a clear vision of what I think this looked like. Even though I don't even think you told me the age of the woman or like any of the things, but in my mind, I can picture it. I don't know. I'll maybe I'll tell you later what I think and then you can tell me if that's right. And you talk about stuff like this all the time that it's like, oh, you're going for a walk or you're just like out in the world, enjoying the weather.

And actually, I think I've shared this with you, but it always really inspires me too. There is something about that's like, oh yeah, a walk does sound great. I should go for a walk because I love to go for walks. And since I've known you, obviously, I didn't meet you until after you were a coach, and this is just like who I think that you are, just the person who's like always eating all the healthy food and going for walks.

But from I think from what I understand, before you started your wellness journey, maybe that wasn't just naturally who you are. Have you always done that? Have you always been the person like out picking up your neighbors to go for walks in the middle of the day?

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Mary: So I've always been super friendly, but I was not taking care of myself at all before I went on my wellness journey. So there was skipping meals, skipping breaks, skipping vacation for six years. All those things and it was just non-existent. So through my wellness journey, while I was losing weight, I had learned that you can also get weak when you're losing weight. So I was like, oh, I don't want to get weak. I want to be strong.

So that's when I got like an exercise bike, proved myself that I could use it, then bought my Peloton bike. That ticked off everything. And then throughout this, then I started biking outdoors. That's my absolute favorite. And then I'm like, oh, I just love being outside in the fresh air. It helps you feel so good. So now I go on a lot of walks too.

Lindsay: So if there are any coaches listening right now, and this might throw you off, I did not plan to talk about this, so I didn't tell you when we were prepping for this, but if there are any coaches listening who feel a little bit just maybe either they're still working full time and now maybe they're coaching so they're just like working a lot, maybe a little burnt out, or maybe their business is just keeping them very busy and they aren't making time for this. What would you say?

Like what's just one step that they could take if they're listening and they're like, I, there, in their head kind of judging themselves, right? They're like, I should really be doing stuff like that. Of course, we want to say coaches don't do that, but of course, we do. What's just one step? What's the first thing?

Mary: Take your breaks. That is the absolute best thing you can start with, even if it's just five minutes to start with. And by break, I do not mean leaving your office and getting on your phone.

Lindsay: Oh, wait, wait, hold on. You're calling me out right now. What's happening?

Mary: Calling all of us out right now, me included sometimes.

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Lindsay: Yeah, yeah.

Mary: But take five minutes away. Go outside, sit in the sunshine, get a drink of water, take three deep breaths, anything like that to kind of like give yourself a break, reset, come back refreshed. And even just starting with that five minutes will make a huge difference because even if you can do it a few times throughout the day, your whole day is going to be set up for success.

Lindsay: I have definitely learned that if I'm sitting at my computer and I'm feeling very, like stress isn't the right word, but very, I'm very dialed in, but it doesn't feel like the output is actually happening, right? Like, I'm really trying to get something done, and it feels maybe it's even on a time crunch or a whatever, I have learned that if I just get up and force myself to go outside and just walk even once around the block, especially if it's like the sun is warm but the breeze is a little cool, right? With like that perfect day, it is everything. It is like I will feel completely re-energized. I will get the work done so much faster, and it just really shifts a lot for me.

Mary: It shifts so much and it's something people just don't realize. And they think they have to sit at the computer and force and force and force output, and then it takes them 10 times as long and they're upset and exhausted and irritated. And it's like, no, stop. If you're at it like this long or half hour and it's just not working, go do anything else. Move your body. When you move your body, you get your thoughts working. Come back to it. You'll get done in no time and it makes your whole day better.

Lindsay: I think clients are always surprised when I give them the assignment of like, here's what I want you to do. Go for a walk and either then get back to it when you get back to your house, or take your phone with you and don't type on your phone and look down and then fall and like break your nose. That's not going to be a good plan. But you could take some voice notes, right? If you feel the inspiration coming. It's just like loosen up, maybe a little bit about the way you work. I think sometimes can be just, I don't know, it can be really, like people will be surprised how

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productive they can be by really moving their body in any way, doesn't have to be a walk even.

Mary: Yeah, and something you teach us all, so like work to, work in the way that works for us. And like I've really paid attention to when I'm working out, especially on my Peloton, I have some of my best ideas, so I have my phone there with me and I'm creating my content as I'm there. But it's like I can do 10 posts in a workout there instead of sitting at my computer trying to force something. So however works best for them.

Lindsay: Yeah, this is even such a good reminder for me as we're talking about it because I feel like I get in these phases where I get a little more, well, I get a little busier, very like head down focused, like just keep going. And it's always a good reminder to like, nope, how about not that? Like that's not actually the best energy to create all the things from. So I'm just really glad that we talked about this, even though it was a little unplanned. I appreciate you.

Okay, so one reason that you're here, one of many reasons, but one reason is you are in my membership, your energy is incredible. The people there, there are a handful of people that are just like big fans. All the time, people on calls are like, "Well, I talked to Mary this morning." And I'm like, Mary is talking to everyone, giving them pep talks, loving on people. And I love that about you, first of all. So thank you for just being that energy in any space that you're in.

Mary: Thank you.

Lindsay: So my first question is, is this just like who you are in the world, like in your life, or is this something you've developed or like learned over time?

Mary: This is something I have developed because I didn't have that kind of support growing up. And it's something I've gained from the coaching community and it's just like, I love being that person for someone. And it's like, no, we all can thrive together. We all can succeed. We celebrate it all.

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I'm there for all of it. The good, the bad, the in-between, but I will for sure always be in there to believe in what someone wants, hype them up, make sure they're going after it, and making sure they take care of themselves in the process because otherwise they can't do it anyways.

Lindsay: And do you find that when you do that for others, first I'm sure it just feels good to you to do it. But then does it make it more natural maybe that some of that like comes back to you?

Mary: Yeah, I think it's fun because now it's like we get to celebrate each other. So there's people celebrating me too, but it's really great to have a community of people where you can be there for all ends. No one's going to leave if you have a bad day or something's going wrong, but they're also there on the good times too. So it's really great when we're all having different experiences of the day, we can be there for all of it.

Lindsay: Yeah. Yeah, I think it's maybe it's just something interesting for like the listener to consider because I think that in the beginning of my business, and still now, but especially in the beginning, I was very much this person that you are in communities, always cheering other people on and whatever. And kind of similar to the walk, actually, I noticed now, again, when I get in that space where I'm very like head down, focused, like kind of not paying attention to what's going on around me.

You know, the big picture around me, my friends, my colleagues, my family, whatever, it can get a little like, oh, I, like where am I? I feel a little bit lonely, but the minute I start reaching out and just saying, "Hey, like I'm thinking of you or I would love to support you. What are you working on?" Or, you know, whatever, just like encouraging people, I just like realize, oh, then all these things start coming back to me too, right? Because it's like then they're thinking of me and it just creates a totally different energy, I think in your world.

Mary: I think it creates an opening because I think our life is so shut down and we're all afraid of saying something of how it's going to be received

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because like even when you see people out working out, you would love to say like, "Great job. Keep it up." But you don't want someone to think they're going to take it wrong. So it's like by us reaching out and cheering on someone and opening the door, it creates more of it everywhere in life.

Lindsay: Yeah. I was thinking about this actually before we got on here. I actually think that's the whole reason that you are on this podcast right now because not because it's like, oh, that's the only reason, but it's what brought my attention to like, wait, I should do this thing with Mary, which actually was last week, I asked you to come to coach week and talk about some of the things that we'll, we'll get to in a minute. Some of the things that you're so great at in the membership.

And we had such a good conversation, but you were on my radar because people just kept talking about you and like mentioning you, and then someone even posted happy birthday to you in the group, and it was just like your name kept coming up, which just naturally my attention was directed there. And then so then I started noticing all of the things and then we had a conversation last week and it was incredible, and I was like, we have to talk about these things on the podcast. And now here we are.

Mary: I love it.

Lindsay: So I think it's just such a good like, I don't know, such a good what, like lesson or takeaway for anyone listening just like sometimes all you have to do is be kind and like say hi to people, cheer them on and you never know what's going to happen.

Mary: Put good things out into the world and you'll get good things back.

Lindsay: Yeah. I mean it like feels kind of cheesy, but it's like, no, this is like actually how it works. And I saw it happening in real time with you over the last couple weeks.

Okay, so like I said, last week I had you, I asked you to come to coach week and we had a conversation which was amazing. People got to ask

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you questions and I would love to talk about some of those things here today. You came so prepared. You were like, actually, I have a list.

And I'll just do a quick setup. So what we were talking about, what we did in coach week, I taught people how to experiment with things in their business and then how to evaluate and decide kind of like what worked and how am I moving forward from here based on what didn't work. And then how to do all of that without using coaching against yourself and how to, that's kind of like the cycle of growing a business generally. Or really like learning anything or doing anything new.

And I think you're an incredible example of that, which is why I asked you to come talk, because one thing I've been watching you do over the last few months is just be so committed to trying things, coming back and getting coaching, trying more things, getting more coaching. Like never, at least from what I see, doesn't feel like you're ever just like, I can't possibly talk about this. Like you're just so willing to come talk about it because you know that's how you're going to move forward. So first, what does it take for you to do that? Is it like courage to just show up? How would you describe it?

Mary: I think it's desire because I want it to work. I want to have the most successful business. I want to help people and I know by me showing up and being brave too and saying the things and asking for help, that it's also going to help someone else. And everything I do, everything I learn is always, I will always use it to help someone else too. So to me, this is like, I get the help I need, but also hopefully I'm helping someone else in the process.

Lindsay: Yeah. Okay, and so within that process, kind of that basic process I just described, you have some really specific things or ways of thinking about things that you use that you've shared last week that we're going to talk about a little bit here.

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Mary: Well, one thing I think would be fun to add to go along with what we were just talking about just a second ago about like, when you put out good, you get more good back is I start each day with my energy givers and spirit lifters.

So every day before I even get on my computer, I sit down and write a list of all the things that give me energy and lift my spirit that happened the day before. And it just all the things that are great in my life that I'm super grateful for, that make an impact in my days and really make a difference. So then everything I do from there for the day at least has a good energy going into it. So it just allows me to start off the day in the best way possible.

Lindsay: I love that. So the key thing I heard there was before you get on your computer, because in my experience, once you're on your computer, forget it. Like there's emails, there's all the things. So you're just kind of tapping into that like, instead of letting your brain on its own wander into here are all the things that have gone wrong and that will probably go wrong today, you are purposefully directing it in the other direction.

Mary: Yes. Purposefully directing my brain to what I want to see more of in my day. So getting very intentional with how I'm starting my day, so I don't get distracted by everything else. And it's easy to get on the computer first thing in the morning and just to doom scroll or to get just lost. Like you know what I mean? Like you click here, here, here, you're doing 25 other things, and you've done no work. So this way it's like, nope, leave the computer off, set myself up for success, bring more of what I want to the day.

Lindsay: And do you just, are you just thinking about these things in your head? Are you actually writing them down? Or what is your, for the people that are like, I need the process, what does it look like?

Mary: I actually write them down. I put the date and I write my energy givers and spirit lifters and then I have a little heart I write with each one of

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the things about like working out or cuddles with my dog or breakfast that was super good or doing something special for a loved one or meeting people on walks. All these fun things, anything that like gives me energy throughout the day or lifts my spirit and is like very heartwarming. Those are all the things I make sure to make a note of.

Lindsay: I love that so much. I have started adopting it a little bit. So I'm not the, I'm not perfect at it. I don't actually remember every day, so I probably need to make a note, but I just wanted you to know that ever since you've started talking about it, I'm like, okay. I haven't been writing them down, but I've just at least been taking that moment. I just like close my eyes, I think about some things, and it really is quite useful.

And I do think again, like I said, that's why I was like, what I hear you saying is before you open your computer or phone maybe, because for me, I know that like once that happens, forget it. Like there's a small chance that I'm going to remember to like, oh wait, stop. Let me like rewind and go back there because my brain's already going in 20 different directions.

Okay, so and then what? So then you, when you go about your day, you're experimenting with some things, you're, we've specifically been coaching a bit on like your social media and different types of posting and like how to kind of get out of your head and like share more of you there. And so some things you mentioned that kind of, I think go along with all of that is when you're experimenting and you're evaluating, you told me that you like to actually evaluate beforehand before you do the thing. So let's talk about that. What do you mean by that?

Mary: So I've learned from doing this the wrong way that before you just start doing something, you actually have to think about whether it's for you or not. So I will evaluate beforehand and I'll sit and write down like what I think I would like about doing it, what I think I wouldn't. And then develop my way of doing it if it's something I think I would really like. But this saves like so much time and effort.

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And then I just make sure I'm doing it for a set period or doing it for a trial period. So then I know to come back and like, okay, try this out for 30 days or 90 days. That way it's just not going on for months and months and months and now you're like, oh, no different results. I've been doing the same thing. And it's just like, okay. And it just brings awareness so you can come back and tweak it to make it work for you.

Lindsay: Yeah. And in this case, I think mostly what we have talked about in this context is marketing your coaching business, right? So like kind of getting stuck in a rut of like doing the same things over and over, like this is what I think you're supposed to do. So I guess I'll just do that.

And what you're saying is now that you've seen that now you kind of pause before you choose the thing and you're like, okay, why am I doing it? Is it for me? Like is this something that aligns with how I like to work? Is this how I like to show up? You just kind of giving it like a pre-eval so that it's just very clear why you're doing it, is it for you and how long are you giving yourself so that you don't get stuck in the like a year later, you're like, wait, I'm still doing this thing and it's still not working.

Mary: And when frustration shows up anywhere in this process, I use it as a cue to check in and be like, okay, what feels off about this? And how can I do this my way in a way that I feel good about? So I'm still like working towards what I want, but I'm also doing it in a way that feels good and true to me.

Lindsay: Yeah. And as you're doing that, you pick a trial period, which we already mentioned. One thing I will add to that is, so some people have the tendency that you just said, which is like, they'll just go on and on forever without, you know, pausing and saying like, wait, is this actually working? Let me check.

Or there's people on the other end of the spectrum that'll try like once and then like, oh, that's not for me. And then just go seek out a like completely different strategy versus picking that trial period is like, wait, I said I was

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going to try this for 30 days. And I think the value in that is like, you don't have to just keep doing the same thing over and over for 30 days, but really being able to like, okay, if I want to do this thing or if I want the result that comes from it, how can I figure out how to make it more mine or make it more aligned with just who I am and how I like to work? Do you ever, are you ever on that side, or is it, are you typically the like, I'm just going to keep going until someone tells me to stop?

Mary: Sometimes I'm, I don't know if I'm on the once situation, but when disappointment hits hard, then it's like, oh, okay, hold on. So I've also been working on a process to like sit with disappointment. And with that, now I have this visual in my head of I think of me sitting on a park bench with a little like cartoon heart sitting next to me, all sad with the little legs swinging back and forth and I sit there and I tell myself and tell the heart, it's okay. This was only one thing. It's not the whole situation. There'll be other opportunities, there will be other chances. Don't worry about it, we're okay.

But if I can take the time to sit and talk myself through that, then it's way easier to get back out there and be like, okay, because basically what I'm telling myself is, it's okay, this was just one thing. There's many more chances. So you just keep going.

Lindsay: I love so many things about that visual. And I think probably a lot of people need to hear this because as coaches, depending on where people learned to coach or where, you know, maybe they're certified or trainings that they've had, they may have learned something that sounds kind of like, okay, like identify a feeling in your body and what color is it? What, you know, like to kind of describe it, like name it. What do they call it? Like name it to tame it or something, right? Like naming the feeling, but it's very internal, and it's like you have to be very aware of body sensations and all the things, which is amazing.

And what I love about this, I think there are some people that if they're listening to this, they might be like, oh my gosh, that sounds, um that sounds so like so much more intuitive maybe than what I was just

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describing because it's kind of like a, it's like a visual process versus like you must be fully connected at all times in your whole body to identify the things which can sometimes be tricky.

And I think that is, I don't know, I'm trying to find the words. It's like such a good alternative or even like starting place because it allows a little bit of separation too. It's like you aren't the disappointment. The disappointment is separate. It's this little heart that's sitting on the bench and there's you and there's separate things, but also like connected.

Mary: Yeah, 100%. It gives you the separation. You're like, it's okay. No big deal. There's another chance. It gives you that space and lets you zoom out so you can see it for what it really is and then reassure yourself that there's still lots of more chances.

Lindsay: Yeah, it's kind of similar, like you know, before previously I've asked clients like, "Well, what would you tell someone else if they were experiencing this, right?" Or like, "What would you tell your best friend?" Or like, "What would you tell me if I was saying, coming to you and saying like, I'm so disappointed about this thing."

But this makes it even more, it's like you're much more connected because it's not a real person and it's like this sad little heart is what I have like so many feelings for this little heart. It's like such a good like, I can really tap into like so much compassion for it versus sometimes my friend, I might be like, "Well, I would tell her to suck it up and like let's go." Or whatever, I don't know, right? But like there's just a different tone, I think, that comes when I think of that visual.

Mary: Right. And when you're, when you're disappointed, your heart is hurt a little bit. So it's like you're just like, okay, you're acknowledging it, you're comforting it. Then you feel good enough to keep going.

Lindsay: Yes, yeah. When you shared that on the call, I'd never heard you say this before. When you shared that last week during coach week and

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our, you know, the talk we were having, I just like melted a little bit. I was like, this is the sweetest, the sweetest thing ever.

Actually, let me ask you this. This is what people love to ask me. But like, how do you know when you're like done sitting with a feeling?

Mary: Yeah. I would say honestly, as soon as my heart feels lighter and I feel lighter, and I'm like, oh, okay, okay, we're good. Onto the next.

Lindsay: Yeah. Yeah, I think my answer is similar. I think it's like I feel an actual shift in my body. Like I feel lighter. Maybe my chest feels more open. Maybe I'm, maybe I'm crying, and that's going to happen for as long as it happens. And it's kind of like I think once it shifts, I kind of have stopped crying. Like that's always an indication. I think there are a lot of ways to tell, but yeah, you kind of described it how I would, I think.

And it's like your thoughts kind of become a little more clear again, like they're not as, things don't feel as heavy or not as maybe foggy or like cloudy in your brain. Do you do this with other feelings as well? I hadn't thought of this until just now. I'm like, wait, do you have visuals for like everything that you're, that you like feel in your business or life? Or is it just this one?

Mary: Just this one because this is the really big feeling for me that normally will stop me in my tracks. Other than that, the only thing I know is when I'm in a really good mood, I will hum like a little song to myself and I'm like, oh, today is a good day.

Lindsay: I love that.

Mary: Keep going.

Lindsay: I love it. Okay, well I really think like you're onto something. I think you could create like a whole *Inside Out* situation, like all the characters, all the different feelings with little visuals.

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Okay, and then you told me that one thing that really helps you is something you call know as you go. Let's talk about that a little bit. What does that mean?

Mary: Yeah, so something that really helps me that I've adapted lately over the last like month or two is the phrase that I know as I go because otherwise, when I think I have to have everything figured out right now or know every single step or process or all of that, I get completely shut down and also it just feels like so much pressure to figure it all out right now. And I'm like, but sometimes I need more information or you need more experience or you need more trial and error.

So with the phrase of I know as I go, it opens me up to take the next step and then get more information and keep going. And then, really, the path becomes a lot easier anyway. So instead of jumping from A to Z, we're taking each step. This is how all real change is created, but sometimes when you are working so hard at something, we lose sight of that. So this helps me slow down and be like, okay, one day at a time, next best step, we're good, we got this, keep going.

Lindsay: Yeah, I think as coaches sometimes it's like, well why do I need a coach? It's like this right here because when you're the one in it, you, it doesn't feel like, it doesn't always feel like it's possible just to be like, oh wait, pause, let me just, of course, I'll just know as I go and like keep figuring it out. Sometimes you need a reminder like, wait, hold on, pause. This is okay, like this is just the learning.

But I also see coaches do this sometimes with even like beliefs or like thoughts or feelings, where it's like they have, they think they have to be perfectly, like they have to have the right thought, the right belief, the right feeling all figured out so that they can determine the perfect action to take before they do anything.

And I always have to break it to coaches, like that's just not, it's not how it works at all. Like you have to actually move, which is what will help you

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learn the things. Or certainly ways you can coach yourself into like, into the action, but I think that there's, if anybody listening feels this, if you ever like feel just frozen, not doing anything because you're thinking you have to find the right belief, no, sometimes you just have to move and then you get to develop the belief along the way. And do you have that experience? Or is yours more like, know as I go like just the willingness to just take the action?

Mary: The willingness to take the action. I feel like I've always been an action taker and it's what I help people with. But I also think I do it in a way, especially now where it's like, I'm not about like flipping the table upside down and like turning your whole life all upside down or stepping way out of your comfort zone. It's more of like, okay, we're expanding our comfort zone. So like what's the next step out? And then keep going from there because I think if we go too far out of our comfort zone, you completely like tweak out your nervous system and you shut down completely.

So it's like this is where also, I've talked about, like, okay, what is my way of doing this? Like, how can I put myself in places and in environments and doing things I really like? So I can expand my comfort zone and keep my momentum going.

Lindsay: Yeah, I think it's been really fun watching you in the membership because I've created coach archetypes and I've talked about those on the podcast before, but it's just fun watching you kind of learn that concept, find your archetypes and then really start to shift the way you are doing some things so that they really like align more with, with your archetype and with you and how you like to show up. What is your, what has your experience been with that piece?

Mary: Yeah, so I am a connected guide and a dynamic presenter. So that's like deep one-on-one connection with people and then also energy exchange. So I've been using it a lot to have fun, to just put myself in environments with like people who I think are great and interesting and fun and we have stuff in common.

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And then also, I've been translating it to my content. So I'm like, okay, how do I bring my warm, fun vibes to my content and then also how can I like just talk to one problem, one person, just like it's me and a friend out to lunch, like what would I say? What do I want to tell them? And it's been really fun to show up that way because it makes it so much more personal and it brings the connection that I've been looking for because it's really easy to think about social media as a void where now it's like, oh, hold on, rewind. I'm out to lunch with someone, we're talking about coaching, things are wonderful. We're both having a great time.

Lindsay: And they want to be having the conversation. We had to clarify that in our coaching.

Mary: Yeah, everyone's there and wants to know about coaching, and we're talking about it, and you know, it just, it's great to look at it from that lens. It puts it in a whole other perspective because it's just like, I'm a big, I will share with anyone anything that I've learned. So it helps me bring more of that.

Lindsay: And everybody needs to find you on socials and see the things you're sharing because they're great and we'll give, we'll talk about that at the end. But I have been watching, seeing some of your posts. I think at one point, you know, social media, how it works. So I like liked something or whatever. Now I see I think most of your posts, which is so fun. And I'm just always so excited. I'm like, she's doing the thing. It's like, what is the word? It's so...

Mary: Refreshing. Unfiltered.

Lindsay: Refreshing. It's very refreshing to just coach someone on something and then to literally see it happening in real time and like see the changes happening. It just feels so fun just from a coach perspective. So, there's that. So thank you in general for that because I love it.

Let's maybe dig into that a little bit if you don't mind. Do you mind? Because I know social media is something we've been focused on a lot in

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your business or that you've been focused on a lot, and I've been coaching you on a lot. And kind of like how to figure out how to do it in a way that it doesn't just feel like you're just showing up. Okay, I have to post today and then just like forcing yourself to post something, which is the worst by the way. If anybody's doing that, don't do it. It's not fun.

Tell us like how has that shifted? So you've used that idea of like, I'm just going to show up like I'm just talking to like feel more of a connection. Like you're actually talking to someone. It's like I'm going to picture talking to a friend. I'm telling them this thing. And if I was like watching or someone was watching, what would it look like to the person watching? Like what has shifted?

Mary: Well, before it felt like, I guess I can share from my experience from my end, it felt like if you were a person alone in a dark stage talking to no one.

Lindsay: I relate to that.

Mary: And now, yeah, and now it feels like I'm at a cute little restaurant, just me and some friends, and I'm talking and sharing all the things because it's really hard to show up to social media when you don't think anyone's there or is watching or wants to hear anything. And now it's more of like, now I'm just so excited. I'm always excited to share, but I'm more excited to share now because it's like, oh, I'm just putting all this out there and sharing everything I can and then when someone's ready, they'll find it and they'll get everything they need and more.

And like my marketing strategy is generosity, so I'm putting it all out there, and it's there. So it makes it more fun for me because it's like I'm just putting all the value into the world and like not holding back and fully showing up as me and sharing all the things, and I'm stepping more and more into it, the more and more comfortable I get with it.

But there's no more trying to do it the right way or having all the stuff you're told to say or do or not do in your mind. You're actually just putting it out

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there, all of it, sharing bits of me so hopefully help someone or find it, help them find it when they need it.

Lindsay: Can you describe, for like the person watching, what they would have seen shift in the content itself? Like, how does it actually look different? Or do you think it looks different? Maybe you don't, maybe you think you just feel different when you're creating it.

Mary: I mean, I'm guessing it looks different. I think it's simpler. I think it's just a quick picture and the caption, and I'm on the move. Um my answer, I'd love to know what your first answer is.

Lindsay: Yeah, my answer is I just think it's so much more you, right? Like I, it's like the you that I see show up on calls. Like I see that now in your post. I'm like, oh right, yeah, like that's Mary. That's the Mary I know. And it's fun even just the photos, like the photo with your dog and stuff like that where it's like, oh, you and it reads like you and oh, it's like fun to see this snapshot of your life.

And then I saw a video of you talking the other day and I'm like, oh, she isn't nervous or anything at all. Like this is just her. It's like, I felt like if as if we hopped on Zoom for a few minutes and I like asked you a question, you're like, oh, here's what you could do about that. And you were telling me like, I can really see that you feel like you're actually talking to someone, versus feel like you are just like, okay, what's just the post today? What should I say? Or what's the perfect quote or what's the perfect thing to teach or, you know, whatever it was that you were thinking before.

Mary: Right. And before it felt like a chore and something I had to do and something to just check off the box. And now I'm like having so much fun with it, and I'm like, yes, let's share the things. This is fun. And there's like no pressure into it anymore because it's just like, I'm putting it out there. So when someone needs it, they will find it.

And kind of back to the like making things comfortable for you, like I'm most comfortable in my kitchen with all the background of culinary and

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everything and just loving to cook. So now when I do those videos, I just put it on my little phone stand in the kitchen and sit and talk like I talk to a friend like they're there with me when I'm making dinner or prepping food or doing whatever.

So I've learned to do it in a way where I'm like, oh, I feel great now, like I talk with friends on Marco, I love doing that. So it kind of brings that same exact vibe and feeling of like, hey, I'm just talking to a close friend, sending them the message, telling them something that I think would really help them, and it's like sending the love out into the world.

Lindsay: Yeah. I mean, I can definitely feel it like in the content, just so you know, I can like really feel that coming out. So if anybody's listening and this is how you feel about social media, for sure think about how you can shift that because that is no fun, which actually brings up the other thing that we said we would talk about, which is this concept of like at one point recently I was coaching you and I know there's just so many coaches out in the world, hopefully listening to this episode, who have been in it for a while, building their businesses and just feeling very frustrated and kind of doing the same things over and over and thinking like, this is what you're supposed to do. Why isn't it working?

And I coached you on this at one point and I told you something that you said has been really powerful for you. So I'm going to let you share it.

Mary: Yes, you said that like this part of our business, we just need to like cut it off and let it go. And I was like, what does she even mean? I was like, I left the coaching call like, what? No. I don't understand how you just cut it off and move on.

And then later, I was either walking or working out or something, and I came up with this visual of like me stuck on a raft out at sea, but I had all these other rafts tied to it. And I'm like, oh, just cut these extra rafts off. If I don't cut them off and I keep dragging them with me, I'm never going to

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make it to shore. And I want to go to shore. So these things are getting cut off.

So that shifted everything because I was like, oh, okay, I really can just let this go because it doesn't have to come with me, and I don't have to feel bad about it. I think that's the thing, too. When you're in business for a while, and things aren't where you want them to be or whatever, you're like dragging around all this past stuff and feeling bad about it. It's like, you know what? No, let it go. We're moving into the new. We're not in the past. Whatever happened and we're moving forward. We're going forward with new energy and our people are coming with us.

Lindsay: You have the best visuals of anyone, just to say that again. And I say this to every coach who comes to me with this thing because what I can always hear, right, is like they're problem solving, and you were certainly problem solving with, if we think about the visual with all the rafts pulling you back. And the way I would say that is like you're thinking about how do I build this business through the lens of because it hasn't worked for however X amount of time. So then everything that's happening is through that lens, right? Like, and it hasn't been working, or it hasn't been working the way that I want, whatever.

And I just for as someone who's been running a business for 10 years and who had a business before that, I'm going to say like that's a thing that always happens. You always are problem solving.

There's always some, like sometimes things are working, sometimes they're not. And when they're not, it can feel very much like, here are all the things I tried, they're not working, they're right and like now you're approaching everything through like, it's not working versus approaching it through, no, I'm experimenting, I'm finding, I'm figuring out, I'm going to find the thing that's going to work and I might as well do it in a way that feels better to me than feeling like a punishment or feeling like this thing I just, like the chore I have to show up for every day.

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And I'm just so grateful that you're willing to share that because I think hopefully a lot of coaches are digesting that right now. I'm guessing it probably still comes up sometimes. Or were you actually able to cut it off? It's like all those rafts are just floating into the sea and you've never seen them again.

Mary: Oh, me and friends now talk about it. We're like, that's a raft you cut off. And we'll send each other a pair of scissors.

Lindsay: That's so good.

Mary: Oh yeah.

Lindsay: Oh my gosh. But these are like other coaches, you're talking about your businesses. It's like cut it off.

Mary: Yes. Release it.

Lindsay: Yes.

Mary: We check in with each other. It's a thing we do now.

Lindsay: Perfect. Oh my gosh.

Mary: We do the same thing with brain farts.

Lindsay: Okay, well now we have to say what that is too. People are going to leave this episode with just like all these amazing little nuggets of things. Just hopefully just listen again, take notes, write it all down, and remind yourself of these things. But what you're about to hear is funny. So let's go there.

Mary: So one day, Lindsay very lovingly told me that my brain is really mean to me sometimes. And I am like, yep, yep, it is. All of us have that, right? But I don't know, again, I was working out, and I thought of the term brain farts. And I'm like, let's redefine this. I'm like, what if a brain fart is

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when my brain is being an ass to myself and being super mean to me, and then this was just a mean thought it gives me.

So on days where your brain's just being mean, it's just having a gassy day and lots of brain farts. So now we also like my friends and I, we do this with the brain farts of like sending, like a friend sent me a fart emoji the other day because it's like, no, we're not accepting that.

Lindsay: Yeah, it's so good. It's so good because it also just makes you laugh, and then that can lift a mood immediately. And I just really love the way your brain works. I think that's the thing. It's like your brain is so creative and comes up with so many of these like amazing visuals, and it's so great.

Mary: I think we have to do stuff like this. I think we have to lighten the mood. And this is something I'm so great at helping with my clients with, but it's like doing business is like the craziest thing you'll ever do. And it's the most amazing thing you'll ever do. But when it's you, your business yourself, it can get heavy at times.

So it's like you have to lighten it up somehow. And now it's like, well now when a silly thought comes in my head, I'm like, oh well, just a brain fart and moving on. So it's just like, okay, fine, whatever. It does that. Moving on to the next thing. So it just gives you a fun way to look at things differently. So they don't stop you in your tracks or deter you. It's just like, yeah, fine, whatever. That's fine, moving on.

Lindsay: Those are some of the most important tools you can have, I think, when building a business because there's always opportunity for things to go wrong or not work or, you know, whatever. And yeah, if you can lighten it at least just enough that you are not problem-solving from like the deepest, darkest, heaviest, most terrible place, that's probably going to be better and also like why would we want to feel miserable all the time when running a business, even when things feel hard. Like they can feel hard and not miserable. Just in case people didn't know.

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Mary: I think about this all the time, that as kids, you wait your whole life to be an adult so you can do whatever you want. And then we get to adulthood, and then we're like, well, I got bills to pay, I got this, I got this, and we do nothing.

So my whole thing is like, no, let's have some fun. You can do things your way, enjoy life, take care of yourself, business, career, whatever you want, you can do all of it and have fun doing it. We just need to regroup. But I think people just need to add more fun into their lives or at least let themselves truly enjoy the things in their life they do like and spend more time enjoying those things and adding more of that into their life.

Lindsay: I could not agree more. I approve this message. The last thing maybe that we'll talk about is you have joined my coaching membership, The Complete Coach. And you said we have to talk about that today. So maybe I'll just start with, why did you join, and what do you love about it? I'm very broad, and then we'll just go from there.

Mary: So you were actually the first coach I ever found and I found your podcast and then joined the coach lab and why I was like so intrigued with your world is you are so calm and so collected and like I needed that in my life at that time and I still need it. But it was just like, this woman, I need to be in her world. So I was in Coach Lab for a long time, kind of fell off the radar, came back to it pretty well with the last fall, and then was like, no more Coach Lab and then...

Lindsay: Yeah, right, just in time for me to announce, oh, and by the way, Coach Lab is closing. But then from that point forward, you showed up to every, as far as I remember, every single call, and that's when you super dug in and you were like, I am getting what I came for, I am not messing around anymore. And I could not have been more impressed. It was so fun to watch.

Mary: Well, okay, but credit is yours because that first time I came back, I felt like I laid it all out.

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Lindsay: Yeah.

Mary: And you held me with such kindness and some compassion. And like just like, I kept like looking at the time to be like, oh my god, I can't believe she's spending this much time with me. And I was just like, I felt like, I was like, whoa, like she's not rushing me, she's just here. And it showed me that I could show up and take up space and that it was okay and it was safe. So that was like a game changer for me too. And like I said, like I always think when I'm getting help with something, it helps someone else too, so that's always motivation for me as well.

But that first time I'm like, oh, wow. Okay. And it just has helped me become a better coach too because now I hold so much more space for my clients and we're not rushing anywhere or doing anything. It's more of like, okay, sure, I got you. Don't worry with all of it. And I can just show up so much calmer. So of course that makes you a better coach too. But,

Lindsay: I also just want to say, I'm going to pause you for just a second and say, I was actually very grateful for that moment because I do think, like you just said, I'm willing to do it if it helps other people. And I do think it helped so many people because you can tell the difference between someone who just shows up and is just has a lot of complaints or a lot of like, I don't know how to describe it, like they haven't done a lot of thinking about it. It's very surface-level. Like this thing's not working and this and this and whatever and all over the place. That was not you. You were deeply hurt, I think, and like in pain and like struggling.

And I think I was just so like proud to be there in that moment that you were able to just, it was like a gift, I think that you gave the room because I think sometimes people feel that way in their business, even I feel that way now in my business sometimes. And it's really useful to see like, oh right, I'm not alone. Like this is part of it. And I think it actually allowed other people to then in following weeks, like kind of really be brave and like share the things that were really going on. So, that's all. I just really appreciate you. Thank you for that.

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Mary: No problem. I have learned that you just got to show up and say the thing because when you don't have the results you want with anything you're trying to change in life, you can feel very ashamed and embarrassed and not want to share, and then you feel lonelier, so you pull back. But when you can show up and share something, when we can share shame in safe spaces, the shame goes away.

But we have to be brave enough to say it first and to put it out there. And it's okay. Like you're better off to admit that you've made a mistake or things aren't going the way you want because when you show up and get the help, which is also what this whole community is for, then we all can grow and we all can benefit and it just makes a world of difference and you don't feel so alone anymore and you just like, okay, good. Let's do the things, and we'll move on. But it's okay to be vulnerable and scary, but you got to show up for it.

Lindsay: That was one of my number one goals when I created The Complete Coach is that it would be a place that coaches felt like they could come and celebrate. It's like that end, like not feel, sometimes people feel scared or even ashamed to celebrate. Like celebrate the things and talk about what's working. So like that's all great. And also to show up and say like, and here's actually what's not working, and can you please help? Because the faster you can do that, the faster you can get the help, the faster you can move forward, and the faster you can just like lighten it in general so that it's not a thing that's like so built up and so heavy over weeks that then you, you know, are like shut down or like it's too big to even tell anyone.

Mary: Yeah, because a lot of times, as soon as we say it, it loses all of its weight. And it's so important just to say it and get it out there because otherwise it's like, you're hiding a secret that you don't want anyone to know about. And it's just like, no, just put it out there. Put whatever's going on, whatever you're, wherever you're not getting the results you want, say it, get the help. And as soon as you say it, you feel so much lighter.

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Lindsay: Totally agree. Again, approved. Stamp of approval. If you're listening, you should come join us in the membership. And come get coached with Mary because she's so great and so fun.

But truly, I appreciate people like you, all the people in the membership, but especially people like you that just show up so consistently. You're so willing to just be present, be vulnerable, and it really like helps communities, I think, having people in there like that. And I'm just grateful that you're there and that you choose to be there. So everybody should come do it with us.

Mary: Yes, they should because my absolute best friends are from your communities, and it's the most amazing time. And people are there for all of it. The good, the bad, the in-between, you'll never be left hanging. You know, we celebrate the life stuff, the business stuff, supporting your clients through all of it. I mean, it really is the full circle of everything. And it's the greatest group of people ever. So we would love to have you.

Lindsay: Okay, is there anything else that we have not talked about that you were hoping, is there anything you were hoping I would ask you or that we would talk about today that we haven't?

Mary: No, I think we've covered it all, and it's just evaluating is so important. If you're not doing it, start doing it. Don't worry about having it figured out. Just start. You know as you go and don't be afraid to come get help. You need community, you need people.

That's what I should say is that's something I learned that I never had before, was a community of people that helped me feel supported and held. And that's something I found when I came into the coaching world, but it's my favorite part of this group is just having a community of people that are in it with you, because right, we're all going after a coaching business. We're all in this coaching business. We all have different struggles, and it's great because there's people of all different experience levels in the group

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too. So you've got a wealth of knowledge to pull from, and people aren't stingy. They're, we're all here in it together. We're all helping each other.

Mary: One of my other favorite things is just watching how generous everyone in the community is with their knowledge, with their resources, with their coaching, with anything, with their celebrations.

Lindsay: Okay, well, thank you so much for being here today. This was amazing. I had so much fun as always. Tell everybody, so if people are listening and they're like, I need to find Mary, where can they find you?

Mary: Yeah, I am on Instagram and LinkedIn mainly. It's just Mary Okon Coaching, and then my website is maryokoncoaching.com, and Okon is O K O N.

Lindsay: And I don't think I've ever told you this. I'll tell you right, right at the end, I'll leave this with you. My grandma who passed a last year, who was my favorite person on the planet, her name was Mary. And so every time I talk to you, I literally like think of her and have this vision of her. So just so you know, that's probably also why I have just like a special place in my heart for you. But now you know, because you'll probably never forget. Every time I'm talking to you, you'll be like, she's probably thinking of her grandma. Weird. Seriously though, thank you for being here. You're amazing and goodbye.

Mary: Thank you for having me.

Lindsay: Thank you so much for being on today and for listening to that conversation. I hope you loved all the little things that Mary shared. Isn't she incredible? She's so fun and brought so much value. So thank you, Mary.

If you would love to join us in The Complete Coach, the membership that we were talking about, we will put that link in the show notes for the wait list. And if you would love to discover your coach archetype, which is something we use inside the membership, I will put a link for the archetype

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quiz in the show notes as well. And you can go there, you can discover your own archetype. It is a bit of a shortened version from what we use inside the membership, but it will give you your main archetype and ways that you can think about incorporating that into your own coaching practice. I'll see you back here next week. Goodbye.

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.