

Ep #287: How to Balance Deep Dives & Quick Wins in Coaching



Full Episode Transcript

With Your Host

Lindsay Dotzlaf

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Lindsay: Hey, this is Lindsay Dotzlaf, and you are listening to *Mastering Coaching Skills* episode 287.

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 so happy you are here today. Let's just dig right in. Are you ready? So, today I want to talk about something that comes up all the time with my clients and that I notice all the time just in the industry, a conversation that is happening often in small ways, in big ways, in ways you might not even notice. But this episode is going to reveal hopefully something useful about yourself as a coach and hopefully you're going to walk away learning something that you didn't know about yourself or that you weren't as aware of.

So as coaches, people come to us and they pay us money to help them in the most simple terms fix something, right? Or to work towards something or to create a result in their life that they don't currently have or to create something that they desire. We could say it in many different ways. Sometimes when I say fix something, I know it triggers some of you. And it immediately makes you think of marketing maybe that you don't like, but just in general, I think we could probably all agree that clients pay us to fix something.

And for the most part, if we could fix that the fastest way possible, if we could just give them a magic wand or a magic pill and it just fixed it, they would probably pay us for that. Right? I'm always joking with my clients, if you're my client, you know this. I always say like if I had the magic wand, I promise you, first, I'd be a gazillion bazillionaire, however many, you know, numbers that is. And also, I would give it to you. I wouldn't gatekeep it, I would give it to you.

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So, our clients do hire us to help them fix something, right? And sometimes there are several layers to how we do this work. So before I dig any deeper, I want to give you a scenario that comes up often, very often in my spaces, specifically in The Complete Coach, in the membership. This is coaching that I do all the time.

So, I'm going to overly simplify this scenario, but hopefully you will understand what I'm saying. I'm going to give you this scenario and then I'm going to give you a couple options on how I might coach on it and I want you to just see which one would you do as a coach. And put yourself in the seat of the coach, not the client, for a second, even though you might identify with the client scenario. Put yourself in my situation for a second and just ask yourself, which one would I lean towards? Which option?

Okay, so my client comes to me and they say, "I have this client who, they always show up for every call, but they don't show up. Like they aren't really putting their full energy into the coaching. They don't really do a lot between sessions. At least that's kind of what it seems like and I'm not really sure. Like I don't really know what to do from here. I think that we're just moving so slow."

Now, of course, you might ask some clarifying questions, but for now we're just going to keep it super simple and just trust your gut and just think about like which direction would you go in this scenario. Because as the coach, I have a couple different options.

Option A is I take a kind of a deeper direction. I explore my client's thoughts about their client and maybe try to identify is there some sort of unspoken agenda that my client has. Maybe I look at like what's underneath this frustration that they're feeling with their client and I really get under the hood and examine it kind of from all directions.

And then there's option B, which is I give them something they can try on the next call, right? Something tactical, something a little more strategic,

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something that's a little bit like, here's how I might solve this problem or have you tried these things.

So first, just notice which direction did your brain reach for first in the coach seat, not the client because you may have had that experience before, but in the coach seat, like which one would you do? You can apply it to your niche quickly if you need to. Which one would you do? And maybe you're like, "Oh, I might do both, but this one feels more convenient or this one feels faster or this one feels like real coaching." Just notice anything that comes up for you.

And I want to be very clear that this whole episode is not going to tell you which answer is the right answer. Of course, if you've been in my world for more than a minute, you know that that's not how I do. What I want you to see is that there is no right answer, but your instinct or your leaning did just tell you something about the way you coach.

So here's what I typically do in this situation. Now again, bringing in a lot of context, right? I'm going to ask a lot of questions. It also depends like how many times, because this is usually in a group setting, how many times have I coached this client? Do I have more information? Like is this something they're always coming back to, right? Like this again is a very simplified situation. But here's what I usually do in most coaching scenarios that call for it in my membership, is I approach it always as often as I can from both sides.

I'm going to do a little walk through on the deeper side, right? Like tell me your thoughts about like what's happening in the sessions when your client is coming with no, you know, you thinking she hasn't done any work. Like what's going through your head? How does that affect the way you show up for the sessions? You know, are you, I'm trying to identify like is my client thinking this client could be moving so much faster or she should have better results by now or oh no, she's going to think I'm a bad coach because she doesn't have all of her results by now, right?

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All of those things. Like I'll just dig into them. How are you feeling when you're coaching her? Maybe even digging into like, do you think your client is feeling safe to tell you all the things on the call in your session?

So I'm probably going to do that and I'm probably also going to take the other path next, immediately after, which is now let's talk about some things you could try in the next session. Right? I might give some strategy or help my client come up with a strategy that feels really good to them in this situation for the specific client. I might even give like here's one question I might ask this client to unlock something that she doesn't see as happening.

Now, if you're in The Complete Coach, you might even be laughing right now because if you have been on more than a handful of calls, you have probably heard me coach on this exact topic because it just comes up so often. I think it's something we deal with a lot as coaches. But in most cases when I think about my client in this scenario and what they're bringing, I usually think that both approaches are amazing and sometimes both of them together can be so much more powerful, right?

Like kind of bringing them to a bigger aha, like something that's going on underneath if that's the thing that's happening and giving them that quick hit, like the quick win of and here's something you could try on the next call. In my mind and in my experience and what I see with all my clients, that typically works much faster as in like clients just move faster when they can approach it from both angles and it helps them learn to think from both directions as well.

For this episode, for the purposes of this episode, I'm going to call these two different things, kind of the deep dive and the quick win. Okay, so these are strategies you can use in your coaching. They aren't identities that you possess as coaches and most of you are probably doing both at different times, but a lot of you probably have a default one direction or the other. Either that you feel more comfortable in, right?

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So a lot of coaches, especially coaches that I work with, do feel a lot more comfortable sometimes in the deep dive, in the like, this is so fun to dig up all the things that are underneath. Although there are also quite a few coaches that do feel more comfortable in the quick win, in the quick let me give you a strategy so you can just solve it and we can move on and we can move really fast as fast as possible because that's why you're here.

Also some coaches come to me because I work with coaches from all over the industry. Sometimes coaches come with specific trainings or certifications that they have that specifically teach one of these over the other. I've even had coaches in my containers who, and you might be one of them listening right now, who get like shivers when I even suggest talking about strategy because some coaching programs specifically teach not getting into strategy at all.

Personally, I think that's a little weird because I think that that is one of the things that distinguishes coaching from therapy is really helping your client move forward. Therapists do that as well and, you know, depends on the type of therapy, all the things. But in general, I think people hire coaches to move forward and people hire therapists to understand how did we get here? Who am I? Why am I reacting this way to this thing? All of that. That's a separate episode though.

Okay, and then the more kind of meta idea that I want you to consider, that I have noticed with many of my clients, is that whichever one of these coaching approaches they trend towards, it's also the way they coach themselves or the type of coaching they are more open to, which isn't always the most useful situation.

Now here's why I think both are important because each of these, the deep dive and the quick win strategy, they can both be a little bit deceptive, right? So the deep dive coach isn't just staying stuck in mindset work over and over. This can look like lots of different things. This could look like creating safety, self identity work, exploring the story under the story.

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And obviously these are all incredible tools, all things we should be doing with our clients and when you stay kind of stuck in those, they're the things that don't always move a client forward, right? Or keep a client digging deeper and deeper and deeper instead of, okay, but like what's in this moment, what's the next step to move forward.

But also, the quick win strategy isn't just quick strategy or a simple framework. It can also be helping a client, you know, find their own way, offering a new quick belief. Like here just believe this, right? That they can integrate if they don't have a lot of resistance to it. A lot of you sometimes you think you're doing one or the other of these things, but you're actually doing the opposite, right? You've been dismissing belief work because it didn't feel tactical enough to count as a quick win.

Or sometimes you dismiss strategy or quick win work because you think it's not what will over time or in the long term move the client forward. But I think we could probably agree, we could see why both are amazing, right? Like of course that deeper inner work, the creating safety, the nervous system work, the mindset work, the awareness, right? Like really helping a client understand who they are and what they want, amazing.

Also, sometimes a quick win is everything. I know I've had coaches who were like, "Have you tried this?" And I'm like, what? I've never thought of that. I shall implement it immediately. And then it just works. Right? Like these are both things that are super valuable, but let's talk about where each of them, like what the downfalls are to each of them when you get stuck in them or when you only rely on that thing.

So when you are the deeper coach, the deeper dive, you just want to go deep on everything. Sometimes you can get stuck in the insight and the awareness without any real traction or traction that takes a very long time to create. Maybe you're creating like ultimate safety for your client, but the safety is only coming with no movement, right? So they feel fully safe where they are right now, but that's not why they hired you. They hired you

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because they want to go somewhere. Maybe the client leaves with tons of awareness around who they are, but nothing actually changes.

Now, let's think about the quick win strategy. Sometimes if you're solving for the surface over and over and over, the same issues will just keep coming up, but in different paths, right? Like dressed up in different clothes. And if you never are exploring what's underneath, then you just keep a client in a place where they just need more quick wins.

They always need you or someone else or the internets or wherever to tell them, okay, now what's next? What's the next step? And if you're not paying attention, both of these on the surface can feel super productive. That's what makes them feel very sticky when they're happening and in the moment.

Now, let me give you some examples with a little bit of nuance so you can see a little more what I'm talking about. Many of my clients trend towards being the coach who wants to just get really deep and I fully get this because I am also this coach and used to be much more this way until I started kind of seeing the things I'm laying out for you in this episode. Here's what I want you to consider. Coaches, especially when we get in a room with other coaches, we can kind of nerd out over, let's get really deep.

Let's ask all the questions. Let's just pour our hearts out and just lay it all out there. But most of you are not coaching coaches. And even in a room full of coaches, that's not always the most effective strategy. Trust me, I've been in many of them.

But many of you are not coaching other coaches. You're just coaching real people out in the world who may or may not have ever even experienced coaching. And if you just approach that with we are just going to get deep, it's going to feel so uncomfortable, but it's going to be amazing. So many of your clients will be like, that sounds terrible. I hired you to help me fix something. When do we get to that part?

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And so I just want you to consider that sometimes giving them those little hits, the little quick wins, the strategy, the helping them even determine their own strategy is what actually helps them develop so much more trust with you to know that they can be more open, be more vulnerable, and they learn to trust you in the process so that you can go much deeper.

Some of you are out there refusing to give them anything tangible in the name of like real coaching. I'm going to say "real" in quotes. Because that is either what you learned or that's what you think real coaching is. And some of you even can be on like a, what is it called? Like a high horse about this, right? Where it's like, that isn't real coaching.

But I promise you if you can learn to kind of straddle both worlds, it's going to open up so much more trust and commitment from your clients because they will move forward faster and if they are getting what they want, they're just going to keep coming back to you.

So let's look at a specific example. Let's say you're a relationship coach and you have a client who avoids all difficult conversations with her partner. And she has this conversation coming up that she really wants to have and she just doesn't know how to approach it. She's super scared because she doesn't like difficult conversations and she's just scared of the outcome.

Now, the deeper dive into this is, there's so many options, but you know, you could explore like where is this avoidance coming from? What are your beliefs about yourself in this relationship? What are your beliefs about your partner in this relationship? How are you feeling every time you go to approach the conversation? What did you learn about conflict growing up? What like there's so many ways that you can dive deep.

You could approach it from literally every single deep dive angle that ever existed, which is amazing. Some of those things, maybe don't do all of them, especially if it's a newer client, but these things are amazing. Of course, I am absolutely not saying don't do them. But let's say this

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conversation is something she really wants to have and she wants to do it soon.

So what would a quick win approach be to this? Maybe you explore a few of those things, right? Like what are your beliefs about conflict or why do you think you're avoiding this? Like what are the thoughts that are coming up for you? What are your beliefs about yourself? Maybe you dig into one or two of those, but then you leave her because maybe you won't see her for another whole week. Maybe you leave her with something simple.

Maybe, don't make it up on the spot, but maybe you have some sort of conversation framework that you teach. Amazing. Teach it to her so she can use it. Maybe you have a way of walking her through how to approach the topic next time it comes up or when she's ready to talk about it. Maybe you even have a really simple somatic practice for how she can create safety in her body going into the conversation, right? I think of that as like arming her with all of the tools.

And notice even in those, that quick win category is a somatic practice. Like that's an option, right? Some of those things though, giving her that quick framework, the quick win, the quick practice she can do ahead of time, that is exactly what might earn you the right to go deeper and deeper in each conversation you have around this.

Now, for those of you that trend towards the quick win, if you are solving for the same thing over and over and over with the same client, that is a signal that the real work might be underneath, right? It might be like, okay, what's going on here that's really keeping you stuck? Maybe you think that every time you try to just solve their thing with a new strategy or a new, you know, quick win, maybe you think like, this is efficient. You just need to try all the things.

But oftentimes what I see with my clients, you're not actually being efficient, you're avoiding the deeper work. Maybe it feels awkward to you or you feel uncomfortable doing it or you feel uncomfortable kind of slowing the client

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down, even though it's not really slowing the client down. Maybe your client wants that quick fix, right? Maybe they even tell you like, just tell me what to do.

But sometimes what your client wants and what you know might actually help them are not the same thing. So let me give you another example. Let's say you're a money coach and you have a client who can't ever actually look at her numbers. Right? Like you have set up some sort of system where it's like each week before your call, she reviews whatever it is, her budget, her spending, her, you know, all of it. And she never does. Every single week she comes to the call and she's like, I didn't do it again.

Now a quick win strategy for this might be setting a simple weekly money date, right? Making it more concrete, laying it out for her. It's only 15 minutes, do it the same time every week. Here are just the specific things you need to look at. Not all of it, just these few things.

But what about the deeper side? Right? What about examining, like what's coming up for you when you think about looking at the numbers? Do you have shame around money? What did she learn growing up when she thinks about money? Digging into what are all the fears of what, what does she think she will find when she finally looks at the numbers?

Notice how both of these things are super effective, but together they're even more powerful. Of course, give her that quick win, right? Of course, like, here's a strategy. Try this. But also, let's examine this. Tell me your thoughts about money. Tell me what you learned growing up about money. What were you taught? That is going to unlock first why the strategy is or isn't working and also how you as the coach can tweak the strategy for this specific client to make it work even more effectively.

And last, if you aren't quite sure, if you're like, I don't know, like I kind of do both and I can see, you know, a reason to do both. Here's what I want you to consider. What is your go-to when you feel stuck? Are you more of a like, okay, what's just the next thing? What's a quick hit? What's the quick win?

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What can I just do right now? And then next and next and next. What's this thing I can practice so I can just move forward?

Or are you a like, "Ooh, this must be a identity thing that I really need to dig into. I need to sit with this for a while. I need to get coached and coach myself and have my friends coach me and my colleagues coach me and just uncover my next level of growth and then like dig even deeper and uncover what's under that." Now, obviously, both of those are a little exaggerated, but I do find that most of my clients trend in one direction or the other. And whichever one you do with yourself, it's probably more comfortable for you to do that with your clients.

Now, your work as a coach after listening to this episode is not to pick a side and to go all in or to think that one side is right because neither is right. The work here is just building access to both for yourself, for your own coaching, and for the coaching of your clients. You could even think back to clients that you've had in the past and the things that you've done with them where you're like, "Ooh, that didn't quite work. Why not?"

Maybe you can see it now after the fact where it's like, "Oh, they really could have maybe used some deeper work." Or they really could have used some strategy. They were stuck in the deeper work. Or you can think about clients who had amazing progress working with you and think about that, like which one worked for them and why.

Remember what I said in the very beginning. People pay for fixes. Sometimes that fix is a simple framework, a simple tool, a simple do this, try this. And sometimes that fix is unearthing a whole belief that they've had that they've lived with their entire life. Sometimes it's unearthing something that, you know, helping them see finally seeing the thing that they've been avoiding.

And the best coaches that I know use both of these things, both moves deliberately. The clients don't need to be loyal to one way or the other. They just need you to listen to them and constantly be trying to figure out and

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thinking about what will help them in this moment. What do they need right now?

Okay, if you loved this conversation and if maybe you're even stuck in the very beginning of this episode, you couldn't get out of the client seat where I said, here are things my clients come to me with all the time. If you're still stuck in like, but wait, what do you do when a client's not getting results and you don't know they're not showing up and you don't know how to move forward.

Join us in The Complete Coach. I will put the link for the waitlist in the show notes and we would love to have you. These are problems we're solving every day, all day, and we would love for you to be there. Thank you so much for listening. I hope this was super helpful and I hope to see you soon. Goodbye.

Thanks for listening to this episode of *Mastering Coaching Skills*. If you want to learn more about my work, come visit me at lindsaydotzlafoaching.com. That's Lindsay with an A, D-O-T-Z-L-A-F.com. See you next week.