

# Ep #292: Reimagining a Coaching Business That No Longer Fits with Melisa Liberman



## Full Episode Transcript

With Your Host

**Lindsay Dotzlaf**

## **Ep #292: Reimagining a Coaching Business That No Longer Fits with Melisa Liberman**

Lindsay Dotzlaf: Hey, this is Lindsay Dotzlaf and you are listening to Mastering Coaching Skills, episode 292.

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, today I am having a conversation with one of my incredible clients, Melisa Liberman. She is going to blow your mind. She literally delivers over and over and over in this episode. Pretty soon I am opening the doors for my Reimagine Mastermind and Melisa just so happens to be a client in Reimagine. And I cannot wait for you to hear all of the changes that she made when she was in Reimagine and for you to take away all of the goodness that she shares, like just all of the things that she learned when making those changes.

Just to give you a little bit of a preview, she talks about switching from one-to-one to group coaching and what has been so powerful about that. She shares one of the most powerful things she shared in Reimagine, or at least in my opinion, which is something she has used throughout her business, throughout her time in business and something she comes back to over and over. If it's the only thing you take away from this episode, let it be that. And you'll see, you'll hear what it is when she shares it.

She talks about hiring help for the first time and what that is like or at least in the specific role that she hired. She literally talks about reimagining her entire business and all of the shifts that it took in order to do that and why it was the exact perfect timing for her to do such a thing.

So, hopefully you have your pen and paper out and you're pulled over on the side of the road or you're sitting on your couch or you're not doing anything besides listening because this episode is packed full of goodies that you are going to want to take notes on. I promise you. So if you're not

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doing that, then maybe just listen once and then come back and listen again.

With no further ado, I'm going to let Melisa introduce herself. Oh, and one quick note, if Reimagine sounds like something you might be interested in, I will be putting some information in the show notes. So go there, click the link, and consider joining us. Now let's dig into this conversation.

Hello. I am so excited to be here with you today. Tell everybody who you are and what you do.

Melisa Liberman: Thanks, Lindsay for having me. I am Melisa Liberman. I am a business coach for independent consultants. They are consultants who sell their consulting services to corporate clients. So B2B type of consultants. And I help them to learn how to sell their work because they're really good at delivering for clients, but they don't understand how to find clients and sell work and ultimately to be successful hitting their goals so they don't have to go back to corporate.

Lindsay Dotzlaf: Yes. Okay. And just for people listening if they're like, what does that mean? Like, can you give some examples of what your clients might do?

Melisa Liberman: Yes, absolutely. Some of them are leadership consultants, so they work with their clients on team effectiveness. Some are executive coaches, so they work with, you know, with more of executives or teams of executives one-on-one. I have one client who calls herself the Wendy Rhoades of team effectiveness. So she goes in and helps, if you have ever seen the show Billions, basically, she goes in and helps the executive teams to be much more highly functioning as leaders and also as a team.

And then also consultants who do work with manufacturing companies helping them to decrease the cost of their supply chain, healthcare consultants who work with implementing software. So a huge range of work that consultants do with their corporate clients.

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Lindsay Dotzlaf: This is my husband is always hiring healthcare consultants for this exact thing. So.

Melisa Liberman: Yes.

Lindsay Dotzlaf: Okay. So, we have like a little bit of a history. You were my one-on-one client years ago. It's been really fun. You've been in Reimagine and it's been really fun. There's been years in between working with you before and working with you now. So just like as your coach and your friend, it feels just really fun to see how far your business has come and like what it used to be and what it is now. So first, I just wanted to tell you that it's been really fun for me just having you in the mastermind and just like checking back in your business. And you're still doing the same thing, right? Like that's who you were working with then?

Melisa Liberman: I started off working with doing job search coaching.

Lindsay Dotzlaf: Okay. Yep.

Melisa Liberman: I was helping people find jobs in corporate. And then at one point I thought to myself, why am I doing this? I don't ever want to go back to corporate. I have no idea why I'm helping people find jobs. The reality was is that I didn't feel competent enough to help. I know that I always wanted to do this, but I didn't feel confident enough or competent enough to say, I know how to help people to acquire clients and to have a, you know, hit revenue goals and all of those things.

So in hindsight, I chose that initial niche to figure that out for myself in a, in addition to the consulting work that I had already been doing and felt like at some point I was qualified enough to switch over. So, yeah.

Lindsay Dotzlaf: How did you get into coaching? Like how did we get here? Because you worked in corporate yourself?

Melisa Liberman: Yes. Gosh, that was a such a long time ago. Now 14 years ago, I left corporate. My husband got an opportunity in Hawaii to go

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back to school. And so I resigned from my corporate job, which sounds like an easy choice, but it really wasn't, even though we were moving to Hawaii. And at that time, my company asked me if I would stay on as a consultant. And so I said yes because we were moving to Hawaii onto a military salary and it seemed like a good idea to have some extra income.

But over the course of time in working with corporate clients, I was working with startups helping them to scale and working with the leadership team. And my favorite part of it was the coaching side of it. I didn't even know that I was coaching at that point. I think I just really loved the, every time that one of them would bring me to the side and say, how am I going to deal with the CEO today? Or how am I going to navigate this challenge on my team?

And that coaching part of it was the thing I love the most. And so I just started doing a lot of research around what is coaching, you know, what does this look like? And ironically, one of my friends had become a coach, a sleep coach for kids, which I needed at the moment at that time, like desperately. And so I hired her as a coach. So I just started seeing these coaching opportunities come along.

And then the last indicator, I guess for me was I started doing some network marketing, you know, because I was doing this consulting and I was trying to figure out what did I want my business model to be in the long run. So I started doing some network marketing, which I was terrible at. So I hired this coach.

And pretty quickly, I think she realized I wasn't going to be successful. And I am so grateful to her for her to say, "I just keep seeing so much friction here and it's certainly possible to overcome, but it just feels like you're, it's incongruent with who you are. And so we can either work on overcoming all of these hangups you have or what about just doubling down on your consulting business?"

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And so through some of those coaching experiences, having my own coach and coaching the executives when I was consulting, that's what led me to get certified in coaching and build the business.

Lindsay Dotzlaf: That's so funny. That to me means you had a good network marketing leader because mine did the opposite. She tried to like double down on like, we're going to get you to do it. And I was like, I don't think so.

Melisa Liberman: No. No, we're not.

Lindsay Dotzlaf: No. Do you mind saying like what company?

Melisa Liberman: Well, two things. Number one, she was an external coach that I hired. So she wasn't part of the company. She had actually been a former executive. It was at Isagenix. So she had been a former executive there. So it was kind of helpful that way because she didn't have a personal stake in whether I was going to succeed or not.

Lindsay Dotzlaf: Yeah. Okay. That makes a big difference I think. I sold Rodan + Fields for a little bit, skincare, and I could sell the skincare. I just had no interest in building like the business side and building a team and all the things. That was not for me. That's just funny. I don't think I knew this about you. Maybe I did. If I did, I forgot. Okay, so, alright so you found, you found coaching.

Melisa Liberman: Yes.

Lindsay Dotzlaf: And then was there at some point you were like, I'm all in or was it like a slow transition? Like how did the, how did you go from consulting to like now I'm a coach?

Melisa Liberman: That's a great question. It took a while. After I started my coaching business, I still had my corporate client for quite a while. I was down to one corporate consulting client and I probably had them for 18 months. But I knew that I wanted to start, I wanted to only have coaching

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clients. I knew I wanted to not have consulting clients as much anymore because of the business model I had built, which was much more of a fractional COO type of an offering that I had been delivering.

It was so time intensive. I mean, I remember, probably the last straw I remember, I was, I had taken my kids to the pool. It was like on a Wednesday or something. They were little. I have three boys. And we were driving back and my client said, "I need to talk to you immediately. It's an emergency." I had no skills of saying no. So there's that. But I, so I said, okay, just give me a minute.

And so I pulled the car over to the side of the road. It wasn't the freeway, but it was, you know, a pretty busy road.

Lindsay Dotzlaf: In Hawaii. Still?

Melisa Liberman: We were in Colorado by that point.

Lindsay Dotzlaf: Okay.

Melisa Liberman: And so I pulled the car over to the side of the road and the kids are screaming in the background. There's no way I could have this meeting. So I get out of the car. I put my laptop on the roof of the car, on the hood of the car, sorry, not the roof, the hood of the car. And I'm having my meeting there on the side of the road.

And that's the point at which I realized I had gone too far. And I needed to make some pretty significant changes. And I knew that coaching would be a lot, I could make coaching a lot more flexible and on my own schedule, rather than feeling at the whim of the client. And so from that point forward, I did everything I could to figure out how to replace the income that I had been making in corporate and also as a consultant and start building a business that exceeded that.

Lindsay Dotzlaf: I can literally feel the anxiety in my body thinking about the laptop on the hood of the car with screaming boys in the back seat,

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probably, well, they were pretty small. So they weren't like hitting each other, probably at that point.

Melisa Liberman: Oh, they, if they found a way to hit each other, they would have. But at least they were strapped into the car seat.

Lindsay Dotzlaf: That's true. In their car seats. Yes.

Melisa Liberman: That's right. Yeah.

Lindsay Dotzlaf: Okay. But yeah, oh my gosh. I can like in my chest feel the anxiety of like what that felt like in the moment. I feel like been there, done that in different ways. So you were like making changes. Here we go. I'm doing it.

Melisa Liberman: Yeah. But I tried to not keep so much pressure on myself. So I kept that corporate client. Although I did use it a lot against myself. Like I would constantly think this revenue doesn't count and this revenue does and I'm failing at this or I'm not.

Lindsay Dotzlaf: Oh, now that I hear these words, I'm thinking you had the corporate client while I was coaching you maybe?

Melisa Liberman: Yes, I did. Yeah, absolutely. Yeah.

Lindsay Dotzlaf: Those words sounded very familiar.

Melisa Liberman: Yeah. So this 100 or 200k I'm making doesn't count, but you know, and focused so much on landing coaching clients. I'm really glad that I didn't drop that client. I think it would have created so much stress. But at the same time, if I had to go back and do it over again, and I talk to my own clients about this, like parsing out what counts and what doesn't count is not valuable at all.

Lindsay Dotzlaf: Correct. Yes.

Melisa Liberman: You told me that a million times, I know for sure.

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Lindsay Dotzlaf: Oh my gosh. I feel like, and I say it now too to clients in different ways. Just the ways we say, "Oh, but that doesn't count."

Melisa Liberman: Right.

Lindsay Dotzlaf: Like kind of wild. Like what do you mean? Of course it counts. It all counts.

Melisa Liberman: That's right. We like to make things harder on ourselves, I think.

Lindsay Dotzlaf: Yeah. Why not? I mean, you would think as coaches we would have awareness around that, but so many of us are like, how about doubling down on just making it as hard as possible? That will be fun.

Melisa Liberman: That's right.

Lindsay Dotzlaf: Okay. So then, so you're, you're in Colorado at this point, your kids are getting older, you're growing your business. And when you think about that, so that's been, what year did you start your coaching business? Do you know?

Melisa Liberman: 2017. Yeah.

Lindsay Dotzlaf: Okay. And so since then, it's just been, how has it been? Is it, does it like grow steady? Just year after year? Has it been ups and downs? Like what is the just overall, what has the experience been like for you?

Melisa Liberman: It has grown. I, I'll say it this way, I have grown it very steadily. I was able to get to 100k. I mean, all I was thinking about in that first year was 8,333. All every, all day long. How do I get to \$8,333 a month, which is 100k business. And it did so much work around that and really broke it down. I mean, it was there were a lot of tears you could attest to in this process, just you know having come from a very successful corporate career down to feeling like I have no label behind, no title, no corner office,

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no credibility, no clients, no anything. It felt like a huge threat to my self identity and it took a really long time to rebuild that back up again.

But I did it just, I started figuring out I've got to do this one step at a time. And so from a lot of your help in our coaching together at that time, worked on how do I get consults? That's it. I'm not going to worry about how do I close the consults. I'm not going to worry about how am I going to deliver to the client. If I get one, I'll solve that good problem when I get it, but I'm just going to focus everything I think about, all of my attention around how do I fill my calendar with clients, with consults?

And so I went about doing that. I did a lot of speaking. I did some, I hired an agency that did some direct messaging to people on my behalf. Under with a lot of people who thought we were networking and talking about how I could help them introduce them to someone that I knew. Crazy, crazy conversations. But through those, there were gems, there were people that became clients.

And then I started to realize that, I remember at one point you directly said to me like, "The problem is not getting consults anymore. You're solving the wrong problem. You can get consults now. We need to focus on getting better at closing the consults."

And so, you know, then I started working on that and little by little created really an engine for myself around my own podcast, speaking for companies that work with independent consultants. So they would bring people to webinars and I could deliver value and offer something valuable that would create consults from those and get myself to the place where it feels like a flywheel, like a really good way of finding people that would love to work with me and talking with them and creating clients.

Lindsay Dotzlaf: I love it. And I want to pause you here because I want the listener to just like, let's not breeze by this because it's so important. It actually came up recently in Reimagine and you offered this thought like a couple of people were talking about kind of like their bigger goals and like

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all these things they're working on and you generously pointed out like, "But wait, what's the one thing that you're working on right now?" And you, I don't remember exactly how you said it, but basically like, how do you create a consult? Like that's all you should be thinking about.

And it's so simple, but I guarantee most of the people listening right now are like, wait, what? Because they're thinking about do I start a podcast? Do I, which could be part of it, but they're, they're like out here thinking about all these things and you were so good. Like I remember this from coaching you where it's like, this is the thing I'm doing and I'm going to figure it out and I'm going to keep going until I figure it out. And you did until all of a sudden you had, you were basically running a full coaching practice except it was only consults, like not paying clients.

Melisa Liberman: That's right. That's right.

Lindsay Dotzlaf: That's what I remember. I remember so specifically one day being like, wait a minute, okay, pause. You have how many consults? Okay, let's take the next step. Like now the job is how do we close a consult?

Melisa Liberman: Right.

Lindsay Dotzlaf: To turn this into money instead of just doing free consults as a business.

Melisa Liberman: That's right, exactly. And I think that guiding question is always one that is so important because it's so easy to get distracted by how am I going to do this or so often I hear the topic of, well, is this a good use of my time or how am I going to scale this or can I sustain this forever? And it doesn't even matter because if you can't even, you know, if you're unable to figure out what to do and how to accomplish these building blocks, then it doesn't matter if you, if it's sustainable or not.

You can always, once you nail these foundational pieces like creating consults, closing the consults, and learning how to balance delivering client

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work with, with acquiring more clients, then it doesn't matter if it's sustainable or how our brain kind of races ahead to all the what ifs. So I always like to bring it back to what is this guiding thing that I'm working on right now? Like, I need to figure out how to create consults. That's it.

Lindsay Dotzlaf: Yeah. What would you say like thinking back to then? One thing I remember about you that is true and is still true right now is that you are not scared of an action. Like you will take any action. You will figure it out. You even all those things you were saying where you were like, and so I started doing all these things, just figuring out like how do I get people on a consult?

And you tried, I remember you coming to calls and me being like, I've never even heard of this thing that you're talking about and amazing. Like great. And some of it would work and some of it wouldn't. But what has, so like that's not your work. You don't have, there's no like, okay, get out there and take some action. But what has been like the harder piece for you or like what do you think has been your work over the years?

Melisa Liberman: It was all the mindset side. You might remember this, but we would coach a lot on, this is a waste of my time to talk about what I'm thinking. I just want to get some work done.

Lindsay Dotzlaf: Actually, I do remember that. Yes. But you were so committed. You always came to the calls and you would even say something like, listen, I know I should be here. I know this is valuable and also like, why are we even talking about this? Like I could be using this hour to whatever, whatever it was you were doing at the time.

Melisa Liberman: Yeah, that's right. But the reason why is because at the end of the day, even though I was super resistant to it, I knew that it was so important. Otherwise I wouldn't have gone and had a certification in coaching. I wouldn't have been hiring coaches who are not accountability coaches. You of course are one of the best mindset coaches there are. So I knew that it was important, but I had this resistance to it.

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And I think at the end of the day it comes down to, I mean, I grew up on a cattle ranch. There's no one talking about anyone's feelings. If you're having a feeling, it's interrupting what needs to be happening. And so, you know, there's a lot around, you know, in corporate, that's not always the best approach to be operating off of your emotions. I would go to meetings with the CEO and like with a paperclip and stab myself in the finger with a paperclip to keep myself from crying or from like, you know.

Lindsay Dotzlaf: Oh my gosh.

Melisa Liberman: Like this is intense. A lot of background of not really being open to emotions or to working on the mindset side and I could just power through from an action's perspective. But I think what this business did for me is there was no escaping it. I got to a place where I couldn't outwork it and I didn't want to, but I knew it was important. And so the mindset side is, in fact, I think once we reconnected on, in Reimagine and I was talking about how much work I do with my own clients on mindset, you were confused.

Lindsay Dotzlaf: I don't know if confused is the right word, but I was, I, yeah, I think I was like, oh, okay, now we're talking. I like this.

Melisa Liberman: 180.

Lindsay Dotzlaf: So great. Oh my gosh. And I do remember, I'm having now all these memories as you're talking about this, I do remember you were one of the few clients that like, maybe the first time you cried, I was like, yes. Which, like I can hold lots of space for all the emotions. I don't mind. People can cry and do whatever they need to do on a call. Totally fine. But that just wasn't your thing.

Melisa Liberman: Yeah.

Lindsay Dotzlaf: For the most part. But I think when you did, I had this feeling of like, okay, we're getting somewhere. Not because I thought you like needed to cry, but because I was like, oh, you're like experiencing,

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you're like letting me see how disappointed you feel right now or how like frustrated you are or how, you know, whatever.

And I wonder like, are you now, would you say, are you like better at just as a human, not necessarily even as a coach. Are you more in touch with the way you feel? Are you like, like how's that going?

Melisa Liberman: Yeah, I would say for sure. I mean, there's, I'm always a work in progress. But I found that the really the secret to success and being able to continue growing the business regardless of all the external factors that are going on and to continue to evolve what I'm offering and that kind of thing, it all comes down to mindset first. And part of that is emotional intelligence and being able to use that as a superpower instead of something that's a deficit or deficiency.

Lindsay Dotzlaf: I feel like that visual of you stabbing a, what did you call it?

Melisa Liberman: Paper clip.

Lindsay Dotzlaf: Paper clip. I'm seeing a, I'm like a toothpick, that's not what you said. A paper clip, stabbing yourself with a paper clip to keep from getting upset is such a visual and such a, I don't know if good is the right word, but such a clear analogy or metaphor, whichever one it is, for like what we do sometimes maybe in our business, like, look over here, like just distract ourselves with like, look over here, don't worry about all that over there.

Melisa Liberman: That's right.

Lindsay Dotzlaf: Because then you'll just be upset. Like just look this way. Which maybe is what sometimes people are doing when they don't want to answer the question like, how do I just get a consult? Right? It's like, look over here, like solve this other thing.

Melisa Liberman: Yeah, that's right. I think we just distract ourselves with so many questions that are not, that are further along or not, that seem

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interesting but not useful. But if you just break it down to what is the one question that you need to ask yourself to make the next step in the goal that you're wanting to achieve, I think it's confronting but also really guiding, really focusing.

Lindsay Dotzlaf: Yeah, and that's kind of the work is like learning, I think, how can it not feel as confronting? How can we make it like, yeah, this is just a question. Let me just solve it without making it mean all the things about myself or without it, you know, whatever, like completely derailing me and then I have to get back up and start from scratch.

Okay, let's actually talk about, so you're in Reimagine. We've already said that. You have completely transformed your business. So some people come into Reimagine and they make some business changes, but and maybe some behind the scenes or some like how they work type of changes. Some people really just change the way they think about their business or relate to their business. So it's like a lot of different types of reimagining.

But out of all the clients that I've ever had in Reimagine, all the rounds, the couple rounds that I've run, you have made like your business is a totally different business.

Melisa Liberman: Right.

Lindsay Dotzlaf: So let's talk about that.

Melisa Liberman: I, it was the perfect timing for me when you started offering it last summer. I had reached a point, so up until the point that last summer, less than a year ago, I was all one-on-one coaching. So I had been doing one-on-one coaching for years, for six years or I've lost track of time now. Seven years and...

Lindsay Dotzlaf: All the years, many years.

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Melisa Liberman: All the years. All the years. I could be wrong too. All the years I had been doing one-on-one coaching, partially, if I told you the reason it would be that it was because I felt like that was more my style, that I wasn't good like in group settings, that I thought clients got more out of one-on-one, like all of those reasons.

And those were partially true. And I also felt a little rebellious. There's so much advice out there, you know, move from one-on-one into group and the people that, I think there's some sense in the community that people who do group coaching are better than the one-on-one people in some ways. And so...

Lindsay Dotzlaf: Not in my community, but yes, I know what you're saying.

Melisa Liberman: Yeah, not your community, the general community out there of coaches. And so I felt really rebellious in some ways, like I'm just going to do this and show everyone how it can work in a one-on-one setting. And so that worked for a really long time. But last summer, I did hit a pinch point essentially where my calendar would no longer, I was not choosing to readjust some of my family priorities to make one-on-one, that volume of one-on-one work anymore. I felt forced into at least trying, like I'm just going to do one group and see how it goes. That was it.

And so I joined Reimagine and we did that first launch which I had no idea what I was doing. It was a two-week launch. I had no plan. I just would write emails to people once a day and filled that group up and hit the goal which felt exciting, but then it also felt like a fluke or it felt like, oh, you could always sell something once, you can't do it again.

So then we did it again and I filled that one again. So I had the same thoughts, "Well, I probably just had a lot of extra demand that people wanted to do the group and the timing was better." All of these bad thoughts. And so then I sold it again. So now I've done this three times since Reimagine started and hit the goals again.

Lindsay Dotzlaf: Turns out it just is working.

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Melisa Liberman: Yeah.

Lindsay Dotzlaf: And every time you go into the launch, I told you I think on our last call, I don't think you'll mind if I share this, but on our last call I said, "Yeah, I think this is just part of your process where you like, you decide, you know, this launch is coming, you make a goal, and then you immediately decide there's no way in the world this is ever going to happen and this is terrible and I've made a really bad mistake." And I think that's just part of your process. It's like step one or step two.

Melisa Liberman: Totally. I will say though from the past to now, the difference is that lasts maybe an hour versus it used to last for weeks or months. Yeah.

Lindsay Dotzlaf: So it doesn't take you out. It's just like, oh, here we are for a minute and but I'm going to keep going. And then you just get on the other side of it and then it just keeps working.

Melisa Liberman: Yeah, there's nothing wrong with that part of the process, I think, as long as it doesn't linger. So I sold three of those groups. I absolutely love them. I love and I've made some opportunities to work with people one-on-one in those groups like giving away incentives. If you accomplish this, you'll get a one-on-one call with me. Some fun things like that. So I can continue having some one-on-ones in the midst of this. And then I also sold a mastermind, a higher level mastermind during the time period. And I just did it off of a Google doc. It was so much fun.

Normally I would spend all this time making a landing page and setting up all the payment processing and the email marketing. And I decided, you know what, I'm just going to invite, it's going to be invite only. I'm going to send out invites until it fills up with amazing people that I would love to work with again and they're going to look at this Google doc and make a decision. And they did. And so that's a fun way to look at this too. Because I think sometimes I know I fall in the trap of thinking everything needs to be so polished and online market-y set up and it doesn't.

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Lindsay Dotzlaf: Listen, I'm taking notes about this piece because I, as you know, I'm preparing for a Reimagine launch and as we're recording this, depending on when this comes out, may already be launched, but I'm like, does it have to be this complicated? Does it? Is this what I need to do? So it's just good to hear. Even, like as my, I love learning things from my clients and this is one of the things I've been taking note of from you is like, what if this part could just be a little simpler?

What if it didn't have to be a sales page that I don't even know how to make and I'm going to have to figure out how to, you know, like the whole thing. So, yeah, anybody listening, just maybe a question to ask yourself if you're listening and just like, how can I, how am I overcomplicating this?

Melisa Liberman: I think people appreciate even especially now things being less complicated, less polished, more real. Yeah.

Lindsay Dotzlaf: I agree. Okay. So how has the transition been? Like going from one-on-one to group? Was it as bad as you thought it was going to be? Are you loving it? Maybe like how are the results going in the, in the groups? Just overall, like how are you feeling about it?

Melisa Liberman: It's going really well. It's, the main group I have is called the Lead Gen Sprint, the Consultant's Lead Gen Sprint. And so it's seven weeks of helping them to dial in. Most of these consultants have been landing clients like I did off of word of mouth or former colleagues that they had in corporate.

And so being able to teach them and coach them on how to take control of their own pipeline, how to land their own clients without relying on word of mouth, and to feel much more secure and stable in their business and the mechanics and the process of it, but also it, you know, always comes out of mindset and the way that they're thinking and where they're holding themselves back in terms of what they're willing to pursue or what they're willing to charge for what they do and helping them to overcome all of those blockers is I'm super passionate about it.

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And I've found that it's been a lot of fun delivering this in a group setting and having those consultants to work to meet each other and to collaborate together and to share experiences and wins and to normalize the setbacks that occur has been a really good benefit for them as well.

So it's been a process now that I've refined over these three times and I'm excited about some new things I'm building into it for this fall launch to help them to implement the process in a way that's very effective but also figure out where their mindset needs to be in order to, you know, to be able to create a 500k business or a million dollar business, whatever they want to create.

Lindsay Dotzlaf: It's so fun. I love, I just love your brain and I love the way you are kind of so methodical and think about the process and all of the things that you help your clients with. And in Reimagine, one of the things I offer is a, an upgrade where you where we spend you get like a day with me basically. And or you can split it into two half days.

And so we have been doing some work on this and it's just been really fun hearing you talk about all of your ideas and like what you want it to look like and all the things you want to build and, I don't know, it feels to me like you're kind of loving the group.

Melisa Liberman: I love the group. Yeah. I think my next work is I do have a few one-on-one clients still and the next reimagining is turning that off for a while. Yeah. It feels a little bit like a crutch. So that's probably the next step.

But those VIP days that I've had with you have been so incredible because, you know, it takes from the weekly group coachings that we've been doing together and we accomplish so much in that period of time of, you know, figuring out what the next few months look like and also both from just a pure project planning perspective, a strategy perspective, and you of course pointing out where I'm getting in my own way, which is so valuable.

Lindsay Dotzlaf: It has been really fun. I like selfishly, it's really fun for me. I'm definitely, it will be included in the next round as well because I just

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really like to get my hands in there and like be like in your business for those few hours and like really with no drama, none of the drama I have about my own business, just let my like strategic like sequential mind work through things. I'm like, that's so fun. So much more fun to do it in someone else's business than in my own. Of course.

Melisa Liberman: But I think it also gives a good example, Lindsay, of what a group coaching program can look like where for those of us who do love working with people one-on-one, we don't have to fully give it up. There are other ways to be able to have that interaction and diving deep.

Lindsay Dotzlaf: Yeah, I love it for so many reasons. First just that selfish piece of like really being in your business, but then also when I know your business so well and then when you are in the weekly calls, it's like, but I've spent three hours with you doing this like deep dive into this thing that you're working on, it just really gives me so much more, you know, kind of like I don't have to ask as many questions when I'm coaching you in the group because I know exactly what you're talking about. We just created a whole plan and yeah, I think all around, I love it. I really love one-on-one coaching too. So there's that piece of me and I feel like I understood you in the past when you were like, I don't want to give it up. I'm like, I, I know. I get it.

Melisa Liberman: Yes, it's hard to give up. Yes.

Lindsay Dotzlaf: Yes. Yes. Okay. So you launched this group that you call your Lead Gen Sprint, which is like a shorter thing. Then you launched a mastermind also from that. And you hired someone who is now, are they full-time?

Melisa Liberman: No, I hired an OBM or director of operations, whichever you want to call her. She's amazing and she's not full-time, but she has been helping me with all of the launches, a lot of the tech side. I mean, these are things I know how to do and quite frankly, I kind of like doing them. But, you know, when I got to that place of I don't have enough hours

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in the day, it really forces some of these decisions that I had been delaying. So she's taken all of that off my plate.

And while I thought it would be, I would miss it, I don't. I don't at all. It's really nice to have her to take on those tasks. She manages my schedule, she manages my email. So it's really helpful. And then I also hired a house manager. So she's helping with the like personal side of this so that I can focus the hours that I have to work on purely on client delivery and on advancing, you know, what I'm offering in the business and how I'm acquiring clients.

Lindsay Dotzlaf: And I think we should say, maybe this is a question too, did you know at the time, like when you started, when you were like, okay, all in on a group, let's go. At the time, did you know the changes that were coming with your husband?

Melisa Liberman: So my husband just got a job. We live in Colorado and he got a job in Florida. So now he's commuting back and forth, which is a bit of a logistical challenge. But no, we had no, we had no idea that was coming.

Lindsay Dotzlaf: I mean, thank goodness you made...

Melisa Liberman: Yes.

Lindsay Dotzlaf: I thought about that before we started recording, before you were on here today where I was just thinking through like all these changes that you've made. And I thought, oh my gosh, wait, did she know that was happening? I didn't think you did.

Melisa Liberman: No.

Lindsay Dotzlaf: What amazing timing.

Melisa Liberman: If I hadn't done all of this Reimagine work, there would have to be some severe compromises either on my business or in what I do to support my kids who are competitive swimmers and spend four hours a day at the pool. So...

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Lindsay Dotzlaf: They need at least 42 rides from you every day is what I have learned after our last call.

Melisa Liberman: That's right.

Lindsay Dotzlaf: Because they're doing all the swimming and all the ways imaginable, I think.

Melisa Liberman: Yeah. Water polo, swimming. So if I hadn't gone through all of this of Reimagine process, for sure I would have had to choose between really cutting back a lot on those things I like supporting the kids and what they're doing or my business or even both probably.

Lindsay Dotzlaf: Yeah. Okay. What else? When you think about Reimagine, since that's what we're talking about, what else would, are there any other major changes you've made? I just feel like, like I don't even recognize your business at this point.

Melisa Liberman: Yeah, I don't either. I think the other piece is the way I think about myself has shifted tremendously. And, you know, that's part of this process of shifting into offering different things in different ways. I think of myself as someone who can sell without a consult now, which is crazy. I mean, first we were having all those consults that I never, my close rate was 1%. Literally 1%.

Lindsay Dotzlaf: Yes, I remember. Yes.

Melisa Liberman: It was really bad. And I was making money, so I was closing 1%, which means I had to have so many of these to make the money. So now thinking of myself as someone who can sell off of an email or sell off of a sales page or I'm learning, you know, figuring out ads now, that is a huge shift and liberating in a way because I know that I still have the skill set to sell on a call, but now I've got all these other ways of selling that just give me a lot more flexibility and ability to take the business in any direction I want it to go in.

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Lindsay Dotzlaf: And maybe one thing we should address in case people are listening and they're like, what? I want that business. Like how? One thing to keep in mind for the listeners is that you've been doing this for a while and you were so committed. I would say just from watching you from the outside. I think, correct me if I'm wrong, it felt like you were very committed to consistently being in front of new people in some form, growing your list, like a kind of a constant like keeping the people coming in. Does that feel true for you?

Melisa Liberman: Yeah, absolutely. At the end of the day, I knew that I wanted to figure out this business. I knew that this was my only option that I was willing to pursue. I knew that there were no backup plans. I wasn't going back to corporate. And so I had to figure out how to make this work. And so kind of that driving reason of why I wanted to do this was so compelling to me. So every time I would have a setback, the setback was not as important to me as making this as successful as it could be. And so that's, every obstacle I ever hit was always came back to that.

And that's why I focused so much on figuring out how do I make this work? And I knew, you know, I think I shared a minute ago that I hired an agency to do those direct messages and I was getting these appointments, but I knew that wasn't working. It wasn't really the highest quality, it was not a high quality lead at all. But I started asking myself, who has amassed my ideal client? Who's already got the trust of my ideal client? Where does my ideal client already listen to?

And so I started finding speaking opportunities and started once a month, every month I would have a speaking opportunity of some sort to groups of consultants, sometimes huge groups, sometimes small groups, always virtually. In this whole time I've only done one in-person speaking...

Lindsay Dotzlaf: Oh, wow.

Melisa Liberman: Yeah. Engagement, speaking, a talk. But everything else has been virtual and I built my list that way.

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Lindsay Dotzlaf: How did you find these things? Like was it, how do you connect with the person who's already has the group? Like what was your, did you have a method? Was it, I know you had a lot of colleagues and like connections.

Melisa Liberman: So two ways that I found these speaking opportunities. One was I found a group of people who work, executives at software companies that are platforms for consultants. So there are a lot of platforms out there where consultants can come in and find opportunities and corporate clients can post essentially engagements that they're looking for. Catalant is an example of that and MBO Partners. So those are the types of tools. So I found an association that had all of these executives of those companies and became a member of that.

And so I would just meet the people in the chat literally and set up networking calls to meet them. And it was a win-win because they would find me and I would say, you know, "Listen, you do a lot of work in your company to benefit your corporate clients, but you're not doing that much to benefit the consultants. And so I can come in and do talks for them a couple of times a year so that you're cultivating that side of your business."

And so it was great. We were finding someone for free to do, you know, content for them and fill up their marketing calendar in that way. And it was great for me because I got access to all of those consultants.

And then, you know, beyond that, I would meet beyond that association, that's what I would look for, asking myself the question, it always comes back to this idea of like, what's the guiding question? Asking the question, who's amassed an audience of my ideal client? What companies, what associations, what people have amassed an audience of my ideal clients? And then finding ways to get on their calendars and offering this kind of win-win to them.

Lindsay Dotzlaf: Yeah. Okay. So for the listener, no matter what your niche is, the question is, who has already gathered the people, right? Who has

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already like, where are your people hanging out in groups and how can you get in front of them? Teach them, talk to them, and how can it be a win-win like for, for maybe, I don't know, I'm trying to think of like a specific example, but I don't know, nothing's coming to mind right now. Of course, just how can you be in the rooms with them, either virtually or the actual room.

I always say like with coaches, you know, I'm like, you coaches love to go to a coaching conference, but like if you're a marriage coach, go to like a marriage conference or a relationship, you know, like a relationship seminar or a, like just go, you don't have to be a speaker the first time you go, but at least just go, see what's going on, like make connections, and eventually like get in front of those people. That's a, not better time than going to the coaching conference. Like for sure do both if you want to, but be in the rooms with your people as much as you can.

Melisa Liberman: Yeah, absolutely.

Lindsay Dotzlaf: It's such a good example of that.

Melisa Liberman: Absolutely. It's a great example. And I think there's so many ways of doing that now, Slack groups, forums, conferences, associations, so many different ways of looking at this to find those people.

Lindsay Dotzlaf: Yeah. And the people that are like in charge of the conferences, the events, the whatever, like they will love help.

Melisa Liberman: Absolutely.

Lindsay Dotzlaf: And if you can help them in some way, like if you don't just walk up to them and like, can I sell my services to your people? That's not what we're doing. But like, how can I help you? What's like a space here I can fill?

Melisa Liberman: We were having a conversation about this on Reimagine this week where someone was saying, "Well, I don't, I don't want them to

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think that I'm taking from that." You know, he was thinking about how do I, how do I get a speaking opportunity? I don't want them to think that I'm trying to get something from their audience.

And it's like, no, let's look at this the opposite way, which is you're coming out of nowhere perhaps saying, "Listen, I've got some really good content or a really good process or a workshop or a lunch and learn or whatever it is to share with your people that could be really valuable in a way that's opposite, you know, different than the way they work with their people." And what a gift.

Lindsay Dotzlaf: Yes. Yeah, like don't go to a marriage, you know, in the marriage example, like don't go to another marriage coach who's running a conference and do something that's like competing, right? Like think about what is like adjacent? How can this be complimentary to something that someone is already doing?

Melisa Liberman: Yeah, absolutely. Adjacent. Mmhmm.

Lindsay Dotzlaf: I love that. Okay. Well, I feel like we've hit so many nuggets here today, just one after another. And is there anything just about your business or about the maybe the changes that have happened even in the last year or last, not even year, eight months that you were hoping we would talk about or that we haven't touched on?

Melisa Liberman: I think the last thing is I signed up for this Reimagine group and didn't fully know what it was. We had a call, I think. But what made a huge difference in addition to the VIPs that we were talking about and the weekly calls, what made a huge difference, I would say are two things. One, you also have a community on Circle that you can go in and pretty much ask anything or get feedback on anything. I've literally never used it. I don't even know how to log in there.

Lindsay Dotzlaf: Worst client.

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Melisa Liberman: And I say that because in the past I would have done that just to try to get the most out of my investment or to be a good student or to show that I was doing a good job. And I don't feel guilty whatsoever of never logging in there. I don't think you care that I've never logged in there.

Lindsay Dotzlaf: No, I try to make it very clear from the beginning. Like everyone is like, you are here to get what you need and you take the pieces that you need from this.

Melisa Liberman: Yes. So I find that really valuable of something I haven't used because it shows me, oh, no longer are you trying to be the good student or doing, proving something to someone. And the second thing that I would say is just the literal name of this program, Reimagine, was so inspiring to me.

Even, I accomplished a lot of this with before we even started the group because it felt like this is what I'm committed to right now. I need to go through and think about everything that I'm doing and relook at it and decide is this, am I keeping it this way? Am I adjusting it? Am I completely changing it? And even the idea of committing to something like that word Reimagine, I found to be incredibly valuable.

Lindsay Dotzlaf: I'll share this with you. You might find it funny. I was considering changing the name after this round because I think people get a little confused and I think even I was confused when I, when I was like learning what is Reimagine? Like what is this, is this developing into. And I think people think like, oh, you, kind of like what you actually did. Like you have to come in and make all these changes, which is not what everybody is doing.

Because some of them are more like behind the scenes or like mindset shifts, not necessarily like you did, like going from one-on-one to group, whatever. So I was like, it's confusing and it isn't actually how I usually name things, right? Like the podcast name, the whatever. Like usually I'm very clear like this is what we're doing here.

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So I had already decided before you, before I read your feedback form, like, no, the name is staying. Actually, I think it's perfect. It's all in the way I talk about it, like that it, but it really is a great name for what happens in the room. And then I read your feedback, which I sent out a link, everybody sending me feedback about the mastermind. And one of the things you said, I don't remember your exact words, but something like what you just said, like just the name itself like really opened something up for me.

And so I just want you to know that that feedback like really solidified for me. Like, okay, yeah, the name is staying. This is what it is. And it was just really nice to hear that, especially coming from you who is someone who I don't, I don't know that I would have clocked you as like, or I would have said like, Melisa's really going to love the name of this thing.

Melisa Liberman: Right. Right.

Lindsay Dotzlaf: Like this is really going to speak to her, you know.

Melisa Liberman: Yeah, normally it's much more practical, I guess, if you will.

Lindsay Dotzlaf: But yeah, which is actually how I usually name things. And so this is a little outside of the box even for me. But I, so just hearing that from you, it felt very validating. So I appreciate that.

Melisa Liberman: Yes, absolutely. It was, it's been a great experience.

Lindsay Dotzlaf: I love that. And if you, if someone was asking you, like, should they join? What are your, what would you tell them? What are your thoughts?

Melisa Liberman: Yeah, I think what you just said is so important. It doesn't, obviously I made some pretty significant changes in my business, but to be clear, these were sort of pent up changes.

Lindsay Dotzlaf: Yes. They really needed to happen too.

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Melisa Liberman: Yeah. So they, I had a big list of pent up changes. Let's just put it that way that this sort of pushed me over the edge to start tackling. But at the same time, there's so many people in the group to your point that are making what might not be on the, on the surface of it seem like a big shift, but they truly are.

And so you get to decide what Reimagine really means and if and not worrying about is it big enough or is it too small or any of those kinds of things, just knowing like what would after the mastermind is over, if my business looked like this or if I felt more like this or if I was spending my time more like that, what would that be and then working toward it.

Lindsay Dotzlaf: I love that. Yes. Okay. Well, thank you. Is there anything we've missed? Anything else you want to say?

Melisa Liberman: I think we've covered a huge long progression here, Lindsay. It's been so fun to be on the podcast. Thanks for having me.

Lindsay Dotzlaf: I think we did it. Oh my gosh. I'm so happy to finally do this with you. It feels like maybe years in the making, but here we are doing it and this was so fun. So if anyone's listening and they want to find you, tell them where to go. Where can they find you? Where are you hanging out?

Melisa Liberman: Yes, absolutely. So you can find me at [melisaliberman.com](http://melisaliberman.com). My name is missing a bunch of letters. So Lindsay will probably put that in the show notes.

Lindsay Dotzlaf: Oh yeah, Melisa, yes, has one L, one S. I've had to learn this the hard way so many times trying to find you in my email. You know, like typing your name and then like, what, I know I have her in here. What is happening?

Melisa Liberman: Yes, absolutely. And then, so if you go to my website, I have a book there called *Grow Your Consulting Business*. Of course, it's geared toward consulting businesses, but it also has a lot of content in there, steps in there, 14 steps to grow a consulting business that especially

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focus on, would be applicable to executive coaches. So if you're listening in the audience and have an executive coaching business, it could be valuable. I also have a podcast called Grow Your Independent Consulting Business.

And then I also have a line of products called Growth Atlas that are planners and business brain journals and project desk pad that help business owners to blend together strategy with what they're wanting to accomplish in their businesses with the mindset that needs to accompany it to make everything come together and to achieve their goals. So it's a quarterly business planner and a 100-day business brain guided journal. So you can check that out on my website also.

Lindsay Dotzlaf: We're just going to end this by saying like, I really think you should do more. You know, like just come on. We got to get some more things going. You don't have quite enough going on right now.

Melisa Liberman: Now we're about editing.

Lindsay Dotzlaf: That's so good though. That's, to me that's like a really fun part of business sometimes when it's like, ooh, I've built all these things and now we're going to simplify. We're going to edit some stuff out and...

Melisa Liberman: That's right.

Lindsay Dotzlaf: ...bring it back a little. All right. Well, thank you so much for doing this today, for taking time to do this with me. I'm so grateful and I'll see you soon.

Melisa Liberman: Okay. Sounds good. Thanks, Lindsay.

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](http://lindsaydotzlafcoaching.com). That's Lindsay with an A, D-O-T-Z-L-A-F.com. See you next week.