

Ep #308: Unfinished: What to Remember When Learning Something New



Full Episode Transcript

With Your Host

Lindsay Dotzlaf

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Hey, this is Lindsay Dotzlauf and you're listening to Mastering Coaching Skills, episode 308.

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 glad you're here today, and welcome back to the Unfinished series. Last week, we had to take a small detour, as I have been quite sick. You might still be able to hear it a little bit in my voice. I apologize for that. But I did not have the episodes recorded ahead of time, so we had to fill in with a replay, but I am back. And today I want to talk about something very important.

This might be, I've been thinking about this, this might be one of the top skills I have learned while growing my coaching business, and it is absolutely not what you think it's going to be. So I want to share it with you. And maybe just pause a second, like what do you think it is? I'm like, one of the most important things I can teach you about running your coaching business, about becoming a successful coach, whatever that means to you, being great at coaching your clients, at running your business, at doing all of the things that it takes. What do you think it is? The one thing.

Okay, whatever your answer was, I'm guessing it wasn't this. Here's my answer. Being able to tap into skills that you have already learned. Stay with me. Let me explain why this is so important. This actually came up in Reimagine today in my mastermind. We talked a lot about it in several different ways when we were coaching, when I was coaching, and it felt so important that I had to come here and share it with you and make it one of these final episodes of the Mastering Coaching Skills podcast.

If this is the first time you're hearing that. Don't worry, there's more to come. We're just doing a little brand shift, all right? A little shift in programming. but the podcast is remaining. But are you ready to hear why I think this is

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one of the most important things that you can learn to do? I think that this is the first place you should look when you are trying to figure out what is your next move? How are you moving forward? What are you doing next? How do you create the thing you want to create?

Any of those questions, I know those are very broad, I'm going to dive into some specifics in a minute, but any of those things, the first place you can look is, what do I already know? Because I have a very strong belief that anything you have learned, you can't unlearn it. Anything you have chosen to learn on purpose and you've worked towards it, you cannot unlearn it. Now, you can layer new skills on top of it. So if you've learned something that for whatever reason has become, like isn't serving you, is no longer serving you, you can layer new skills on top, learn new skills that then help you combat, like whatever reason it is it's not serving you, whatever.

But that's not what we're talking about today. That feels like a separate episode. I just want you to think about over your lifetime, all of the knowledge you've learned in all the different ways, through life experiences, through education, through adults in your life teaching you things, through friends teaching you things, through coaching, through mentoring, through job experiences, like every single thing that you have done in your life, all the things that you've chosen to learn and to be good at, you cannot unlearn them.

I'm going to give you some examples. And I've pressure tested this. Like I've tried to think of things that I'm like, can you unlearn it? And again, I wanna be clear, I do think you can layer new skills on top. So I'll give you a silly example of like one of the things I was like, okay, if you are like a chronic nail biter, now, I've never been that, so I don't know, but I'm sure there are other examples like that of myself that I could think of, but nail biting was just the thing that came to me.

You can learn to stop biting your nails, right? You can learn to layer new skills on top that help you resist the urge, that help you get out of that habit, you replace it with something, whatever, like whatever the things are that

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you would learn to stop doing it. But if I told you right now to do it, you could. Like the skill of actually doing it isn't gone. So I'm gonna share a couple personal examples that are kind of small and a little bit silly, and then I'm gonna build up to showing you some areas where you can apply this that hopefully will feel quite transformational for you.

And I want you to take this concept, like my challenge for you at the end of this episode is to take this concept and think about like what's the thing you're working towards right now And where have you not asked yourself this question? Like when you ask yourself this question, what can you learn from it? Okay, so here's a for silly example. So sometimes I'll be on Instagram scrolling and I might see a post that I see this often, right? I hear it often, it's like, it's hard to make friends as an adult. I totally disagree with that, but I also know it is hard for some people.

But for me, when I was young, I went to so many, we moved a lot, I went to so many different elementary schools, and I have memories of kind of making the decision, I have to learn to make friends, I have to be good at this. I was also kind of quiet, not shy necessarily, but just kind of quiet, like introspective, thoughtful, not the most huge personality, like bubbly human. So I knew like I have to be intentional about this and I have to learn to make friends. And then every time I moved, I would have to do it again and again and again. I got better at it and better at it and better at it. And now as an adult, I'll be 46 this year. My thought is like, I'm great at making friends. You could plop me down in almost any situation.

And as long as I want to be there and I want to make friends, I'm going to, no problem. It's why I don't have a lot of fear around like moving or traveling somewhere for a long time or being somewhere by myself because I just have this skill that I've learned. Another example is if when I was young, like growing up, I was a gymnast. And right now, if you told me to do a back handspring, I think this is an interesting example. I couldn't do it. I couldn't just be like, okay, and do a back handspring, which is like a backflip where you put your hands down on the ground behind you and like flip over. but I have done it so many times that the muscle memory is there.

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And if I close my eyes, I can picture like the running, I'm doing like, I'm picturing like a round off back handspring, like doing the round off, like exactly what that feels like, exactly what the back handspring feels like. At this point in my life, I am certainly not strong enough to do it and definitely not flexible enough. I would certainly hurt myself. I would break my back, I would land on my head, it would be a whole thing. But I could do it if I wanted to. I could train, like I know what it would take to do it. I would have to build the muscle, I would have to stretch every day, lots of flexibility, tons of practicing, but that muscle memory is still there.

I have no doubt that I could learn it, like relearn it, right, that I could do it again. Not even relearn it, but like work myself up to the point where I could do it. Or one example you hear all the time is, oh, it's just like riding a bike. So if you know how to ride a bike, even if you haven't ridden a bike in quite a long time, you could probably just get on a bike right now and ride it, right? Like you could probably even envision what that feels like right now, like what riding the bike would feel like if you close your eyes, imagine the pedaling, you know, just like this is just what you do. You just get on, you just ride the bike.

Even if you haven't ridden in a while, maybe it's a weird bike or it's an old bike or something's different about it or the terrain is different. Like you might be a little shaky at first, but within 30 seconds, probably you're good. Now, I have a client, Kyle, who has been on this podcast. I think we may have actually talked about this. He rides a unicycle, and he rides a unicycle, he does like mountain unicycling. Like mountain biking, except on a unicycle, it's insane. I've seen a video of it, my brain doesn't even understand. But if I asked myself, like, how would I learn to do that?

My first thought is like, no way, that's impossible, that would be so scary, I could never do it. But if I really put myself, like this is not something I think I'm interested in, but if I was, if I decided I was going to do it, what might I do? I might like get a tutorial, hire someone to train me, whatever, but when I'm sitting on it and I'm learning, I would start remembering everything I know about riding a bike, right? The question is like, what can I bring to the

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situation that I've already learned? Like how am I already starting with some information that I wouldn't have if I had never ridden a bike?

So I'm thinking like I would know how to balance, kind of. I mean, it would be work, I'm sure, but I would have more information, again, than if I'd never ridden a bike, right? Because when you first learn a bike, that's the whole thing. You have to learn how to just like balance if you don't have training wheels. So on the unicycle, yes, I would have to learn to balance, but I would already be like past the starting line. I would also already know that the pedaling is something that helps you balance.

So even though it feels scary, like actually pedaling is probably going to be helpful versus hurtful. So it's like I'm already coming in with like, here are the skills I know, and then here are the new pieces that I need to learn and layer into the situation. Now, obviously these are like silly examples. But now let's bring this concept into your coaching practice and think about where you can apply it. And my response to that would be literally everywhere. I don't care if you're a brand new coach. I don't care if you're an experienced coach.

When you are first starting a business. any business, not just the coaching business, but any business, you're learning lots of new things all at once. This is one of the most important times that you can remind yourself. Like, what do I already know? What are the skills that I'm bringing to the table right now? Because it's very easy to get overwhelmed and feel panicked and feel defeated when the thought is like, oh my gosh, I have so much to learn, I know nothing, I have to learn 100 things, what am I even doing? I have no idea what I'm doing. Whatever your brand of spiral sounds like.

But when you pause and ask yourself, what are the skills I'm bringing with me? What do I already know? You can start to show yourself that you're not starting with nothing. You're starting somewhere. Just like if you know how to ride a bike and decide you want to ride a unicycle. So one question that a lot of coaches bring to me in many different ways is, but how do I sell coaching? I don't know how to sell coaching. Maybe I went to training or

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certification, like I know how to coach, but how in the world do I just sell the coaching?

And so if you're a brand new coach, one place you can look is, how do you already know how to sell? Even if you've never been in a sales position, what is something maybe in your life that you love so much that you tell everyone about? I know you've probably heard this before, but like truly think about it and ask yourself like, why am I so good at convincing everyone that they should buy a milk frother?

I think that was the example one of my clients gave today when we were talking through some of this. We all kind of laughed, right? She's like, I think she said milk frother, and it was like, I got this thing for like \$7 at a thrift shop or something. It's my favorite thing in my whole life, and I tell everyone and everybody needs one. And apparently, my guess is she had told some people that were in our mastermind because a couple of them were really laughing about it.

And that's such a good example, right? Like if you know how to sell a milk frother and convince everyone they need one, which is what she's doing in that situation, then you ask yourself, like what are the skills that I have learned over my life that I'm applying here that I can take and apply over here? So when I think about that, it's like, well, you know that when you love something, you're great at talking about it.

When you use something regularly and it's a huge part of your life, you're great at telling people they need it too. Like even just those two places are such good places to start. So how can you apply that to your selling? So my guess is in your life, probably not a milk frother, but like, what's the thing? What could you literally sell to anyone on the street that's looking for it, that would benefit from it, right? Because I know some of y'all are out there trying to sell coaching to people that are like, dude, I don't want to coach. Don't do that. That's not what I'm talking about, right? It's like, we're not gonna sell a milk frother to someone who doesn't drink any form of milk.

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That wouldn't make sense. Now, again, I'm gonna be very clear. Yes, you might need to learn some new skills that you're going to layer on top of this, but this is all about like reducing the amount of energy that has to go into this new thing because you already know how to do parts of it. So maybe you're a newer coach and you've had a handful of clients. This is something I coach on all the time. She's like, okay, I've had a handful of clients, but I don't really know how to sell coaching. And so I'll ask a bunch of questions like, okay, what does that mean?

And usually it means I'm trying to sell it on Instagram or on social media, or I'm trying to, basically like I'm trying to sell it in this very specific way, and I don't think it's working. And often if I know that my client has already had some clients, the first thing I want to know is where did those clients come from? And it almost always sounds the same when I ask this question. It's something like this. Like, well, my sister's best friend hired me because I was telling my sister about coaching and then she, I guess, was talking to her friend about it and then the friend wanted to talk to me.

And also there's this person I have from high school that I've stayed in contact with over the years through social media and I happened to see them last week and they wanted to chat. Like, they just kept asking me all these questions about coaching and wanted to talk all about it. And then I was sitting next to someone on an airplane and we started talking. And it's just like they tell me all these things about the people that have just kind of come to them and decided for some reason to buy coaching. And the thought they're having about it is like, yeah, but I can't replicate that.

Like that's obviously like that's a fluke, I can't replicate it. And of course, it feels impossible to replicate the exact situation if the one client you've ever had, you signed because you sat next to them on an airplane. That would be a very bad business strategy to just fly places all the time and try to sit next to people and tell them about coaching and use that as all of your marketing. Of course, that would be ridiculous. But if all of your clients have come from those specific situations, then you can pause and say, okay, what does this mean though?

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Like, what is the information that I can gather from this that tells me what I actually am good at when it comes to selling coaching? Or even if it's when it comes to getting people on a consult. When I hear these answers, I think there's so much information. I'm like, okay, well, obviously you're great at talking about it, at least the people you're familiar with in a way that they understand what coaching is. Otherwise, they couldn't have gone and told their friends or their, you know, whoever. You are clearly good at having conversations with people who want to talk to you, who are sitting next to you on a plane asking you questions.

In the example of the person you went to high school with and then you see them and they start asking you all these questions. Clearly, whatever it is that you're posting on wherever they follow you on social media is clear enough that when you add in your relationship or your rapport with that person, they believe you're good at what you do and they want to talk to you about coaching. So when you see that, it's like, oh, you're already starting with these really important skills. You already have it. Now, the question might be, how can I be more intentional about it? And or how can I specifically get people to click a link on social media? We use those skills that you know you have, in that situation.

So if you know you're great at selling coaching to people who you already have good rapport with, which means you know what you're talking about, you can explain coaching when someone asks, and maybe you're quite passionate when you talk about it, so that infuses them with some passion around it too and makes it interesting. Then the next step is like, okay, how do you use all of those and translate them to social media? How do you use all of those and translate them into whatever the next thing you're trying to do is. Because you can't unlearn them. I don't care if you are listening right now and you're like, but Lindsay, I don't think you understand.

A few years ago, I signed some clients and I haven't signed any since. And I don't know what's happening. This thing about I can't unlearn things that I already knew how to do is bullshit because this is not true for me. I want to push back on that because however that worked three years ago is how it

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can work now. You just forgot you could do it. So ask yourself, like how did you, and force yourself to answer, how did you create those clients before? What were you believing about yourself? What were the actions you were taking?

What were the things you were good at that got those people, wherever they were, to say yes to your offer? And I'm not saying that's all you need, but it's such a good place to start. It also helps you lean so much further into feeling confident around whatever the new thing is you're trying to learn than if you tell yourself I have no idea what I'm doing, I'm starting from scratch. And it actually helps you conserve energy because you're not starting from scratch. You don't have to learn all of this again. You are already bringing so much to the table. Or maybe you have a question that's like, how do I build a schedule that works for me?

And maybe you're a person who, like me years ago, maybe you've gone out and you've learned all these different scheduling methods and you're like, I don't know, none of them work. I promise you the best place to look is what skills do you already have that helps you keep a schedule? What are the things that you do without questioning? What are the things that have become easy when it comes to your schedule over the years? And how did those come to be? How did you learn that? I think one of the hardest things about being an entrepreneur is that you're learning so many things, even, and this never stops, by the way, like there's always just new things you're learning.

There's new levels, there's new technology, there's new everything, tools, all the things that you're always learning. And so the worst thing you can do is make it harder on yourself by always thinking you have to start from scratch instead of bringing with you everything you already know and reminding yourself and saying, what am I already working with? So when it comes to your schedule, if you're trying to, let's say, learn to get up at a new time every day and stick to it, okay, at some point in your life, I'm sure that you've had to learn to get up for something at the same time most days.

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How did you do it? What helped? What got you out of bed? What was the best method? I'm not saying that's the exact best method now, but it's at least a good place to start. Another thing that I help many of my clients with is planning something, like planning a workshop, planning a retreat, planning like some sort of client experience. And let's just take a retreat, for example, And they might come to me and say like, okay, I really want to host this live event with my clients, but I've never done it before. It feels so scary. How do I do it? Where do I start? Oh my gosh, help.

And the first thing I always say is, well, let's start with what you already know. What do you know about yourself? What do you know about your clients? Like plan a retreat that you will love hosting. I can't actually tell you what those things are. You have to know these things about yourself. What time do you like to start each morning? What do you want the retreat to feel like? What do you want the energy to be? How do you want your clients to feel when they're there? Do you love teaching? Do you love coaching? Do you love experiences? Do you love hiking? Do you love a lot of big energy? Do you love a cozy space?

Let's at least start there. What do you already know? What have you learned about yourself and learned maybe in your years of coaching that you love when it comes to doing your work? Now, what do you know about your clients? How have you learned that they operate best? What is best for them? How do they learn? What do they need? And yes, of course, there are still skills that you will have to learn in order to host a retreat, but that is the absolute best place you can start is what do I already know? Imagine these two different things. The worst thing you can do is plan a retreat that is just like this.

If you are a person who does not love early mornings and you need a lot of downtime and like quiet time and when you're coaching, you don't love to just teach the whole time, you really like to maybe teach a little bit, to coach, to respond to whatever your clients need, the absolute worst thing you could do is plan a retreat in a place you've never been, that's a very big, loud city, that's in a condo with neighbors all around you, lots of noise

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outside the windows, your clients are all staying with you in the same house, there's no downtime, you're on constantly, and the whole thing you've planned is teaching, teaching, teaching, teaching, teaching.

At the end of that retreat, I promise you, you will think, I am never doing that again. That was awful. And even if you got it together and forced yourself to deliver a great experience, even your clients might walk away with like, that was good, hmm, I don't know, like something felt off. How do I know this? Because I've seen it done so many times. And I've done versions of that myself because I forgot this rule. I forgot, like, wait, what have I already learned?

But if that's you and you take everything into account, what you've learned about yourself, then maybe you're gonna plan a retreat in the mountains with not much going on around you in a really quiet space where there are spaces really nearby for your clients to stay, but they're not staying with you, or they all stay together and you stay somewhere else so you can have that downtime and recharge.

And then you plan your days where it's a mix of first like starting a little later, and then it's a mix of coaching and teaching and opening it up to them, having group conversations. Like, that's the thing that's going to feel amazing to you. And now I want you to take this concept, first of all, you can apply this to anything in your life, right, any area, not just your business. I'm just using that as an example. You can apply this to any area of your life. Anytime you're learning something new or having a goal that you've never had before, you can always start with like, okay, what do I know? Even if it's something that's brand new, what skills have I already learned in my life that I'm bringing to the situation?

But now I want you to take this and think, you can apply this also to your coaching. And not only does it make your coaching so much more powerful, it also has you feeling less exhausted at the end of coaching sessions. So often, especially in the coach lab, when I was running that for years, clients would come and say, I don't know what I'm supposed to tell

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my clients. Like, how do I know what to teach them? What to tell them? What to say? How do I fill the time? What if they bring me a thing that I've never done, that I don't know how to do it.

My answer is, why are you trying to do all of that anyway? Now, depending on what kind of coach you are and how you work, of course, there are going to be things that you're teaching your clients and the expertise that you have that you're bringing to sessions, right? When my clients come to me, I'm not just asking them, like, what do you already know? We might start there. And then I'm filling in some, like, okay, well, here's, you know, I might teach them a thing here or suggest something here.

But one of truly the most powerful places you can start with your clients when they bring you something and your first thought is like, oh my gosh, what do I say? How do I tell them what to do? What do I teach them? One of the very best things you can do is mine them for their skills. What can they already bring to the situation? And this is not lazy coaching. This is amazing coaching. Coaching is not about showing off how much you know. It's about helping a client understand how to get where they want to go easier, faster. Yes, with your support, but like I said earlier. it's always going to get them there faster when you show them all the skills they're already bringing to the table.

So when your client comes to you and says, how do I have this really hard conversation with my partner? Maybe, possibly, depending on the situation, instead of diving into like, oh, let me teach you this concept, you start by exploring difficult conversations they've had in the past. What worked? Maybe even difficult conversations they've had with their partner. If they've been with someone for long enough, they've probably had difficult conversations. This one might just feel different because maybe the topic's different or they feel a pressure around it or there's something different about the situation. The first thing you can do is mine their brain and their experiences for like, what skills do you already have that we're starting with here?

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And then maybe you do some coaching and then maybe you identify some gaps where it's like, oh, here's a skill that might be really useful for you in this situation. If my client, for example, comes to me and says, use one of the examples I said earlier, if they're like, okay, how do I schedule my time so that it works for me? What I'm not going to do is immediately choose a method, for example, a time-blocking method, and just start teaching it to them. The first thing I'm going to do is get super curious because time-blocking, great, works for some people, does not work for everyone.

Some of you know what Monday hour one is, right? That works really well for some people, does not work for others. The first thing I'm going to do is get curious. Well, what has worked for you in the past? Like what type of scheduling works for you? Let's start there. And yes, we might layer in some new skills, but I'm never just going to dive in to like here's the one method that will definitely work for you. Unless the only exception to this would be, let's say I'm hosting a workshop that's like come learn time blocking method from me, then obviously that's what I'll be talking about.

But even then, let's say I did that, I would probably teach the method and then my style is usually then opening it up for coaching and questions. And so I would probably help them take whatever it is that I'm teaching and figure out how do we make this fit with what we already know works for you or doesn't work for you. And I'll end by saying, I think this is one of the reasons that coaching is very powerful because what I'm telling you right now, although I know it sounds very simple, I don't actually think it's natural as humans for us to remember.

In my experience with myself, with all the people I know in my life, with all of the people I've coached, what I have noticed is that this is not our instinct. Our instinct is I'm doing something new, I'm starting from scratch, this is going to be so hard, it's going to take forever, oh my gosh, what do I do? And then the next step might be, like if you're committed to the thing, the next step might be I need to go learn all these new things. And I'm not saying don't learn new things. Learning new things is amazing. And also, the most powerful place you can start is what do I already know? And with

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just a silly quick story, the other day my daughter came to me and she said, if you've listened to the podcast, you know she rides horses.

And so sometimes on weekends we have horse shows and I go with her, and I'm sometimes helping with all the things, but I'm also literally allergic to everything, and so it's hard for me to do some of the things, and she comes to me, and she says, I have a job for you, a new job. At horse shows, I've decided this is your job. You're going to be so good at it. I said, okay, what is it? And she said, I think you should be the braider. So she rides dressage, and in dressage, that's one of the things she rides, but in dressage, the horses, it's like the fancy riding like at the Olympics where they have like the braids and twists and stuff in their hair, the horses in their manes and their tails.

So when she said that, I, not being a person who actually knows a ton about horses, like she knows way more than I do, I was like, what, no, why would I wanna do that? And she, because she's apparently a life coach, looked at me and said, are you serious right now? You are so good at braiding. You know how to do all the braids, you braid my hair all the time, You braid some of the girl's hair, like I do. I braid the rider's hair sometimes. I've just grown up like braiding my own hair. Like I said, we moved a lot. This was a thing I would do like alone in my bedroom, a skill I learned because I practiced it over and over and over. I knew how to do all kinds of crazy braids, all the things.

So she looked at me like, you lost your mind. Why are you thinking you don't wanna do this or wouldn't be good at this? Because she also knows that I love it. And she said, you already know how to braid. All you would have to do is learn how to do that, but like on a horse. And I was like, you're a genius, you're right. So we'll see, I haven't done it yet, I haven't started my research, but when she said that, it was instantly, it was like, oh, of course I can do it.

Now, I have already watched a couple videos and decided, yeah, I absolutely can do it. It is the same thing, except different. There are certain

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different things you have to do, different ways to like, like horse hair is just a little different, but do you see the difference? Like at first I was like, no way, I don't know, I don't even know about horses, but that wasn't the point. Who cares? I know how to braid, I'm very good at it, and so now I just need to learn a few more skills that I then layer on top of that. I know it's a silly example, but I know some of you love when I share silly things like that because it just helps it, it like sticks it in your mind, right?

So just have this vision of me trying to braid a horse's mane, the horse like being grumpy, probably shaking their head, pulling the hair out of my hands, whatever it is that's happening. But just know, I know how to braid, so I'm going to figure it out. The same is true for you and for your clients. And I promise you, the more you embrace this, the more fun you're going to have, the easier it's going to be, and the faster you will move forward to whatever it is that you are trying to do. Okay, friends, thank you for being here today, for putting up with my little bit of hoarse voice. I will see you again 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 lindsaydotzlafoaching.com. That's Lindsay with an A, D-O-T-Z-L-A-F.com. See you next week.