

7: The Mindset Work That Actually Gets You Started



Full Episode Transcript

With Your Host

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Welcome to *The Future Coach*, the podcast for independent coaches, in-house coaches, and the coach curious. I'm your host Kara Loewentheil, founder of The Socratic Coaching Academy. If you want to chart a new path, uplevel your skills, and build a successful career around coaching, you're in the right place. Let's go.

Hello, my friends. In our last episode, I shared with you a little bit of the teaching that I did in our Coach Curious Prep School. And today, I want to share one more little tidbit from that experience. I did a couple of different short teachings during that program around the mindset hacks that I think people who are considering becoming coaches or people who are new coaches and need to work on putting themselves out there should really be internalizing and practicing. And because so many of you are people who are aspiring coaches, people who want to be coaches, people who are new coaches, and I know some of you are established coaches, I wanted to share some of those mindset hacks with you.

Because as a mindset coach, I know that the most important thing in our ability to succeed in anything in our lives is the way we're thinking about it. It's not always the only thing you need, but you can't succeed without it. So today, I want to share some of those mindset hacks, a little sneak peek. Well, past peek, I guess. It's already happened. But I want to share with you a few of those mindset hacks so that you can apply them yourself and get yourself in the mindset that you need to succeed as a coach. So give these a listen. Listening is great, but I really want you to practice what I'm teaching in these.

One of the things I talked so much about in Coach Curious Prep School was that if we are coaches, we have to go first. We can't ask our clients to take risks, to be uncomfortable, to move forward without certainty, unless we're willing to do those things too. And when we do those things, we learn so much that we can then teach to our clients. So I really want you to not just listen to these, but actually practice them. Go first, be that inspiration

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for yourself and for your current or your future clients. Alright, let's get into them.

So, I want to talk a little bit about what feeling nervous means. So for those of you who don't know me, before I became a coach, I was a lawyer. I was a feminist litigator. I worked on reproductive rights and women's rights. Then I was an academic, so I was supposed to become a law professor. I did a couple of fellowships, and then I found coaching. And when I decided that I wanted to leave the world of academia to become a coach, that was obviously a really big decision. And I do not think that everyone has to go two feet in all at once. That's what I did. I was in a different point in my life. I was young. I didn't have kids or stepkids. I was single. I was only responsible for myself.

There are a lot of ways to move into becoming a coach, using coaching. You can use it in your current career to manage better, to coach internally. You can be a coach in someone else's business. You can do it part-time. You can do it as a side hustle. There's a lot of different ways to do it. What I did was the scariest option, which is just I'm going to quit this career and start this new one. And so obviously, not a lot of people do that in their lives, and so I often get asked when I'm doing podcasts or whatever else, what I did to feel confident making that jump.

But that whole question is based on an incorrect premise, because I did not feel confident at all. I felt very afraid. I did not feel confident. Courage is required to live a life you really want, but you only need courage when you're afraid. There's really no way to have the life you want without ever feeling scared or nervous because change seems scary to the human brain. So even when nothing scary is actually going to happen or is happening, your brain will still think things are scary just because they're different. And when it comes to making some kind of career pivot or change or doing something that not everyone you know has done, your brain is always going to put off that danger flare even if there's no actual danger.

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So it's really important to understand that number one, your nerves don't mean that something's really scary. But number two, it's still brave and courageous to do something when you're scared. Even if the thing isn't a real danger, if you feel scared or there is risk, it's still brave or courageous to take that action. But in order for anything to be brave or courageous, it has to have fear. I ate breakfast this morning. That was not brave of me. I was not scared of my breakfast, right? That's just a thing I did. I didn't need courage for that, nor do I think I should be complimented for being brave enough to eat my breakfast. On the other hand, for somebody who has an eating disorder, let's say, and is trying to work on feeding themselves better, that might be a really brave action to eat breakfast. It just really depends on you and your brain and where you are and what fear your brain is creating.

But your brain is what is creating any fear. It's not the thing itself. It's not becoming a coach. It's not getting certified. It's not the investment. It's your brain. And one of the kind of sucky things about the human brain is we can be scared of things that are actually really good for us, really healthy for us, and really necessary to have the life that we want. I was scared of leaving my legal career to become a coach, and it was the absolute best decision I ever made. I even, I love my husband a lot, but marrying him was number two compared to that.

So as we go into this week together, there are three things I really want you to remember. One is that nerves are unavoidable. It is normal to be scared about doing something new, even when it doesn't actually have to be a huge decision. Some of you might be deciding to take that big leap the way I did, and of course that's going to be scary. But some of you might feel scared even about just admitting to yourself that you might want to be a coach or speaking to someone in your company about how to bring coaching into the work you do or just saying out loud that you have this desire. Wherever you are on the scale, nerves are normal.

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There's no such thing as I shouldn't be afraid. It's normal to be nervous. It's normal to be afraid, and you cannot wait to feel not afraid to take action. You can't wait to feel confident before you make a change or a big decision. I mean, you can, but you'll never make it. That's just with the truth. I'm going to give it to you straight. You will just never make it. And we all know people like that. We all know people who are talking about how they want to do something for years and years, and they never ever do it. And sometimes they just stop talking about it, or sometimes they talk about it till the end of their lives, and they never do it because they're waiting to feel ready. They're waiting to feel confident. They're waiting to feel certain. They're telling themselves that fear means something is wrong or scary or off. And confidence is just never going to arrive like that.

I did not feel chill about any of the big decisions in my life: becoming a coach, getting married, buying and renovating our house. I did not feel chill about any of those decisions. If you wait to feel safe, you'll never make the move. I always say I don't have a crystal ball, but I actually do have a crystal ball in this case. If you wait till not feel nervous about making a change in your life, you will die waiting and never make a change. That's just the bottom line.

The third thing, though, is I want to offer you a reframe. I want to make this a little easier for you that I use when my brain is getting tunnel vision freakout about a decision. And that is that almost no decision, other than maybe having children, is really unchangeable after it's made. So when I got certified, one of the ways that I kept myself from completely losing my shit was reminding myself that in the absolute worst case scenario, I could just go back to being a lawyer. Now, that might be hard. It might be annoying. It might feel embarrassing. I might not get exactly the job I wanted, the first job I had to go get after I left. But could I go get a job as a lawyer? Yes, I could do it.

And I've used the same logic for every other big business decision I've made that's scared me. When I changed my niche and rebranded my

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podcast many years ago, when I've made a big investment in something in my business, like a six-figure investment I wasn't sure how it would work out. The worst case scenario is if this doesn't work, I can go back to what I was doing before. I might have less in the bank account. I might feel a little humiliated or embarrassed. I'm not saying that's fun and pleasant, but when our brain gets really blinders on about a decision, it's thinking about it sort of like if this doesn't work, I'm going to die. And that's not really almost ever the case, right?

I'm not saying that you should second guess your decision every minute to see if it's working and see if you should go back to what you were doing before. But if you decide that you want to pursue being a coach, remind your brain that this is not a lifetime decision that you can never make another decision, you can never go back, you can never change your mind. It's not about going in thinking, yeah, I'll probably change my mind. I obviously want to be in on our decision. But when the brain is in that illogical place where it is just thinking that if it makes the wrong decision here, it's going to die, it is helpful to bring the anxiety down or the fear down by reminding yourself that actually this is just one of many decisions you're going to make in your life, and you can always make another decision later.

Literally, I use this all the time. I'm using it on a big renovation decision right now. Yep, it's a bunch of money on this. If I decide that I need to change it later, I will figure that out. I've used it when I have launched a new program, right, or tried a new way of selling things in my business. Okay, I have all this anxiety. What if it doesn't work? My brain thinks that the whole thing is over. And I'm like, no, I can just go back to what I was doing before.

So it just helps take the temperature down. And I want to offer you that reframe to just remind your brain that it's not actually a life or death decision whether or not you become a coach. I think it's an important decision. I think it's important to know if this is something you want to pursue. It's something to be all in with yourself on, but it is not the last decision you get to make in your life.

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So that is the reframe that I still use. I'm just making one decision in a series of decisions in life that can always be responded to or updated or changed with future decisions if I need to. And that helps me take the intensity down and see things with a broader perspective. And that is really what we need in order to help feel comfortable making a decision.

By the way, when I train coaches, this is the exact process I teach them to do with their clients, right? How to accept and tolerate, normalize the negative emotion first, and then move forward, right? Be willing to move forward with a negative emotion. And then we learn how to reframe our thoughts to reduce those emotions, make it seem a little less intense. Nerves are normal. They don't mean anything has gone wrong. They are unfortunately the cost of admission to having a life that you truly want that looks different than the life you have now.

So I want to talk about a kind of related issue, which is building the belief in yourself as a coach and the identity shift from becoming whoever and whatever you are now to becoming someone who's a coach. And what I'm going to teach you is true for any identity, but I'm going to talk about it in the context of coaching because that's what we're here to do.

So most of us define who we are based on two things. We are basing it on what other people have told us we are. The most powerful impact is obviously family, society, but also our friends, our teachers, our bosses, our colleagues, et cetera. And then we also have our past experiences that we have internalized and we've interpreted those to mean something about us. So that initial story kind of gets laid about who we are in our family unit by society, later on by other impacts. And then as we go along through life, our brain is taking all the evidence it sees and it's interpreting it through the filter of what matches what I already believe about myself.

And this is because of something called confirmation bias. This is something we teach you in my certification, how to work with your clients, because it is such a crucial bias and it really impacts what we think is

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possible for us. So much of coaching is teaching people and ourselves how to do things we didn't think were possible. And so confirmation bias is the big block to that. And so we really have to learn how to overcome confirmation bias, how to teach our clients to overcome confirmation bias.

So I want to give you an example of how confirmation bias can work. So let's think about someone who believes in an omnipotent God. So they believe in a God who controls everything that happens, a God who is evaluating every single person, everything they think, feel, and do all day long, and that God is shaping that person's life according to the virtue rankings or sinful rankings of everything they think, feel, and do. God is deciding like whether they get in a car crash or how their kid speaks back to them or if they have a headache, whatever.

So now, many of us would say that's overly simplistic, right? That can't be really what's happening. That's overdetermining, right? You're interpreting everything according to this story and trying to make anything match the story. So if something good happens, it's because they deserve it and God is blessing them. If something bad happens, it's because they're being tested or punished. So those of us who would think that can't be right or that's overly explanatory or that's simplistic, we're doing the same thing just with a different story. Everybody's brain has stories that it is interpreting reality to match, and it will cherry pick the evidence, it will interpret the evidence to fit a preconception, it will ignore evidence that contradicts it.

So when we're building these stories about who we are, we are unconsciously choosing only to see evidence that supports our prior beliefs. So if we believe that we don't follow through, we only see places we didn't follow through. So we ruminate about a program we took and didn't finish, but we don't pay attention to the college or graduate or even high school degree we have, the hundreds or thousands of projects we've finished at our job, the relationship we've been in for 10 years where we're following through every day.

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If we believe we aren't consistent and that's a story we have about ourselves, we only see places we're not consistent. That's all our brain draws our attention to. So we obsess about not being consistent with exercise, but we pay no attention to the fact that we're consistent about brushing our teeth, we're consistent about showing up to book club, we're consistent about weeding our garden. Our brain doesn't bring any of that to our attention.

If we believe we aren't good at putting ourselves out there, we only see the places that we don't put ourselves out there or that we fear to, right? So we focus on the fear we imagine we'll feel if we have to tell someone we're a coach or put ourselves out there online. But we don't pay attention to the fact that just this week we spread the word about a PTA auction and we volunteered for a leadership role on a committee at our synagogue or church or mosque or whatever. So think about your awareness as kind of the spotlight that your brain directs where the spotlight is pointing. When you don't do this consciously, when you let your brain pick the spotlight unconsciously, the brain spotlights only pieces of evidence that confirm the belief you already have, and everything else is in the dark. We have to tell our brains what to spotlight.

So if you are not a coach and you want to become one, there is going to be an identity shift. And it doesn't matter if you plan to be an entrepreneur, you want to bring it into your current role, you just want to manage your team better in a corporate role, you want a side hustle, whatever. Your identity is going to come to encompass that of a coach. What you get to choose is how quickly and easily that happens. So if you keep going, it will happen eventually. If you get certified and you start coaching, that identity will shift, but you can wait for it to be long and painful and struggling against your own will. You can fight it all the way, clinging to your old identities and arguing with yourself against your capacity to be a coach, being the prosecutor for the other side. And that's going to make it all much harder.

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Or you can choose to argue on your own behalf. You can be your own best advocate. You can start looking for evidence right now that you're a coach or a coach to be. Anytime we want to be different, we have to look for evidence that we already have the seeds of being that person in us. We cannot wait to just somehow secretly become that person without noticing and then surprise ourselves. That's not how it works. We have to believe we can become that person. We have to build that belief, and we need to purposefully look for evidence. So a certification is what makes you a competent professional coach who's ready to coach clients and feels confident about that. But the identity of a coach has to come from your brain.

So what evidence can you find to start to build that identity? Well, first of all, you're in this program, right? You're in Coach Curious Prep School. You only got in here because you signed up and paid and registered and are watching this. So that means you're already someone who wants to be a coach or is at least curious about it, who's committed enough to the prospect to invest your time and energy and money into learning more about it. You're taking these assessments that we're doing, right? A coach is someone who takes the role seriously, reflects on their own desires, their own purpose, and takes their own dreams seriously, and you're doing that.

If you want to help people live full lives and go after their dreams, you have to do that first. You cannot hold back from getting certified out of fear and then coach other people to go after their dreams even when they're afraid. We have to go first. So you're already building that identity. My challenge to you or my invitation to you this week is to look for more evidence on purpose. When can you notice that you are exhibiting the traits that we talked about yesterday? Look for evidence this week that identity shift is already in motion, that you are already becoming a coach, you are already moving towards that new identity, that you are already well suited to it, that you have the seeds of what you need to be successful. You have to look for the evidence, because your brain is not going to shine the spotlight on it unless you tell it to.

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I want to talk a little bit about confidence. So I have been talking about confidence a lot this week, and I want to go a little more in depth on why it's so important. So what we're taught growing up, what seems kind of logical and natural is that the things we do or the things we are what make us confident, right? So that's what we're taught. If you look a certain way, you're going to be confident in how you look. If you have accomplished something, if you get good grades, you're going to be confident in your intelligence. It's obvious that's not the case when you look around the world, but we still are kind of attached to this idea. We think that confidence is going to come from our circumstances.

And it's understandable that we want it to, because most of us growing up are not taught that we can change the way we think or feel. We don't think that we can do anything about it. So we better hope that external circumstances could do it, because otherwise, we're shit out of luck, right? So even if we sort of know now as people who are into self-development and to growth that circumstances don't cause our thoughts and feelings, we still kind of cling to this idea that we would feel more confident if our circumstances were different. But confidence does not come from your circumstances. The outside world cannot convince you to feel confident. And that's because of confirmation bias. Your brain interprets evidence to match what you already believe, and it will ignore or discredit evidence that contradicts it.

So we've all had the experience of accomplishing something that we believed would resolve our imposter syndrome, and then it didn't. Or we feel insecure about something and we're like, well, if somebody just gave me this compliment out of the blue about it, I'm sure then I would feel better. But that's not what happens. We get the compliment, we get the promotion, we get the whatever, and our brain immediately finds a way to discount it. They were just being nice. It doesn't really count. It's just because I work hard. There just wasn't anybody else, whatever, right? We come up with some reason to not believe it. That is confirmation bias in

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action. Your brain will either completely ignore evidence or it will interpret it to fit your preconception.

So real confidence has to come from your brain, from your own thinking. And this is obviously crucial to everything in life, but it is an overlooked part of what's I believe most important about being a coach. Because confidence is what I think the most important thing we need as coaches. It's what makes everything we're afraid of feel easy. So first of all, confidence makes you a better coach. Just when you're coaching, if you are all up in your head worrying about if you know what you're doing and whether you're doing it right and what does the client think and whatever, you're not going to coach as well, right? You're not focused on the client, you're up in your own head.

So you need to be confident in order to deliver good coaching in the first place. But you also need to be confident in order to get clients as a coach. It will feel scary to put yourself out there when you aren't confident about your ability to help people or the kind of validity of what you're doing. I want you to imagine that you had the cure to cancer. You have a cure to some disease. If you knew a cure to a disease, you would be shouting it from the rooftops. You would not be holding yourself back. You would not be nervous about sharing what you know with people because you would have this proof that what you had was going to change people's lives. As a coach, that is what you have. You have something that is proven to change people's lives.

So you have to work on your belief in yourself and your own confidence to put yourself out there, to have the same confidence in yourself to share it as you would if you had the cure to cancer. Putting yourself out there completely comes down to confidence. And putting yourself out there is what you have to do to get clients. So when you feel confident that you can help people and that what you have to offer is worth so much more than you're asking for it because it's I believe truly the secret to life. Coaching and changing your thinking is how you get anything you want in life. It is a

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priceless skill. When you really are practicing those beliefs and believing in yourself to share it, it becomes easy to speak up. It becomes easy to sell.

And when you're confident, it's easy to coach well, and that builds your confidence too. So you get into this good feedback cycle. This is why I think it's so criminal that a lot of coach trainings don't even address this, because your mindset as a coach is the most important element of your success, and you have to be able to create confidence in yourself. You cannot wait for external circumstances to create it for you. Okay? You can't wait to get a certain number of clients to convince you that you're a coach and then feel confident about it. Can't wait until you are ready to charge to convince you that you're a coach and feel confident about it.

Doing that makes you dependent on your clients and what they do or on your revenue or whatever for emotional validation. And that is not the basis of a healthy coaching relationship or a healthy relationship with your business. So you have to build your confidence on purpose. If you want to feel confident as a coach, you have to be working on that now, ahead of time, in your own mind. Now, obviously, if you work with us to get certified, that's something we address directly. We teach it specifically in the certification. We equip you with tools that you can confidently use so that you're taking your clients through a clear process to coach them. And we also work directly with you on your confidence as a coach and your thoughts about yourself as a coach.

But if you are doing this on your own, I want you to make sure that you are focusing on that as well and doing your own mindset work. Because all of the things that you guys are worried about, putting yourself out there on social media, finding clients, charging money, all of that, how well you'll be a coach, if you can really help people, the root of all those things is your confidence in yourself as a coach.

If you want to succeed as a coach, you have to be working on building your confidence. No marketing or business training is going to make it or

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certification, honestly, if it doesn't focus on confidence, is going to make a difference if you're not confident in what you're offering and in yourself to offer it. There's no plan or script that will do the work for you of putting yourself out there and showing up to deliver in a session. You have to build confidence on purpose to do that.

And I really don't want anyone leaving this experience, this coach curious prep school, saying to themselves, okay, well, I just, when I feel confident, then I'll be ready to do this. No, there's no when. It's not just going to land on you. It's not just lightning. It's not just like an air conditioner falling on you on the street. You have to build your confidence on purpose. So number one, do not wait for circumstances to magically make you feel confident. And number two, do not let not feeling confident be a reason to not do something and just give up. That is the flip side of this is that people are like, okay, well, I don't feel confident, and since I need to be confident, I just won't do anything.

Confidence is a skill. It's a belief system that you build. It can be created with your thinking. That's how we're able to teach it in the certification, because it's actually a skill and a set of beliefs that you can build. So don't tell yourself that confidence is this magical thing that either you have or you don't, just you're born with it or not, like Maybelline, right? Or that circumstances are going to create it for you. You have to take ownership of creating your own confidence with your own thinking, whether you do that with us, you do that on your own, it doesn't matter. I mean, it doesn't matter in the sense that you still need to focus on it. You need to take ownership of building your own confidence before you are out there. Don't wait until you're ready to go make your first social media post or try to get your first client and then be like, okay, I should also think something confident about myself. You need to be building it along the way.

And that's why we are focusing in this Coach Curious Prep School on these assessments to help you see where you already have potential. You're already closer than you think, those of you who really are meant to do this.

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And so that is that first little bit of building that confidence. If you feel a little more confident today than you did on Monday about moving towards being a coach, that's your proof that confidence can be built when you are in the right container with the right skills, with the right leadership, with the right teaching. That is something you can build. Confidence is a skill that can be built and you must work on building it in order to succeed as a coach. Bye, everyone.