

Ep #134: Queer Confidence and Belonging with Alex Ray



Full Episode Transcript

With Your Host

Stacey Boehman

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Welcome to the *Make Money as a Life Coach*™ podcast where sales expert and life coach Stacey Boehman teaches you how to make your first 2K, 20K, and 200K using her proven formula.

Hey coaches, welcome to a special episode I have for you today. I cannot wait. I have one of my 200K students, Alex Ray on the podcast today. And we are going to talk about some really necessary topics within this industry. So, I'm not even going to actually do an intro. I think you are going to do the better intro for me. So why don't we just dive in. Tell everyone who you are. Tell them what you do. And we'll just get started.

Alex: Okay. Can't wait. So, hi everyone. My name is Alex Ray. I am the Queer Confidence Coach. So, I work with people in the LGBTQIA+ community to help them become confident.

Stacey: I love that. So, one of the things that's so fascinating. I don't know if you know this but I have had several people reach out to me over the six months that you've been in 200K. And they always send a message and they're like, "Have you heard Alex Ray's story? You have to be following him on Instagram. You have to read all of his things."

Alex: Oh my God.

Stacey: You're the person that has really stood out as being someone who has emotionally engaged and connected 200K which has been so fun to watch people love you so much, and follow your story, and read your Instagram. And so, would you mind sharing with our audience as much of your story as you're willing to and obviously in a condensed version? But would you share some of your story that brought you to becoming a confidence coach for the queer community?

Alex: Absolutely. So, a very brief version is I grew up in a very conservative, very legalistic, Christian home. And from a very young age was taught that people who are gay are going to hell. So basically, people

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like you Alex, are worthy of eternal punishment because they're that awful. And...

Stacey: Oh wow.

Alex: Yeah. So, growing up with that mindset, about when I was 10 years old was when I realized oh my gosh, I'm attracted to men, something's wrong with me. And throughout my teen years I regularly cried myself to sleep praying I would wake up different. And I was like, "God let's make a deal. How about I could be an alcoholic." I had a lot of family members who are alcoholics but that was fine. I was like, "Let's do that." I want that burden to bear. I just don't want to wake up gay. And there were several other things. And I was like, "Let's trade this."

Stacey: Trade awfulness.

Alex: Trade awfulness, trade our burdens.

Stacey: But that's something to just sit there and consider. Where you were in that moment, you would have rather have been an alcoholic. Your brain was like that will be easier than this internal struggle that I am presented with now, and really the world struggle, right?

Alex: Right, exactly. So obviously nothing changed. By the time I – well, I also got diagnosed with depression in second grade. So, was on and off medications and in and out of therapy all through my younger years and then teen years as well. I came out around 19 and shortly after had a full blown panic attack just due to some attention that I was getting that wasn't – it was a lot to process all within a year. And I went back into therapy at that time. And we worked through some stuff I guess.

We kind of revisited the past. If you've done therapy before you know what it's like. But I was never really fully open with my therapist. There was a lot of things that I was scared to even talk about. And by the time I was – by 2017, so I'm 23 at the time, I was rock bottom in my depression. I had

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never been lower. Therapy was not doing anything for me. Medications were not doing anything. And I was overworking a lot. That's the year that I started fitness coaching and I was also working a salaried position in tech.

So, I was trying to use work to compensate and feel better about myself. I was trying to work out, I worked out three hours a day, one in the morning and two in the evening. I was like if I can get really muscular then I'll feel confident, then I'll like myself. I was a chronic people pleaser. I was constantly trying to earn value through what I did for other people. And I felt absolutely empty. And by October that year I was like, "I'm freaking done. We're going to put into play what I've been planning since I was a young kid."

And I attempted suicide. And I thankfully was unsuccessful. I did have to go into the hospital to get the toxins out of my system. But I did after that it was like I was so desperate for a change that I was actually ready. And I think often that's where we do our best work too in coaching when we're like no, no, no, I am sick and tired of the way my life is. I actually really want to help. And I don't care how uncomfortable it is. So, I started being a lot more open with my therapist. We actually started finding the root issues. And then it was, I had just finished therapy at the end of 2020.

And I found a lot of the things during that time but also within that, around I guess 2018, so shortly after coming out of hospital. I was like, "Okay, therapy is just kind of getting me functional. I want to thrive." I had wanted to know since I was a little kid, what made other people confident? Because I was so insecure. I felt like I was watching my life on a TV screen. I was looking at my life through other people's eyes constantly. So, I was like, "It's time, let's figure it out."

And that's the journey that I went on after my rock bottom was let's not just survive, let's thrive. And that's how I found life coaching. That's how I found then The Life Coach School Podcast and then your podcast. And then that's also what led me into then providing this service for others, last year

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was like, “It’s time, let’s start doing the life coaching. I have always wanted to do this.” But I had held back because it was like my Hail Mary, it was like the final thing.

I had always wanted to help people like me live with confidence. And so, I was very scared to actually put myself out there as a confidence coach for queer people. So, for 2020 I called myself The Bravery Coach. And I just coached people on being brave which...

Stacey: I love that though. I love that you had a step. So first of all, I want to rewind because I think this is really interesting and so important for coaches to hear whether someone listening is hearing this for themselves. Or if they have a client who might be in different stages of mindset and growth. But it’s so interesting to hear that you had a plan in your life at one point where exchanging being gay for alcoholism would have been an improvement for you, in your [crosstalk].

Alex: Yeah. I mean [crosstalk] isn’t the only one. I also was like, “Whatever the murder gene is, give me that one. I’ll turn myself in. I don’t really want to hurt anyone but I want that. Lock me up.” Lock me up, which in hindsight is kind of like a gay – sounds like a gay porn. Lock me up.

Stacey: I love it. But I don’t love it.

Alex: Right, it’s terrible.

Stacey: We can joke about it now because you’re through it. But I really do think that that’s so important. Sometimes I think that we try to make either for ourselves or our clients, too big a jump. We try to go from I am...

Alex: I am not enough was my old belief [crosstalk].

Stacey: Right. And so not enough that I would rather be an alcoholic, from that to thriving, it’s too big of a jump. Not that you should go from that to alcoholism at all. But to just see that that’s where you were. And then to

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see that change of okay, I'm going to go into therapy and get to functioning. That's going to be my step. And now that I'm here, it's like you're not even available for the desire of thriving if you're not functioning yet. Which is also why we tell our students, and I say we, I tell my students this, I know that The Life Coach School also says this.

If your client isn't functioning, therapy is a good option. And it doesn't have to be you go through therapy and then you get a coach. It can be that you do both but therapy is so powerful when you're not at that stage yet. It's really hard to bring in coaching when you're not there. So, I'm curious. In your journey when you found life coaching and you were at the functioning stage. What were some of the early things you worked on when you were transitioning into being coachable and approaching your healing through coaching?

Alex: So, one of the most impactful things was Brené Brown and hearing her talk on vulnerability. I was like oh my gosh, I'm not being vulnerable which interestingly enough, and I did an episode on my podcast on this fake vulnerability versus real vulnerability. I started using it as a – I saw that if I exposed things about myself online I would get attention for it.

And so, there was definitely a period of time where I was like, "Oh yeah, I don't really care about this. I have worked through it. It's not really – it doesn't really make me nervous at all to put it out there. But I'm going to put it out there because I'll get some positive attention for it."

Stacey: Yes, I see coaches do this a lot. So, can we talk about that for just a hot second?

Alex: Yes, please.

Stacey: I see this a lot. I will be every once in a while, I just like to scroll through my Facebook feed because I have so many coaches that are on my Facebook feed from years ago. It just gives me a good indication of what I'm seeing in the marketing that they're doing. And so, I can kind of

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use that to say, “What can I offer that might help?” And maybe that sounds a little judgmental but I don’t think it is.

Alex: No. I think it sounds powerful, honestly. You’re like taking the temperature of the pool.

Stacey: Yes, that’s what it feels like for me. But sometimes I will see coaches who are – and I don’t want to say it’s even oversharing. But no, one’s said it the way that you just said it. It feels like it’s meant to shock in awe for attention. And it just never lands with me, wow, this was really something I can learn and grow from. I always feel just a little bit of I want to jump in the pool and pull them out. A little bit of like I want to save you, stop doing that. And I don’t think we do it from a place of trying to get attention.

So, what do you think that you – maybe it is trying to get attention, the fake vulnerability of oversharing, over-offering. I don’t know that it’s like let me post this shock and awe thing to get attention. So, what do you think people are thinking when they do that?

Alex: What I was thinking was this is going to help me connect.

Stacey: Yeah, okay.

Alex: I thought that okay, if I share this then people will understand better. If I share more of the dark side of my life or my story then maybe then I can connect with them. And I think it maybe came from a little place of loneliness or needing to connect but definitely in an unhealthy way.

Stacey: And why? Tell me what made it – what is the difference for the person doing it, how does it show up for them in their life that makes it in an unhealthy way versus when you’re being truly vulnerable?

Alex: So again...

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Stacey: By the way I think everyone should – what episode, do you remember what episode that is that you did on your podcast? Because everyone should go listen to it.

Alex: I have no idea. But I can send it to you.

Stacey: But it's fake vulnerability. Okay.

Alex: It's called real versus fake vulnerability.

Stacey: Okay. We'll add it to the show notes as well because I think everybody should listen to it.

Alex: So, to half quote Brené Brown because I don't remember what she says. But basically, she said something like, "Vulnerability without boundaries is shit." And that's what I was missing. I had no boundaries because I was just looking so much for connection. And I also, it was kind of a – I remember feeling a little bit like I did truly care about my audience so much and for other people like me. I was like I'm willing to die on the alter. Let me just sacrifice myself, gush all this stuff for them and that'll be helpful.

And that's not helpful especially if we're in the place of a life coach, if you're wanting to be a leader. You don't want to be giving your audience the responsibility of seeing all of your mess and trying to make sense of it. Us sharing strategically like, "Hey, this is something I worked through. It was really embarrassing and maybe hard at the time and here's how I got through it", is really appropriate for our audience. And the "Hey, I'm in this shit pile right now", is much more appropriate for our coach, our therapist, our friends, people that we trust.

Stacey: And if they're sharing something that they are not – I love that you call this shit pile, that's exactly what it feels like by the way. But if they're not necessarily in the shit pile you also mentioned that these were – there some of the things that it was well beyond in the past. And it didn't feel like

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you were still hurting from it or you had felt like you had cleared it up. But it still felt like it wasn't healthy. What do you think that was?

Alex: I think [inaudible] is a little bit of a buzz term, I think it was trauma bonding especially for if you're anything like me and you've grown up in a home with emotionally manipulative parent or two. I learned that trauma and sharing all the depressing stuff was how people related to each other. And most of my relationships, whether they be friends or romantic often had to do with sharing the negative of life, not positive things that were going on. So, we could kind of commiserate I guess.

Stacey: Yeah, a 100%, yeah. I have – it's so interesting you say that because I've had some stuff that happened to me early on when I was a coach. And there are times where I think about sharing it and that it would be really useful to my community. The thing that always stops me is that exact thing you just said. I know so many coaches, instead of learning from what I would share and using it to become better coaches or to keep themselves out of a situation like that or keep themselves from creating a situation like that with their clients, the one that I went through.

I feel like it would be too easy for them to bond with me over a similar trauma. And it would fuel the story in a way that isn't super useful and isn't super helpful. They would be able to see, I knew it. And it would maybe pick at – first of all I still have to go through it. I still have to get coaching on it even now. So, I know I'm not a 100% through it. But I do think it would poke in a way that isn't useful to their scars, to their traumas, to their wounds.

And so, what I do instead and I'm wondering if you have experienced this too is I take the story that I would share and I set that aside. And I just teach them what I would teach them after they knew the story.

Alex: That's brilliant.

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Stacey: Because I've realized that it's not super necessary to have the story. They just need the lesson. They don't need the story to add impact to the lesson. The lesson itself is impactful enough.

Alex: You're so right, absolutely.

Stacey: That's so good. So, what do you think is – how will they know if it's true vulnerability that's healthy for them? Or how did you know it for you?

Alex: So, for me it didn't feel manipulative and it didn't feel like I needed people to respond in any certain way to it.

Stacey: Yes, oh my God, that's so good.

Alex: Yeah, it was like people [crosstalk].

Stacey: Yes, it's so simple it's so good. And I will say, I've been just reading your Instagram thinking about our upcoming episode. And I've read it many times before too because people message me and I'm like, let me go look.

Alex: I had no idea this was happening in the background. This is so funny. I mean it's amazing, it's encouraging, it's all the great things, I love hearing this.

Stacey: Yeah. And so, I have been reading a lot of your posts. And I do think that that's what you're doing is you're sharing the lesson. You can tell you've learned it. You can tell you've mastered it. And it's like you don't need the street cred of talking about the stuff that led you to know what you know now to make it effective and your copy is just so fantastic. In fact, can I read one of them?

Alex: Yeah, of course.

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Stacey: I have a screenshot of it, okay, because it'll segway into our next topic, okay. I just really love this. So, hang on, I've got to find it. There's two. I just want to read all of them. Okay.

Alex: Whatever you want.

Stacey: So, let's talk about this one. And maybe I will read two of them. So, this one you said, you can't be fixed because you're not broken. What we do in coaching, therapy or anything self-development mental health related field is not fixing. Nothing is broken about you. What you want is a different relationship with yourself. Nothing is wrong with your feelings. What you need is a different relationship with them. When you change the relationship, you have with your deep inner self and your emotions then it's simpler to make life decisions in your own favor.

When we are stuck in insecurity we make decisions that keep us away from providing our own stability. The same with codependence, people pleasing and fear of failure. You are not busted or in need of fixing. You're a human having human experiences and you are in search of a new way to relate to your spirit. And then you went on to say, when you're sick and tired of trying to shame yourself into change, coach with me. I'll teach you how to feel, process and enjoy your whole self, including the shit that currently triggers shame.

I think that this is exactly what we're talking about. It's like when you are truly at peace with it you don't need to share it because you won't feel that we need to connect over it.

Alex: Yes, you're absolutely right. I think I did that without even realizing it because I do share.

Stacey: Yeah, just something that you know in mastery, right?

Alex: Yes. So, thanks for making it obvious to me now, I appreciate it.

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Stacey: Yeah. I think that's the whole work of when we talk about in 200K, finding that process and breaking your process down. It's like the stuff that you don't realize you're doing is the gold. And that's why it's so helpful to have a community, or coaches, or anyone to be able to – even peers to reflect that back to you.

Alex: 100%, that's the most helpful thing because I think like you just said, we don't see it because we've mastered it. We've been doing it and we kind of mastered it on accident. And somebody else reflecting it back is very helpful.

Stacey: Yeah. So, I think I just have to acknowledge you for your marketing game.

Alex: Thank you.

Stacey: It's so strong in such a good way, you can really tell that you have mastered communicating with your audience and that fine line of helping them and I just I love it. I could eat up all the messages all day long. Okay, so maybe I'll read one more and we'll delve into a new topic. Okay. Just loving all over you right now.

Alex: It's amazing.

Stacey: Coming on Stacey's podcast for her to read my Instagram back to me. It's so good though. Okay. Because you and I had talked before this episode and we really wanted to talk about confidence and belonging with the queer community. So, this is one of your other posts that I really loved.

You can feel like you belong anywhere you go. The reason we feel like we don't belong is not because of the assholes out there, although they're not helping. Even in the LGBTQIA+ community there is lots of exclusion. Lack of acceptance is not why we feel like we don't belong. Hold up, I'm going to read that one again. And that's not what he wrote but I'm going to read it again, everyone listen.

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Lack of acceptance is not why we feel like we don't belong. Belonging is a feeling and therefore it's created by our own thoughts, our inner relationship creates it. So, we are actually capable of feeling it anywhere we go. And then you go on to talk about your podcast episode. I teach you the thoughts that have allowed me to feel like I belong everywhere, even when I am sober at a pool party with 40+ gay men I've never met before. It's a fun story so you know I'm going to make you tell that story.

This powerful sense of belonging is what I want for you too so that you can enter any room, any party, any space and feel grounding in your belonging. Okay, so now you have to – first of all, it's such a good post.

Alex: Thank you.

Stacey: I love, there's so much to unpack there. But the two things I want to land on are the lack of acceptance. People not – and I want to say people not accepting you, people not giving you attention, people not responding to you. You not getting the behavior that you expect from other people, because that's really what it is, just an expectation of other people's behavior. We have an idea that this will – and we're usually not aware of it but this behavior will make me feel like I belong, will tell me I'm accepted.

But it doesn't come from that, people can be however they want to be and they will. And what's so interesting is when you're telling yourself you don't belong you will only interpret other people's behavior in a way that tells you, see, they don't think I belong. I don't belong here. That's what you'll see. You won't see the belonging. And so, let's talk about that for a second.

Alex: Well, that was my entire life before this work. I never felt like I belonged. It didn't matter what other people did or what they said. And I think that relates to kind of imposter syndrome is again the buzzword for that. Where people say, "Yeah, you belong here." Or, "Yes, you're good at this." Or whatever, we have all the validation that we're thinking we're looking for. And our brain is still so stuck in the belief that we don't. We're

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like, “I know, they must be lying. They’re saying it to make me feel good. They’re just kissing my butt.”

We come up with excuses for why it’s not real to invalidate it because it doesn’t align with what we actually believe to be true about ourselves.

Stacey: Yes. I experienced that a lot when I went into Million Dollar mentoring with Brooke. I remember so many times I had to tell myself, she asked you to be in this room. Clearly she wants you here. But I was like, “She didn’t respond to my posts. See, she doesn’t like me. She doesn’t want me here. She thinks I’m terrible.” I had so much, and we can laugh about it but it was really a painful story I told myself for a really long time. And I remember telling myself that story all the way up until I went to this 100K event.

I was still telling myself the story when she was in the room telling her students, “Look at Stacey, she’s such an example of this work. Look at how she’s showing up, and she’s being humble, and she’s making so much more money than everybody else in this room. But she’s also showing up so much harder than everybody else in this room. And just getting to work and not complaining and not doing this.” And I was still telling myself I don’t belong here.

And I had had a spasm in my back and had to leave during lunch when everyone else was working. It was a working lunch. And I had to leave and go find a chiropractor and I was in so much pain. I was like, “See, here you are, you’re the only one leaving.” And it was like all of the evidence was there that I belonged and I was bypassing all of it. It was like literally throwing it away which is so fascinating.

So, let’s switch gears a little bit because I want to hear this. It’s not really switching gears but I want to hear the story about...

Alex: The pool party.

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Stacey: The pool party.

Alex: So, 4th of July weekend I had no plans.

Stacey: This current 4th of July?

Alex: Yeah, a couple of weeks ago.

Stacey: Okay, so it's a recent story, okay, so good.

Alex: Yeah. So last year I had met this guy on Hinge. We never met in person, we just matched on Hinge, followed each other on Instagram and nothing came of it. Literally we've barely had three conversations. And for some reason, his post popped up or something. And I reached out and I was like, "Hey, how are you? Hope you're doing well." And he says, "Yeah, I'm doing great. What are you doing this weekend for the 4th of July?" And I was like, "I don't know. I don't have any plans."

He goes, "Great, there's a pool party on Saturday on the 3rd. Come to this pool party. I think it'll be a really great opportunity for you to meet people and network. And here's this friend that I want you to meet. I think you two would be really good for networking on Instagram and stuff." And I was like, "Look at this. Stacey's right, meet people, tell them what you do." He's doing it for me. He's helping me network. So, I was like, "Sign me up."

Stacey: People will do that. They will help you network.

Alex: Yes, sign me up, pool party in D.C. I show up there and he's not there yet. And I was like, it's okay, whatever. I'll meet people. He didn't show up for two hours, two hours. I'm also sober.

Stacey: The introverted me is silently dying right now. I have so much anxiety thinking about it, I'm like no.

Alex: That's why I told this story.

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Stacey: Already I'm very proud of you.

Alex: So, here's the thing too about parties of gay men. Typically, there's a lot of alcohol and a lot of drugs. Both of those were true of this party. I don't partake in either of those. It's fine, no judgment, do what you want with your body but I don't do them. So, I don't have any kind of buffer to make it easy to interact. All I have is my brain that I've been working on for years and a bunch of people that are on another level. And I didn't die, Stacey.

Stacey: That's the best moral of the story, I didn't die.

Alex: Moral of the story. And I met people. And I talked with them and I got to know them. And I was – by the time he arrived I had met about half the people at the party and talked with them. I was hanging out in the pool just chatting, finding out what do you do? What's your life story? Tell me about these things. And then when he...

Stacey: So, you just hold on, we have just stop. You just walked up to these people and introduced yourself? Or what did you do? I need to know.

Alex: Kind of, I mean so at first I got lost going to the bathroom in the house. And the host found me. And then I was like, "Yeah, so my friend who invited me isn't here yet." He doesn't know me. He's hosting the party. Who's this stranger walking into my house?

Stacey: Oh my gosh.

Alex: And I said, "Oh yeah, he told me I'm supposed to meet." And he gave me a list of four names, one of them was this guy. I was like, "I'm supposed to meet you and these others. Can you introduce me?" And he's like, "Yeah." So, he introduces me to people. And he just gets me into the conversation. And once you're in it it's like okay, this is pretty easy to just kind of keep going with these people.

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Stacey: That's so great. Yeah, I actually had that happen once too. I went to a networking event where I met my second client. And I walked into her room, this was a group that does networking events in my city all the time. And so, a lot of the times it's the same people every time. They all know each other very well and this is my first time. I walk into the room and I'm so stressed, just anxious. I'm already introverted so people don't notice necessarily about me. But even now I get very anxious, if I walked into a room with coaches, I'm going to feel anxious that's just what happens for me.

And so, I walked up to this girl, it was just total vulnerability, taking it back. And I just walked up to this girl and I said, "I am Stacey. I don't know anyone here and I'm extraordinarily nervous." And she said, "Well, I'm the perfect person to talk to. I come to all of these." She grabbed my hand and she was like, "Let me introduce you to some people." And it was just so fantastic to think about that people are willing to do that.

If they know that you're putting yourself in a situation, a vulnerable situation, most of the time, I would say 90% of the time people are going to step up and make you comfortable and make you feel welcome. And they want you to feel like you belong. Because if you think about the opposite, why would anyone ever want you to feel like you don't belong? It would just make you feel awkward and them feel awkward.

Alex: Right, yeah. You're absolutely right.

Stacey: So, you had a great time at the party, met tons of people.

Alex: Tons of people, I had two people – one of them started walking around and telling everyone that I was his life coach. He just decided that I was going to be his coach. It's like yeah, let's do it. We have yet to actually follow through with that. We will see.

Stacey: So random stranger if you're listening, make sure you still contact Alex. That's so amazing. So, what do you think – let's switch gears a little

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bit, just a tiny bit and say what do you think when you think about belonging and when you think about confidence, and vulnerability?

Would you say you think those are the top three things that queer coaches might struggle with when they come into the industry? Are there other things, other challenges that they're going to face that maybe a straight coach would not experience, or there are additional hurdles that other people aren't having to overcome?

Alex: Totally. So, here's – I think belonging is probably the number one thing. And here's my thought on belonging now, it's I belong in me, I am here therefore I belong.

Stacey: That's so good.

Alex: And until we belong in ourselves we can't possibly belong anywhere else. And we're always – I see this a lot in the queer community. We're looking for society to validate us and tell us all these things, which is why I wrote that post. That is not the problem. Yes, society could be better. Like I said, there are assholes and they're not helping. But that's not why we don't feel like we belong. As we talked about, it wouldn't make a difference, we didn't validate it anyway.

We won't feel like we belong until we belong within ourselves, which also means getting in touch with those things that right now we find weird, and awkward, and not worth talking about, hence the reason I wear heels on Instagram. And I wear them to networking events too. Who wants to talk to me? Everyone in the room.

Stacey: That's big, I never heard, that needs to be the quote of this entire podcast. Who wants to talk to me? Everyone in the room. It's good.

Alex: Seriously, because I'm already 6'4, those add another four inches. I'm 6'8 with those things on. So, everyone's like, "Who's the giant with the beautiful eyeshadow? I need to meet that guy." I stand out but I like

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standing out now because I'm like yeah, I belong here. And I'm not worried about people going, "Why are you wearing heels? Why do you have eyeshadow on?"

Stacey: No, you're like, here I am, receive me, I'm ready.

Alex: Who wants to coach?

Stacey: That's so great. But don't you think that is the energy that every coach...

Alex: Every coach.

Stacey: Every coach needs to experience and feel and be walking into a room like here I am, everyone wants to talk to me.

Alex: Yeah. But the reason I think that they're afraid to do that is because they think somebody's going to expose them. I'm going to feel like I've been exposed in a way that I'm not comfortable with. The only reason you can ever be exposed in a way that you're not comfortable with is because you haven't let yourself experience that side of you. You have been hiding that part of yourself from you.

Stacey: That's so good. What do you think that – and maybe there is not a good answer for this, so I could be asking you a question that's hard to answer.

Alex: That's fine.

Stacey: But what do you think are some of the things that they are afraid to be exposed? From the clients that you work with, what have been some of the things that they don't want to accept or that they haven't spent time with themselves?

Alex: So, some of the things are around – there's a stigma within the gay community in particular about feminine energy and being effeminate. And

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so, they're like, "I want to be more masculine and that's how I'm going to be more accepted. And if somebody gets maybe too close to me then they'll see my more feminine side." I also see things around money. Our community is very attached to our suffering which is another reason it's a good idea for me to not do any kind of trauma bonding with the community. There's too much of that.

So, we almost are afraid to thrive. I literally have queer friends and clients who are doing well career wise, financially. It's usually career and finances. And they're like, "I don't want to talk about it. You're the only one I share this with." When they go and sign a new contract or something and make money they don't want to tell anyone. They come to me to celebrate. And these are people that I have never met in person.

Stacey: Yeah. Do you think that some of that could be that being seen on a big stage as successful, or just being seen in general on a big stage? And what I mean by big stage is just really it depends on where you're at in your life. But it could be being seen by 10 people, being seen by 100 people, being seen by 1,000 people. Being seen as successful, powerful, thriving puts you in a place where I could imagine if you were struggling with not everyone in the world maybe accepts you knowing that.

I want to say that that's a circumstance. There are people who do not accept gay people, or queer people. And so, if you know that then it's like – I'm just thinking of one of my clients who said, "It's really scary for me to market myself online because of what I've seen people do to people like me online." And that fear of even thinking about queer people who have been physically harmed and even had their lives taken because of being queer. Could that be a piece of it, of if I'm seen there's more of an opportunity for people to come in and harm me?

Alex: I think that's part of it. Some people do have a legitimate danger maybe based on the area that they live. But honestly, my belief is that more people use...

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Stacey: I want to hear all of it.

Alex: Yeah, more people use that excuse than actually – it has become an excuse to stay hidden. I think that there are many people telling themselves that story when they're not in actual danger. I used to believe it. I have literally never been harmed or anything physically while out, even dressed like this, makeup, heels, whatever. No. And I get it, also I know that I also come from a place of being a privileged white man. I do have less of a target on me. But honestly, I see others that are similar to me that are not white or male and they're doing just fine doing the same thing.

I think unless you really live in an area where there are some hate crimes going on, you're probably way safer than you've maybe been telling yourself.

Stacey: Yeah. So, what do you think are the things that are the big ones that make them say, "I can't shine. I can't thrive. I can't tell people about my successes?"

Alex: I think it always goes back to their relationship with themselves. I didn't want to show up with this, with all of me, my creativity, my more feminine energy, doing a lot of feeling and I wanted to try to fit a different box for a while because I thought that's what I had to do. That's kind of the path that's carved very deep in society. I was actually getting coaching on this the other day and she used the illustration of a path. And I'm kind of using it in a different way. If everyone's walking on the same path it gets worn down. And it's really easy for everyone to fall into that rut.

So, do you want it easy, do you want to blend in? Or if you want to be a leader you've got to go start making some other ruts, which means you might have to go off the trail. You might need to be walking through the thorns. Yeah, it's going to be really difficult.

Stacey: I love that, yeah. I often tell my students that, especially in Two Million Dollar Group when they are – but it just depends on what you

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decide your niche is. It could be at any level really is if you – there's you can follow the tried and true path of coaches and a lot of people do this. There's nothing wrong with it. So, I just want to say this as a caveat. If you come into the industry and you see a niche that's working, you see a method that's working, you see what somebody else is teaching. And for your own safety to build your confidence you latch onto that.

And you start offering similar work, doing similar things, saying similar things, being similar ways, if you start doing that and it works for you, fine. But to stand out, to go on to make millions of dollars in the industry you have to do exactly what you said, you have to pave your own rut. You have to walk your own path. You have to go off. And to me it takes the most vulnerability and sense of inner belonging for yourself and the highest level of confidence. Because you have no one ahead of you saying this is going to work.

People will accept this, people will like this, people will be okay, they will receive it well. I have a lot of my students who are doing, you know, I have students doing sex coaching, and trauma coaching, and all kinds of different types of coaching that maybe haven't been paved before. And I'm always telling them their work is so genius and they've got to push through, and they've got to keep going even though they don't have that example of success in front of them.

Yeah, you're going to create it and even though it's going to be scarier and require so much of you, it's also going to be so much more beneficial. You're going to receive so much more back from that. And even if you didn't, I think, and I'd be curious what your thoughts are about this, even if they didn't make more money by blazing their own path they would still feel more at home.

Alex: A 100%, that's where I'm at right now. I'm like, you know what? The money hasn't rolled in suddenly when I really started becoming – showing

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more of me. If you're waiting for an avalanche then you're still waiting for validation externally. But I'm so much more at ease, filtering is exhausting.

Stacey: Yeah. But also, I have to say, hold on. Yes, okay, I wanted to talk about that too because I read another one of your posts about filtering.

Alex: Oh my God.

Stacey: But I just want to say to you and to everybody listening. I've been watching the industry and there is this like, you know, this does happen. I share a lot of stories where this happens where people have just massive explosions of growth and they come in, Serena Hicks is the best example. She came into 200K at, I don't even know, 25, 30K and then made 400K. And literally I was commenting on her post. I'm like, "What's happening? Tell me how you did this because it's so..."

It's actually that's the outlier thing that happens. But for me a lot of my – and I have had some explosive stages of growth. But for the most part it's the common thing that happens is it's not explosive. It's that everyday you've got to just build it.

We call it, Lindsay Dotzlaf, and I always joke that it's the slow burn because that's how her story has been. It's not been this explosive massive thing. She's been working on it for six years and it's been a slow burn. And she's going to make her first million dollars, my guess, this year, if not, very soon. And it's been the result of – we call it the slow burn. So, I want to just say that I think that that's normal.

And I think for everyone listening if you're like, "It's like yeah." You don't need to have a 100K month and go from \$25,000 in a year to a 100K month to be like I'm making it and I've had this, you know, it's like the slow burn is actually the most frequent, and the most common. And it gets you there just the same. You end with the same exact result.

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But let's talk about filtering because I think this is a really great final topic to talk about. The energy that's required to filter.

Alex: It's exhausting. It's so tiring. I used to, like I said like watching life on a TV screen. That was me filtering constantly like okay, wait a minute. If I do this, what's that person going to think? They'll think this. Okay, I don't want that. If I do this other thing then they'll think this. Don't want that either. It was like a whole freaking flowchart.

Stacey: It's like playing chess with people.

Alex: Yeah, I'm terrible at chess.

Stacey: If I make this move this will move will happen. I'm actually really good at it. I beat the shit out of Neil the other night.

Alex: Oh my God. I love it.

Stacey: But it's very similar to that, it's like if I make this move this can happen, if I make this move this can happen. That is very – the game, I have to have a lot of energy for otherwise I'm like I don't want to play.

Alex: Yeah, it's tiring. And I think we do the same thing as coaches with our marketing and even in our coaching sessions. We're like, "I don't really want to say that because they might think I'm [crosstalk]."

Stacey: Well, they do that on consults, I can't say that, they'll get mad.

Alex: Right. And I can't post this thing on Instagram because then everyone's going to unfollow me. They're going to think I'm stupid or weird. I had drama still even this year where I was like if I say this, this way they're going to think that I'm providing unlicensed therapy. And you know what happened? Someone thought I did and he sent this message. And was like, "You're doing this. I'm a psychologist. You're doing this. This is wrong. I want to look out for people in our community."

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And do you know what? I wrote a very nice message back and I said, “Thank you so much for your insight, although I don’t think we’re going to get far on an Instagram message, why don’t we meet in person if you’d like to discuss this further. You can’t possibly know what it is that I do just by reading my Instagram post.” Ever since that I’ve not been afraid of it. I’m so glad that happened.

Stacey: I love that you were like, “Let’s have a conversation.” You just invited that in, that’s so good.

Alex: Yeah, I wanted to throw up.

Stacey: There aren’t many people...

Alex: I wanted to throw up Stacey, though, that was not easy.

Stacey: It’s not easy. There are going to be people who don’t agree with what we do. I mean I get those comments all of the time especially if I – it’s so interesting because I have – I walk a very fine line of I love being certified with The Life Coach School. If you ask me my opinion, if you come to me and you say, “Should I get certified?” I’ll say, “Yes, I think yes obviously last week.” I hold that belief very strongly. But I also I try my best not to pass on thought errors to my students.

And one thing I know having a community of thousands of coaches is you don’t have to be certified to make money. That’s the truth. I want to say unfortunately but it’s not. Fortunately, it’s an unregulated industry and we get to prove what we can do by the value we create for our clients, not by the education we have. I think that’s a good thing.

Alex: Yeah. That’s well said.

Stacey: And so, my messages on our Facebook Ads sometimes, if we take the route of here are the things that you might think you have to do to make money and here is the truth. These are thought errors. We get attacked for

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being irresponsible all of the time. We've had to take some down because I was like I don't even think this is helping. And I'm fine. We go different angles all the time. But it's like there will be people who will be triggered and who will have a manual for the way that things should be done.

And I was thinking about this with Tony Robbins the other day because I feel like he walks a fine line. As he gets bigger and more public, people could have even stronger opinions. But if you watch his documentary, one of the things they do for live events is they go out and he has his people bring him back, who are people who are suicidal at this event. And they're always aware of whose there. And there are people there, the people they bring in who are there because they are suicidal and it's their attempt to like, they're like I'm coming here, this is my last try.

And he will go in front of an entire room and do an intervention with him and coach them. And I was just thinking, regardless of your thoughts about him because some people love him, some people hate him. I was just thinking, it's so brave to do that because it puts him in such a – he's walking a lot. It puts him in such a situation that could end up being really tricky, that people could have a lot of thoughts about, that could go the wrong way. And he still shows up to do the work.

And the only thing I can think about that is well, you could have a gift and sit back and not try to stay safe for yourself. Or you could have a gift and something that could help someone and you could put it out there for them even if it's at the risk of yourself. And I think that that's like, you know, I don't know what the 100% right answer is. But I can be impressed by that. I'm touched by that.

Alex: It's also where is your brain power spent? Are you calculating all the ways it could go wrong or are you calculating all the people that you might help?

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Stacey: Yes, that's so good. Okay, that's another one, pull that out as a soundbite. Okay, so I know we're almost at time. I feel like I could just have a conversation with you for hours. Is there anything that you were thinking about with this episode that you really wanted to share that you thought would be valuable for any coach out there, especially the queer coaches out there that we haven't talked about that you could share now?

Alex: I would love to demystify confidence very quickly for everyone.

Stacey: Do it. Let's do it.

Alex: We think confidence is like – I don't know. Lots of people have lots of different definitions of confidence. Even I find some people mix it up with arrogance, just cocky.

Stacey: Yes. It's like false confidence. There's false vulnerability, there's false confidence and there's real vulnerability and real confidence.

Alex: Yeah. So, confidence is just the ability to create your own calm in any circumstance. That is it. And they experience all the things and be stable. So, in order to do that there are literally only three things that you have to do, just like making money as a life coach, there's only three things.

Stacey: It's perfect. Perfect.

Alex: You have to be willing to be uncomfortable, decide it's okay. Take action towards the discomfort on purpose. Let it trigger you. It's going to be alright. And then have your own back which is not a defensive thing. It's literally just holding your inner child, giving him, or her, or them, a big old hug and being like, "I got you, we're going to go through it together."

Stacey: That's so good. I love that. Okay, so I feel like everyone needs to follow you and some of the coaches need to hire you, especially if you're listening and you are a queer coach who needs the confidence to just put yourself out there and get your business going. Alex is also a great consult

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ninja and really great at selling and marketing. So, if you want his guidance, I think it's really great to work with someone who's gone through your similar path and who has experienced similar obstacles that you've experienced, whether they're mental or whatever they are.

Having that person can be such a powerful thing. So, I want them to reach out to you. I want them to listen to your podcast, follow you on Instagram, hire you, all of the things because I think you're brilliant. Where can they find you?

Alex: They can find me Coach Alex Ray on Instagram, and on Facebook. And then my podcast is called The Queer Confidence Podcast.

Stacey: I love that. And we're going to link that up in the show notes too. But I know a lot of people listening, they just want to get on Instagram and look you up. So, if you do, I'm just telling you, you're going to spend a lot of time reading. You're going to fall in love with Alex. You're going to be highly inspired. And so, I just think everyone listening if this message resonated with you, make sure you reach out to Alex. Do you do one-on-one coaching or do you do group coaching? How do they work with you?

Alex: One-on-one, yeah.

Stacey: That's so great, so fun. Alright, thank you so much for sharing your time with us.

Alex: Thank you, Stacey, I so appreciate the opportunity. And yeah, this has just been really fun. Thank you.

Stacey: It has been fun. You're so welcome. Alright.

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You either make your 2K or I give you your 2K back. Just head over to www.staceyboehman.com/2kfor2k. We'll see you inside.