

Ep #231: When Potential Clients Want References



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 master coach Stacey Boehman teaches you how to make your first 2K, 20K, and 200K using her proven formula.

Hey coaches, welcome to episode 231. I told you I had another ranty episode for you. I'm riled up and really I'm just recording this on the same day that I recorded episode 230. We're doing two episodes in the same day because listen, I have had the best May ever, ever of my whole life. Even from when I got married and went on my honeymoon, seriously, best May ever. So I worked for, I don't know, typically what I do is I take a vacation once every four to six weeks. I like to go on a vacation even if it's just for a couple of days and kind of rest my brain and simmer.

And I really love to take off enough time where I'm literally antsy to get back. I work so hard when I come back that it's insane. So I took this amazing vacation in December. We went to Aspen. And then I came back and I just worked my butt off all the way through mid-April, just 14, 16 something weeks just extraordinarily hard. I told my team, I think I worked more in the first 14 weeks of this year than I did all of last year, just creating so much content. Now, a lot of it's not customer facing, which is even more brutal.

It's been the back end annoying stuff that none of us ever want to do. We just want to coach and sell basically. So anything that's not that, that requires lots of thought and just meetings and all the things. And I've created a ton of content but just worked really hard. And so it just happened to be that towards the end of April I was like, "I know I need a vacation." So we went to Miami. It was the most extraordinary trip. I just think that every trip I take my son with water, we just have the best, most amazing time. It was so relaxing.

And then we came back straight to, I think we got back on a Thursday, and on Saturday I took my colleague, Corinne Crabtree to opening night at the track and then a few days later, people started flying in from all over the country, some of our friends to go to Oaks and Derby with us that Friday

[Make Money as a Life Coach](#)®, a podcast with Stacey Boehman

Ep #231: When Potential Clients Want References

and Saturday. So I literally just had an entire two weeks of vacation and Derby time.

And then that went straight into my son's first birthday week. And we just do birthdays really big in our house. We celebrate for a full week every single day. It's sort of ridiculous. We did photoshoots. We did play times out. We did all kinds of stuff. And then we ended on Saturday with a huge insane dinosaur party which was so much fun. Oh my God, you guys, my son just, when we got to the party I did not expect this because he's one. He looked around at all, we only invited people that were really familiar to him and met him several times and just really knew him.

He has stranger danger. So we don't want him having stranger danger at his own party. We wanted him to just be like, oh, there you are. oh, there you are. And that's literally the face he had. He was scanning, it was in a garden, it was so beautiful, scanning the garden. He's like, "Oh my God, I know you. Oh my God, I love you. Oh, my god I like you." He looked so, and my nanny was like, "He literally looked grateful that everyone was there." And you could see him looking at the décor. He looked grateful, it was the best ever.

And then it was Mother's Day. What? My first Mother's Day, best thing ever. I had the most extraordinary day with my son and just experiencing being a new mom. And I told my husband, for my first Mother's Day, to make sure he got me a gift. And he got me the most beautiful Cartier bracelet ever, which was the most biggest surprise. Now, it's my Mother's Day gift and my anniversary gift. We didn't get to celebrate our first anniversary because we had just had a baby two weeks before and we were just not even sleeping or functional at that point. If you've had a baby you understand.

Long story short, this year I am leaving my son for the first time. I'm really trying to calm my nervous system about it. I really want to stow him in the luggage without my husband knowing and bring him with us. But we are going back to Napa to Yountville to our wedding site. They just built a Four Seasons in Napa and we're going to stay there. It's actually in Calistoga but

[Make Money as a Life Coach](#)®, a podcast with Stacey Boehman

Ep #231: When Potential Clients Want References

I just say Napa as the area. And we're going to go for a four day anniversary trip out to California to see our wedding site and celebrate.

And so I'm literally working one week full, one full week in May. And so I'm getting all of the things done that I would get done in a month in one week. I'm going to work even after my son goes to bed at night. I'm just hardcore going all in on one week and I am just having so much fun the rest of the weeks and then I'm back to business as usual. So I'm recording a couple of episodes at once on the same day for you before I go celebrate what feels like my first anniversary but is actually my second.

And just please send me all the momma vibes for leaving my son for the first time. I have never left him, a full year, I have never been apart from him. I'm literally freaking out.

Anyways, so I have another rant for you. And listen, I feel like I needed to tell you that I'm actually in a great mood. I recorded the first one, I was like, "Probably seemed like I was kind of pissy." But I'm really not. I'm just riled up. I'm just in one of those moods. I'm feeling feisty. I'm feeling fiery.

So I had a friend message me a few days ago, lovely, great friend who I think the freaking absolute world of and I happen to have patroned their business. So this friend messages me and asked me if it would be okay if they could pass my name and number along for someone who is thinking of working with them and wants to talk to some past, current clients to see their experience. And my sales brain and how I think of this person in my life, I responded back and was like, "What is even happening right now?"

First of all, if I was going to do this it would be with this person. I love them so much that it would 100%, if I were ever going to take a call to sell someone else's business, I for sure would do it for this person. However, I was like, "I'm just outraged that anyone would even ask you. You're so amazing and I want to know what's happening in your mind that doesn't also think that this is absolutely not necessary. You do not need to give your references out. You do not need to give potential clients other clients numbers in order to get business." This person is a no, they're just a no.

[Make Money as a Life Coach](#)®, a podcast with Stacey Boehman

Ep #231: When Potential Clients Want References

So this got me thinking about how many times this has been posted in 2K for 2K. This has been posted many times, people are going to ask you, “Do you have some clients that I could speak to in order to make me feel safe to buy from you?” And this seems harmless. My friend is so lovely and sweet. They are not at all abrasive and irreverent like me. I joked the last time we were together. I’m like, “I’m not even sure if we didn’t work together in a professional capacity, would we have become friends? I know I’m a lot to take sometimes.”

But they’re just absolutely lovely. So this ask seemed harmless to them. But this is all about thinking about the clients. I want you to think about what this signals to your current or past clients that you might give their number out to in order to speak to someone and basically close them for working with you. What it signals to them is someone has doubts about paying me, can you clear them up? And you do not want clients thinking people have doubts about paying you.

And you certainly, bless everything, do not want them expressing those doubts to current people paying you. Why else would they need to talk to them? For reassurance, what do they want to be reassured and why would it be your past clients, current clients’ job to do that and what does it signal to them that you need them to do that for you? No. No. No. So this is what I told my friend. She had messaged me back and said, “Why didn’t I just say no I don't do that?”

And the way she had said it, it wasn’t maybe exactly like that but I told her. I was like, “Listen, the way you just said that felt so genuine, so honest and go with that. But also if you in the moment need to grab for language, borrow this.” And so this is what I told her and this is what I’m going to tell you. Here’s the language. “No, I don't do that. I really respect my clients’ time and their privacy. But what do you hope to hear from them? What doubts or worries are you having that I can clear up for you now in this conversation?”

That’s what they’re wanting. They have a thought. They have a doubt. I even challenge you to think about what that could be, what do they think

[Make Money as a Life Coach](#)®, a podcast with Stacey Boehman

Ep #231: When Potential Clients Want References

that the person will say to them? What do you think they will ask them? What do you think they need to hear from your clients? And you figure out how to get them what they need to feel on the phone with you. References are what the sales call is for. Whatever someone needs from a reference is what the sales call is for. That's your job.

And testimonials, written testimonials and a Q&A on maybe your sales page or in an email, that serves as your references. That serves as a way to clear questions up, to answer doubts and concerns. But references are what you give employers hiring you for a job as an employee. It's what you give when you want to adopt a dog. So I was thinking about this that might really make it click for you. You know I love giving a good Audi reference.

By the way, this might make you laugh. Everyone in our neighborhood thinks that Neil works for an Audi dealership. We have three Audis. We have the SCV. We have a convertible S5. And then we have an RS7 sports car. My husband loves to wash them every week. He just pulls them out in the driveway. His family, his whole life, owned a car detailing business. And so everyone in their family takes the pristine care of a car very seriously. And so Neil really loves to just get out there on a hot day and wash his own cars.

And so everyone thinks we work in an Audi dealership which is so funny. It gets brought up all the time, "How's the Audi dealership going on down the street?" Okay, so I love giving a good Audi reference. So Audi asks for references for their salespeople. If you go and apply for a job they're going to ask for references. They're going to ask to speak to people that you have worked for in the past in order to determine if you will be a good hire. They do not give out phone numbers of people who own Audis for you to call them and ask how an Audi performs. Can you imagine?

Yes, I'm thinking about buying the S5, do you have a customer roster that I might look at of people that own S5s? Could you send me some of the numbers so that I could call them and talk to them about their experience driving an Audi S5? It's particularly the convertible. I'd really like to talk to them about the functionality of that. How often they use it. What? When I

[Make Money as a Life Coach](#)®, a podcast with Stacey Boehman

Ep #231: When Potential Clients Want References

think about this it literally gets me into hysterics of laughter. We absolutely would think that that was insane. The same is true for you as a business owner, never ever, ever do that.

And I want you to consider what's the self-concept you need to have to be willing to let people walk away if that's what they need from you. I was telling my friend, I was like literally, "I'm only shouting a little bit because of the way I see you must be so far from the way you're seeing yourself right now. I see you as seriously that you should be interviewing other people to work with you. You should be having an interview process where it's stringent and only the best of the best have to prove themselves to work with you.

That's the way I experience you. I experience your authority that way, your experience that way, your connections that way. You are the ultimate, seriously." That's how I feel about my friend. I'm like, "You're the ultimate. People should be banging down your door willing to pay you whatever to work with you. You are it, the best of the best. You don't get better." That's how I'm thinking. So to me it seems so ludicrous that this person would even need to do that, ever for any reason.

So I really want you to think about deciding to only sell coaching or whatever you sell, whatever service you sell to the people who don't need to physically speak to clients of yours in order for them to feel sold and safe to work with you. And I want you to figure out how to have a conversation so that people don't need them to do that. You can be in charge of that. You can create enough comfort that they say to you what they would say to them. That they ask you the questions that they would ask the people they were going to talk to.

Figure out what is lingering for them and then you clear that up. And if they still need to talk to a customer of yours then they are a no. Again, I always think about the person they would call, what that experience would be like for them. It would be such an inconvenience, such a waste of time for them. It would be so weird, but the main thing is they would just be so

Ep #231: When Potential Clients Want References

unequipped to answer any questions about your business and the results you give and all the different situations that you're capable of handling.

The other thing that I was thinking about and I'm not suggesting that you say this to customers. I'm a little bit rowdy so I probably would. But I'm not suggesting that you do unless you hear this and you're like, damn, straight. But you could just at least think it. I was seriously thinking about if someone said this to me. I would only give you numbers of people who currently work with me, thus like working with me. So if that's what you're wondering, anyone I trusted to give you their number is going to tell you what you want to hear.

But then any questions that you have because my client doesn't work for me in my business, they are probably the worst person to answer them. And if you have specific ones that you want to ask them, it's probably better to ask me because I work in my business every day. They know the one particular situation that they had that worked for them. They know how I coached them. They know how it applied to their business. We don't get this for 200K but let's just say we did. It's almost like I want to talk physically on the phone to one of your 200K students.

Do you know how many different niches and income levels and marketing strategies, tactics that I serve in 200K? We have people that have super micro niches. We have people that have semi-broad niches. We have people that sell general life coaching. We have people that sell it for \$50, \$500, \$5,000, \$10,000, \$20,000. We have people that sell programs, people that sell one-on-one coaching, people that sell groups. We have people who do business coaching.

It's all across the board so not one of my clients could just say, "Yeah, this is exactly how she would help you or I can clear these answers up." They could not do that. I can do that though if you tell me your specific situation. That's the way I want you to think about it. I don't want you to even remotely entertain this ever.

Ep #231: When Potential Clients Want References

And listen, just tell them, bottom line, I'm not asking any of my clients to do that just like I will never ask you to do that if you're my client. I will respect your time in the future just as I'm respecting my clients' time now. That's it. Whatever the answer is, be prepared to answer this question. Be prepared to answer it strongly, not to be defensive or combative. I'm defensive because this didn't really happen to me so I'm a little defensive for my friend and for you.

I lost my voice during Derby, screaming at all the horses and over all the people to talk to my friends. So I'm a little bit raspy still a week something later. But I feel defensive for you, that would be asked this question. However, I want to just give the caveat of this answer I have thought about for years and years and years. These are the answers I gave when I was selling one-on-one coaching and doing sales calls. And they are not defensive answers. They are answers based on thinking of, I always protect my current clients first.

I protect their privacy. I protect their time, for example I have them on the podcast, that's a great experience for both of us. We get to have a conversation for an hour and they get to tell you everything they would tell you if you reached out to them personally. So I promise, I will never ask you to get on the phone with one of my clients, one of my potential clients and calm their fears. I also will ask that you don't do that either.

Now, I'm going to give you just a couple of final things, ideas instead. Number one, I ultimately want you to just figure out how you handle that conversation, what you would say that would feel the most authentic and truthful to you. That's number one. And how you will find out what they really need to know so that you can address it. That's number one.

But then ways that you can also be prepared for this question is you can ask your clients if they wouldn't mind writing you a testimonial. That's not the same as getting on the phone with someone who's afraid to buy from you essentially. It's very different. You can ask them for that. I think lots of people do that. I think that is not the end of the world. You can create a Q&A form.

[Make Money as a Life Coach](#)®, a podcast with Stacey Boehman

Ep #231: When Potential Clients Want References

Something else you can do that I've done in the past is I've done trainings and I've asked my top clients to come on and do Q&As with people. You could do that, especially ones that have really powerful stories that really love you and it would feel exciting and fun for them to do it. My mother-in-law was part of this weight loss program called The Perfect Plan and she's so proud of her results that she goes and works in the office for them and serves as an example of what's possible and talks to new people coming in that are thinking of doing it.

And she gets paid to do it and she absolutely loves it and it's so much fun for her. And it literally just makes her feel so proud every time she does it. If you can create a situation where your best clients can come together and talk about you on a training, or a podcast in a way that highlights them and allows them to feel proud of the work they've done, that's a win.

But that is not the same as giving their number out and asking them to take a sales call for you, which is what I think is what a potential client is asking you when they say, "Can I get a couple numbers of current clients and past clients that you've worked with? I would like to speak to them personally." What they're actually saying is, "Can I get a sales call?" They don't know that. They don't realize that but they really are asking, "Can I get a sales call with one of your clients?"

See, I'm so feisty. In my mind what I would want to say, I would not say this but I would want to say, "Sorry, I don't have a sales team." We'll just laugh together on that but we won't say that to customers. Bottom line, I don't ask my clients to do that, just like I would never ask you to do that and then get the conversation happening on your end. Think of fun creative ways that you could create a similar situation that feels good for your clients, not an inconvenience for your clients.

And then have those on hand to say, "I can answer these questions and also I'd love to send you a Q&A email. I'd love to send you some testimonials that my clients have written for me over the years. I'd love to send you this podcast." I actually had a couple of my most successful clients on a podcast to talk about their experience. I would be happy to

[Make Money as a Life Coach](#)®, a podcast with Stacey Boehman

Ep #231: When Potential Clients Want References

send you those things. But we just aren't going to be happy to send them numbers of people and have them do sales calls for us.

Alright, that's really my rant. I feel sufficient that I've sold you hard on this is not something to do and the ways to solve it. And we've had a little fun and played around and that's that. Are you all ready? Go out and just close your calls yourself. I love you all. Have an amazing week and I will talk to you after my anniversary trip.

Hey, if you are ready to make money as a life coach, I want to invite you to join my 2K for 2K program where you're going to make your first \$2000, the hardest part, and then \$200,000 using my proven formula. It's risk-free. 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.