

Ep #16: Difficult Clients



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 Divas, Divos, fellow coach lovies. How are you doing this Wednesday? Welcome to episode 16. Today we're going to talk about difficult clients. Are you ready? We're going to actually have so much fun, just trust me on that one.

So let's dive in. Difficult clients. You ready? So a difficult client from your perspective might be a client who isn't coachable, who's stuck in victim mentality. And I'm using really the words that my clients post on in my 2K group when they do their evaluations and when they're asking questions. I'm using their words.

So I didn't come up with like, the way that I would talk about it. I'm literally using the way that they talk about difficult clients. So someone who's stuck in victim mentality, just doesn't jive with your coaching techniques or your philosophy or the way that you coach, who doesn't show up to their calls, reschedules a lot, shows up distracted to your calls, doesn't do their homework, isn't getting results.

Someone that you just don't enjoy coaching. Someone you might even consider firing, or when it comes to potential clients and consults, someone that you don't think is ready and you wouldn't want to offer your coaching to. Someone who doesn't feel committed, or someone you have to really pry to get information from. Someone really not engaged in the process.

Y'all have had these, right? Or maybe - listen, I know y'all have had them because I hear it about it all day long in my 2K page, which no problem, but this is the trend that I see. And because it's become a trend that I see in coaches, I want to bring it up and talk about it on the podcast. I think everybody could learn from it.

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And I know that I've dealt with this early on in my coaching career and it's something I still coach myself on and I'm going to talk about the way that I see it to help you throughout this podcast. So one of my clients recently asked, "What do you do when you have a consult and you don't want to take this person on as a client? I just had that feeling, I was obviously in some judgment, but this call felt pretty exhausting. I think it was exhausting because I struggled to stay in leadership energy. She kept wanting to come back to her pain."

And then in her consult evaluation - so this is what I have them do in our group. They do a three-step consult evaluation and I go in and read what happened on the consult and tell them what actually went wrong and what they need to work on. So this is what my client reported.

She said, "I noticed myself judging her as I'm not sure if she's ready because she kept coming back to her story over and over. And I had this thought like this is just too much because she told me so many things and so many problems and continued coming back to them throughout the entire session. Even when painting the vision of where she wants to go, she just kept coming back to the problem and where she is now and so I would love some advice here."

And then my client also said, "I was exhausted afterwards, I think because I kept redirecting." And then she said, "I tried to coach her a little bit on her objections and I really couldn't get through to her." So I want you to think about if you've had a client like this. If you've had a client that just no matter what you do, they just keep coming back to their problem and they keep coming back to the pain, and you feel kind of exhausted.

Or maybe they just have so many problems, I know so many of you have had consults where the person comes and they just have so much work to do that it feels like there's no way you could ever really get through to them and help them and they're just too far gone. That's usually the thought I would have.

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So this is what I want to point out. I've seen so many coaches talk about this with overcoming objections. They say, "I coached her a little bit around her money," and this specific consult, it really hit me. She coached her a little. She wasn't committed as a coach on the call to coach the client. I wouldn't buy from a coach who wasn't committed to me either.

But she wasn't not committed because the client was stuck in her story, a.k.a. difficult. The client was hard to coach because she had judgments about the client, that the client then reacted to and then her reaction to her client's reaction was to not be committed, "to coach a little." But what if there was no such thing as a difficult client?

Seriously, what if all of the descriptions I just gave you in the beginning of the podcast, they show up late, they're busy with other things, they're not really committed to the transformation, they're resistant, you have to pry them open, they stay in their story, they stay in their pain, what if all of that was a story you have? What if that behavior didn't get labeled as a difficult client?

Hang with me. It's going to change the game forever in how you coach and how you sell and what you do in between. What if there was only such thing as an inexperienced coach? Or a coach who doesn't have a clean mind, a coach who isn't committed, a coach who doesn't know how to get someone out of their story, a coach who doesn't know how to command the energy with anyone in any situation, in any circumstance?

Like a coach who doesn't know how to get their client to show up to their calls, a coach who doesn't know how to get their client to show up present and not distracted, a coach who doesn't know how to pull their client back from their story and their victim mentality, a coach who doesn't know how to coach someone who just stays in their pain.

I always say you have to be the strongest energy in the room, but this is what I mean, the strongest mind. What if the only reason you didn't want to coach someone was because of how you felt on the call with them,

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because of how you reacted? But not because of their behavior, which you think is the culprit, but your own behavior.

I wouldn't want to coach a client either that I had terrible thoughts about, that I had judgments about, that I deemed not coachable. That would suck. And really, here is the biggest thing. There is no growth in that. No growth for me as the coach when it's the client's fault we couldn't coach and get to a result on the call.

So I heard this once in the book, *The Vortex*. It's a law of attraction book by Esther Hicks, and it's specifically about relationships. Fitting because it's a relationship, the coach-client relationship. But this is what she said, it blew my mind and changed my life forever. I remember exactly where I was when I was listening to the audiobook.

She said, "When you don't show up as your highest self, you don't have access to other people as their highest self." This hit me like a ton of bricks. I'm going to say it again. When you don't show up as your highest self, you don't have access to other people as their highest self. When you aren't being your best self as a coach, meaning you aren't in a clean place of non-judgment, a place of love for your client, thinking only in their thoughts, then you don't have access to your client as their highest, most willing, most coachable self.

You don't even have access to how to coach them because your brain, your logical brain is problem solving. When emotions get high, intelligence gets low. It literally gets clouded the moment that you start stressing, the moment you start judging, you lose your power of thought and thinking and analyzing your client's thoughts. You lose that ability completely.

And a client literally will respond completely differently to you when you're coaching them from a clean, loving place and when you're coaching them with subtle judgments. It's two different things. Being coached from a loving place feels one way and being coached from judgment also feels one way.

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That's led by your ego and your need to be right as the coach, or as the client when you feel your coach needing to be right and kind of being pulled by their ego, you know it. You sense it. I've had it happen to me. I've experienced that and it makes you really defensive as the client, and it makes you shut down. It's not a safe place for you as a client.

That's where belief bias comes in. When you have judgments, thought about your client and it biases your coaching, that doesn't just happen in the selling relationship. It happens in the coaching relationship. I had another client who once reported on a consult evaluation.

So she posted it in our 2K group and she did the three-step evaluation and everything in the evaluation was the client was in victim mentality the whole time, the client was resistant, she didn't want to coach on this, she didn't want to do that, she just sat there like this, it was all about the client. And I told my client that my client was the problem, not her. Because my client was the one that was being a victim, not her.

This made my client go wait, what? But she led that call as a victim and couldn't turn the call around because she spent the entire call giving her client power. She was a victim to her client and how we know this is because her client's energy influenced hers. She was at the effect of the client.

So think about this; your client, your potential client, whoever it is, I would just consider all of my potential clients, all of you even as my clients. Everybody. So I just say your client. So your client is always responding to your energy and leadership. Never the other way around. You should never be responding to theirs. If you are, you're doing it wrong.

And then what happens is instead of you realizing you are the reason the consult didn't go well or the coaching call didn't go well, you blame the client. You make it about them instead of you. You call them difficult or uncoachable, or even worse, not committed enough. I see that in so many coaching evaluations I do in my community. They weren't committed.

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And there isn't a whole lot of learning that happens when your client just isn't committed. For you, there's not a lot of learning that happens. And oh my goodness, there is nothing that will turn the client off of the coaching industry forever than a coach who tells a client after they've received a coaching call that did not change their life by any means, that was laced with judgment and opinions about the client, that not buying that coaching means they truly aren't committed.

If you ever have people where you do a consult and the relationship is immediately over, it's probably how you showed up to it. If you take responsibility for every consult you do and every result on a consult, you will learn so much more. There's so much more for you in responsibility and making it all about what you did.

And this isn't about taking on other people's crap, let me just say and be clear. It's about taking responsibility even if you don't need to. Just because you can, just because there's more in it for you to do so. Never make the client not signing or not being coachable about them. Make it about you not being a great teacher.

There's such a difference when you say she wasn't coachable, she was a no for now, she was just in a lot of victim mentality, versus I wasn't able to coach her on where she was, I struggled to help her see where she could have had power. See the difference? One puts all the power in your client's hands, which also makes you believe the money is in their hands, which totally feels crappy.

No wonder you feel stressed and anxious about consults, which is what I see so much of. But if every time you see why you didn't sign the client, because of your inability to coach on a particular topic or a particular person and you go to work on that, you put that in your plan for what should I be working on, I don't know, maybe that, you will get dramatically better over time. Dramatically.

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This is what I did my entire first - still to this day it's what I do. But I really went hardcore my first year. It was just all about me and what can I get better in. So many coaches are spinning in what to do because they aren't taking the time to take responsibility and make a list of all the things they should be getting better on. They are spinning in time instead, complaining about the people they are attracting or lack thereof.

I'm not getting any consults, I'm not getting any clients, the people I'm getting don't have any money. Don't spend your time thinking about that. Spend your time on what you're doing wrong. And not in a bad way to make - again, to beat yourself up about it, as a way to evaluate and get better.

For me, it was abrasive women. That's what I would have called them. People with strong personalities. I struggled coaching them. I would shut down, I'd get all in my head, and then I'd blame them that they weren't coachable. But when I started working on this and bringing these types of scenarios to my coach, she would help me with how to coach on it better

And where my mindset was and the specific thoughts I was having when it happened, and I got better call after call. After a consult I would say you know, it went really great but I really struggled with bringing her out of her story, this is what she kept saying and this is where she was stuck, and she would just go down this rabbit hole and I couldn't bring her back and this is what I tried, this is how I tried to get her back.

And we would just coach on it. The very specific things like my fear of interrupting the client, my fear of cutting the client off, of directing the conversation, why I didn't want to direct it, how I could have redirected it, what I was going to say. All of that stuff, and I got better. A lot better. And it made me so much better at selling, which made me so much better at coaching. Coaching is selling, selling is coaching.

But no one gets better when it's your client's fault. Do you see that? Not you, not them, no one. I had another client once in my 200K mastermind

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and like, a couple of masterminds ago, that had a difficult client. That's what she called her and she came to the session wanting to fire her and asking how do you know when it's right to fire someone.

And so this is what would happen. I start investigating and she would be coaching her and her client would get super defensive. Basically, my client would see something in her business based on just the way my client was telling a story and information she was providing my client that directly correlated to her weight loss.

And my client would try to coach her on it. And then her client would tell her, I didn't hire you for business, I hired you for weight loss, I don't want to coach with you on business. And my client would react to her defensiveness. She would kind of make it something about her ego like when her client would tell her I didn't hire you for business and I don't want to coach with you on business, my client, her ego would be like, wait a minute, I'm the leader, I'm in charge, we do what I say.

She would coach the client on why it's directly correlated and tell her how the relationship was going to work and how she was going to coach on anything that she saw that was relevant. Just all about trying to take her ego back out of her need to be right. I could see where she was coming from.

The way she explained it made 100% sense. Basically she was saying like, as a coach I have to show up and coach my clients not on what they want but what I see, and that was the argument that she was presenting with me, but I could tell based on the way she was talking about it that it was coming from a place that wasn't clean and wasn't about love and wasn't without judgment.

She was focused more on being right. Now of course, she didn't see this. I had to show it to her. She saw it like it was the truth that the client was difficult. And what she really did and what I showed her, she gave her client all of her power and made it all her client's fault when in reality, she just

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didn't have a clean mind coaching her and didn't know how to coach her or what to do.

So I worked with her on getting her mind clean and releasing attachment and coaching her from a clean place. So she came to the call wanting to fire the client, if I remember correctly, the relationship got dramatically better afterwards when she stopped trying to control her client and stop judging her client and starting opening up to fine, who cares, so we don't coach her on business. It's fine, she's paying me, I'll coach her on her weight, I'll find another way to show it to her.

That's the way I think. If a client doesn't want to receive it the way that I show it to them, I'll just find another way. I was thinking about this. I had a retreat last year in Cabo San Lucas and I was explaining to the whole group the difference of creating based off of what you want to create versus what a client needs you to create.

And the way I was explaining it, two of my clients just weren't getting it. And instead of getting defensive and telling them I'm right and you need to listen, in more subtle words than that, instead of having that energy, I sat with it for an hour and I just kept thinking okay how else can I explain it? How else can I explain it?

And I kept thinking of different scenarios and different examples, and I kept coming up with different ways to coach it over and over and over for an hour straight and finally they got it. And they were like, oh I see what you say. That made me such a better coach than if I had gotten frustrated and had judgments and thoughts about them and how they weren't going to ever get it or how they weren't being coachable or how they weren't ready or committed or whatever it is.

It doesn't matter. It's like if I had a thought about it and gotten frustrated and made it about them and their unwillingness to learn it, I would have lost the opportunity to become a better coach. People are always asking me, when

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it is right to fire a client? When should you not offer coaching? When do you give up coaching someone?

And really like, the answer to me is always offer coaching, always coach the client. And if and when you do take full responsibility always, you will know what to do eventually when like, when is it not working for the client. You'll know the answer to that, but I don't think you're ready for that right away, to dismiss your own growth like that.

I want you to learn how to explain a concept or how to teach a client or get them through something 10 different ways, maybe 100 different ways. That's how you become a master at coaching. That is developing mastery is being able to pull a million tricks out of your bag and there never being a situation you can't coach someone on or through.

Coach the hard clients. They are your greatest teachers. They will make you more amazing as a coach and a salesperson than all the dream clients combined. Your business is built on growth, not ease. All the clients that were hard as hell for me, I look back and I know exactly why I had them because I wasn't good yet and they made me good.

Okay, now finally, here is what I'm not asking you to do. This is a super important distinction. I'm not asking you necessarily to coach difficult people for your growth. That's what you might have taken away from this message and I want to be super clear. If that's where you are, you've misunderstood me thus far.

Seeing people as difficult is the area you need growth in. If you know how to coach anyone on anything, there are no difficult clients. There are no difficult clients if you know how to coach anyone on anything. If you can coach them on their resistance to the coaching, there's no difficult clients.

If you can coach them on showing up on time, on paying on time, on not being distracted, if you can coach them in the moment on why they're being defensive in the moment, if you can coach them on only coming with

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amazing things and surface level stuff, if you can coach them on victim mentality, if you can coach them when they don't want to leave their pain.

If there's nothing you can't coach, there's no type of person you can't coach, then there are no such thing as difficult clients. Your perception of who a person is and how they are isn't the truth. You think it's true that they're difficult, but really, it's your judgment of them stemming from your own limited thinking.

When you work on your skill and your limited thinking, you release that there never was and never will be a difficult client. I remember this period of time for like, four months straight where I was complaining to the unit managers of our company and the CEO that I was in nothing but crappy stores. And really low income, nobody has any money, these are not the type of ideal clients, these people are not trying to buy kitchen slicers.

And I would complain and complain and I was so angry about it, just so annoyed, and I was like, I'm so tired of being in these crappy low-income stores. And then it occurred to me that the only reason I resist being in them is because I don't know how to sell in them. If I knew how to sell in them, they'd be just another store.

They'd be like my high-end fufu stores where I have to do a certain type of show, or they'd be like my country stores where I had to do a certain type of show or they'd be like my military bases where I had to do another completely different type of show. They would just be a different type of store. But if I knew how to sell, there'd be zero resistance because I'd just be like, another store to make money in.

What if every client was just another client to learn how to coach better? Every consult was just another opportunity for growth and another opportunity to coach? Like it just wasn't like there was no judgment whether they were - I think the judgment of dream clients is as harmful to you even as the difficult clients.

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It goes back to when I talked about false negatives and false positives, whenever you have a belief bias about your client, if they're your dream client you're going to pump them up all the time, and you're going to miss their stories and the tough coaching that you could give them because they're your favorite and you think they're amazing.

I had favorite clients when I was coaching one-on-one, people that I actually became friends with, but I had to make sure that I never slipped in my coaching with them. I had to make sure I was always super clear when we were being friends and when we were coaching. I had to make sure that I wasn't letting them off the hook because they were my "favorites" or my dream clients.

I sometimes coach them harder. But it's like the judgment of the dream client or the judgment of the difficult client, that creates a bias in your coaching that takes you away from your clean space to just think super clearly and deliver the highest possible coaching. And when you're not delivering the highest possible coaching, you're not going to get someone who receives the highest possible level of coaching and takes that in and responds to that.

This seriously will make you better than anything I've ever taught you probably. So get to it. Go to work. Notice when you're calling someone a difficult client or even a dream client for that matter. Notice all your judgments about your clients. Notice your thoughts about their capabilities and take that on and make that about your capabilities. It will change your life. Have an amazing week.

Hey, if you're 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 \$2,000 the hardest part using my simple 5 step formula for getting consults and closing new clients. Just head over to www.staceyboehman.com/2kfor2k. We'll see you inside.