



Episode 2 final

(0:04 - 0:21)

Welcome to Coaching with Confidence and Care podcast, inspired by common topics that arise in coach training, mentoring and supervision. If you are here, you may be on a quest to become the best coach you can be. You are not alone in this path.

(0:22 - 1:12)

In this podcast, I aim to spark meaningful self-reflection, share tips to help you craft impactful sessions, build your coaching practice with confidence, and discover the secret source to your coaching effectiveness – your unique coaching style, one that authentically reflects who you are and resonates deeply with those who coach. Ever found yourself swept away by your client's pessimistic outlook on their situation and unsure about how to shift their gloomy perspective? It's easy to get stuck in negativity, especially when a situation appears overwhelmingly complex. This may sometimes influence a coach's approach and leave the client feeling overwhelmed instead of relieved.

(1:12 - 1:37)

In this episode of Coaching with Confidence and Care, we'll explore how to balance addressing challenges with highlighting strengths and how your own self-awareness can be a game-changer in your coaching sessions. Hi, I'm Luba Diasamidze, the founder of UpThink Coaching. I'm an active coach trainer, mentor, and supervisor, and get to listen to dozens of coaching sessions each month.

(1:38 - 2:10)

This podcast is a result of my passion to guide coaches towards competence and confidence. In our coaching journey, we often encounter clients who are mired in self-doubt and negative thinking. How can we coach them when they only see the glass half empty and focus on the dark side of the situation? As a mentor coach, I sometimes notice that when a client comes with a strong negative bias, newer coaches may find that overwhelming.

(2:10 - 2:27)

They would be convinced by the dark picture that their client is painting and adopt this pessimistic mindset, focusing on challenges. All this could make a newer coach get stuck in a session. I believe there is a few things to address here.

(2:27 - 2:46)

Let's explore various aspects of such coaching scenarios. I hope one of them will resonate with you and will provide you with ideas about the possible course of action in similar situations. First thing to say here is what I always say.

(2:46 - 3:10)

Self-awareness is one of the key superpowers for coaches. Self-awareness is about maturity. A self-aware and a mature coach would notice their own thoughts and biases and will invite themselves to step out of that picture into an unbiased curious space, inviting the client to explore the situation from that vantage point.

(3:10 - 3:30)

If you catch yourself getting anxious about the situation your client presents, take a moment to return to that state of curiosity that will enable you to do your best work. Second point I want to make is about different types of motivation. Approach and avoidance.

(3:31 - 3:56)

Towards and away from motivation. This distinction aligns with the idea that human behavior is driven by both the pursuit of pleasure and the avoidance of pain, a notion that dates back to ancient Greek philosophers. It is always helpful to know your motivation type and notice and explore your client's motivation type which may be different from yours.

(3:57 - 4:21)

Which is our ally in coaching sessions? A positive motivation or a negative motivation? As coaches, many of us are taught to focus on the bright side. This has many benefits for clients. However, when this philosophy is overused, I sometimes notice coaches avoiding exploring the dark side which may also be beneficial to clients.

(4:21 - 4:43)

They think they may stir up a hornet's nest and provoke a situation that brings about intense and negative reactions which may cause clients anger or tears or create chaos in a coaching session. Don't be afraid of exploring challenges, fears and worst things that may happen. I may surprise you now.

(4:44 - 5:08)

While optimism has its well-documented benefits, pessimism can also be a powerful motivator for some people under the right circumstances. There are people who use negative thinking in some situations and turn it into a tool for achieving their goal. A term for such people is a defensive pessimist.

(5:08 - 5:45)

Once they've imagined the full range of bad outcomes, they start figuring out how they will handle them and that gives them a sense of control. So who exactly is a defensive pessimist? Julie Norum, a psychology researcher at Wellesley College, explains that in her book *The Positive Power of Negative Thinking*, she explains that defensive pessimists

prepare for anxiety-inducing events by setting low expectations for their success, regardless of past performance. We are not talking about a general disposition to see the glass half empty here.

(5:46 - 6:05)

Defensive pessimism is a strategic tool. It is used in specific situations to manage anxiety, fear and worry. By anticipating and planning for these possible setbacks, such people reduce anxiety, increase their chances of success and often perform better.

(6:05 - 6:20)

They may appreciate coaches' support in exploring all these factors. Now let's turn to the positive side. Though common wisdom suggests people should learn from failure, learning from failure may be hard.

(6:21 - 6:39)

Emotional and cognitive barriers can keep people from seeing the information in failure and learning from it. Emotionally, failure bruises the ego. When people feel down or threatened, they may tune out and miss the information that the failure offers to them.

(6:40 - 7:01)

There are some cognitive struggles as well. The information in failure is less direct than the information in success. In general, negative emotions are believed to be detrimental to the pursuit of achievement goals, investment of effort, cognitive processes such as attention and memory, motivation, self-regulation and self-efficacy.

(7:03 - 7:28)

Benefits of positive emotions are well researched. Positive psychology, founded by Martin Seligman, suggests that fostering positive traits and experiences leads to greater life satisfaction and resilience. By focusing on what clients do well and their inner strengths, coaches help them build a more positive self-concept and a stronger belief in their abilities.

(7:29 - 7:55)

By helping clients find positive aspects of their situations, coaches enable them to see more opportunities and solutions, enhancing their problem-solving abilities. To sum it up, as coaches, we really want our clients to think in opportunities. Does that mean that it's always best to focus on the positive and discard the negative? I invite you not to use this black and white thinking.

(7:56 - 8:11)

Good coaching is not done according to algorithms. You adapt to each client that you have. Respect their ways of thinking and motivating themselves and explore what can help them become more resourceful.

(8:11 - 8:17)

Here's how you can leverage your approach. Recognize individual differences. Every client is unique.

(8:18 - 8:34)

Some may naturally lean towards optimism, while others might be more pessimistic in some situations. Acknowledge and respect these tendencies. Do not be biased towards a specific motivation type based on your own preferences.

(8:35 - 8:44)

Be sensitive to your clients and observant. See what works for them. Pay attention to the energy in your session and where it flows.

(8:45 - 9:00)

If your client's story affects you emotionally, pause to regain your curiosity. Help clients to find a balance between optimistic goals and realistic planning. This balance can enhance their performance and reduce anxiety.

(9:00 - 9:24)

Don't be afraid of exploring the negative side, but do not get stuck in that. While it's essential to explore the darkest aspect to fully understand and address them, we must also ensure we are equally, if not more, focused on building the bright side. After exploring challenges, invite your client to pivot to strengths and opportunities, as much as they are comfortable doing so.

(9:25 - 10:59)

Ask your clients questions that help them explore their perspective, recognize their potential and resources, such as

- What narrative have you created about this situation, and how is it serving you?
- How does this challenge reflect your inner beliefs about yourself and your capabilities?
- Who are you when you're at your best, and how can you bring more of that into that situation?
- How would you like to show up differently in this situation, and what would that look like?
- How might you reframe this situation to see new possibilities and opportunities?
- What inner strengths and resources can you draw upon to navigate this challenge?

Encourage clients to connect with their goals not just intellectually, but emotionally. You can ask questions like

- When you think about achieving this goal, what emotions arise for you?
- What makes this goal deeply meaningful and important to you on an emotional level?
- What personal experiences or moments have fueled your passion for this goal?
- Have clients reflect on their learnings and affirm their belief in their ability to achieve their goals and feel in control.

To recap, whether your clients are optimists or defensive pessimists, the key is helping them harness their natural tendencies in a way that propels them forward.

(11:00 - 11:21)

Defensive pessimism is just one strategy among many, but it can be a powerful tool in turning anxiety into achievement. Do not avoid addressing the darker aspects if that helps

your client to feel in control. And remember to build on the bright side, as it is crucial for fostering hope and motivation in our clients.

(11:21 - 11:37)

This involves identifying strengths, uncovering potential, and connecting with their inner resources. I'd love to hear how you balance exploring challenges with highlighting opportunities in your sessions. If you feel like sharing, hit me up on LinkedIn.

(11:38 - 12:13)

Connect with me on LinkedIn and send in your questions or topics you'd like covered in future episodes. If you look for ongoing professional development as a coach, go to Upthink Coaching website to explore our advanced coach training program as well as mentor coaching and supervision

www.upthinkcoaching.com

Next week, we'll talk about some strategies you could use when a client brings a coaching topic that looks quite complex and probably cannot be resolved in one session. Don't miss it! Thanks for listening to this episode.

(12:13 - 12:28)

If this is something that you think is relevant to coaches like you, please share on your social media and feel free to tag me on LinkedIn. Remember, every step you take as a coach contributes to a greater impact. Catch you in the next episode.

<https://www.linkedin.com/in/luba-diasamidze/>