



THE TOP THREE THINGS I WISH I HAD KNOWN BEFORE BECOMING A COACH

KARA LOEWENTHEIL, J.D.
MASTER CERTIFIED COACH

THE TOP THREE THINGS I WISH I HAD KNOWN BEFORE BECOMING A COACH

Prefer audio? Click [here](#) to listen to me read this guide.

In March 2015, I walked into a conference room at a nondescript Holiday Inn in a strip mall near El Dorado Hills, California. I was there for the first day of my life coach certification program, and I had absolutely no idea what was about to happen to me.

I signed up for that certification program with zero idea of what it was like to become a life coach, or what it would take to be successful. I was a feminist legal academic, on track to get a law professor position the following fall. I had spent a decade and hundreds of thousands of dollars on my education and legal career, and I was considering “throwing that all away” (as my grandmother said) to become a life coach.

I didn’t know what would happen if I took this leap, which truth to tell still terrified me, even after I signed up for certification and showed up in El Dorado Hills.

But what I did know was that the skills I had learned working with coaches and learning how to coach myself had changed my fucking life.

And I wanted other women to experience the same freedom, power, and possibility that I now felt about areas where I had been stuck for years. It was unacceptable to me that these tools that had changed my life were out there in the world, but that the vast majority of women had never even heard of them!

I felt like I didn’t know anything about starting a business, but I did know that coaching worked, and that so many women needed it but had no idea it existed.

The next couple of years were an incredibly steep learning curve. It was exhilarating and terrifying and soul-expanding.

As I write this now, I’m a decade into this second career of mine. I have 7 full-time employees who work for me on my team, I have published a New York Times-bestselling book, I’ve coached thousands of women, and I’ve created \$25,000,000 in my coaching business (nope, that’s not a typo!).

I’ve learned a LOT and now I want to share the top three things I wish I had known when I started out with you, so that you can skip some of those early stumbles, fumbles, and flails and hit the ground running for the most exciting adventure you’ll ever have: becoming a coach.

#1 Becoming a coach is going to bring up ALL OF YOUR SHIT. And that's a good thing.

I signed up for my coach certification because I had experienced how powerfully coaching changed my life. So when I started, I was feeling pretty good about all the work I had done. I felt like I'd cleaned up a lot in my brain and in my life. I felt like a bad-ass, at least compared to most people I knew who didn't do any thought work.

But my coach training exposed so much MORE work that I had to do.

I second-guessed my decision to invest money in the certification.

I worried about what my teacher thought of my coaching.

I compared myself to other people at the training who seemed better at coaching than I was.

I dreaded telling my colleagues and relatives about my new life plan.

At the time I felt ashamed, like this meant I hadn't really made as much progress as I had thought before I started my training.

Worse, I compared myself to everyone else — every time I saw a successful coach I made that mean that the market was already full and there was no place for me.

(Which of course was actually the *opposite* of what was true, which was that every successful coach out there was proof that it was possible for me. Even today, life coaches only make up about 0.0015% of the adult US population, which means there are 8,000 American adults for every one American life coach, before we even think about the international population!)

It was exhausting thinking this way.

But what I know now, ten years on, is that this is also COMPLETELY NORMAL. The entire process of becoming a coach is *designed* to bring up all your shit!

Everything from

... the fear about signing up for a certification in the first place ...

... to the imposter syndrome that comes up when you coach in front of someone else for the first time ...

... to the worries about what other people will think of you for making this career switch ...

It's all part of what makes you into a successful coach.

Because becoming a successful coach requires skills like:

- being brave even when you're scared
- overruling your brain when it wants to stay small and hide
- being willing to financially invest in your own training, business, and resources
- holding space for clients even when you have a lot going on
- believing in your own mission more than you care what others think

You can't wait to just learn these skills *after* you're a coach.

You actually are meant to develop them in the process of *becoming* a coach.

So if you feel anxious or scared about becoming a coach, if you worry about whether you will fail or what other people will think, if your brain tries to dismiss it as a fantasy ...

That all means you're on the right track.

Those are actually signs to keep going.

I truly believe that no one is called to become a coach who isn't capable of becoming a successful coach. But so many people give up on the dream because they think their fears *mean* something.

Thankfully I didn't give up. And I don't want you to give up either!

The best way to ensure you don't give up is to be prepared and ready for all your fears to come up ... and to recognize them as a sign to keep moving forward anyway.

#2 You are going to fail way more than you succeed, especially at first — and that’s actually how you create success long-term.

Before I became a coach I was a lawyer — and not just any kind of lawyer, but a constitutional litigator, and then a legal academic.

In other words, I was the Queen of Perfectionism.

Importantly, if you had asked me I would have said that I understood you couldn’t be perfect and succeed at everything right away, failure is a normal part of life, blah blah blah.

But I did not BELIEVE that for MYSELF for a second.

I may have come out of the womb with perfectionist tendencies, but I was also trained by my legal education and my professional experiences (and by growing up a woman in a sexist society!) to believe that perfection was the only way to prove I was smart and qualified.

No surprise then that I regarded failure — especially public failure — as worse than death.

So when I learned how to coach myself, I prided myself on doing it “right.” And when I trained as a coach, that was my expectation for myself too. I needed to get it “right” — which meant my clients needed to like me, agree with me, and think I was a genius who had changed their lives in every session.

Not only that, but I needed to somehow execute the perfect launch of a brand new business despite having no experience in business of any kind, and I needed to never ever fail at any of it or I would die of humiliation.

Can you guess how this turned out?

I was paralyzed. I couldn’t do anything. I couldn’t coach. I couldn’t post on social media. I couldn’t write a blog. I couldn’t start my podcast. I could barely tell anyone what I did, much less make an offer to work with me. It took me forever to take any steps in starting to coach clients or build my business, because I was so afraid of failure.

Thankfully with enough coaching and self-coaching, I was able to get started, and to build my tolerance for failure in real time. I was able to start coaching people, even though I wasn’t great at it right away. I was able to start talking about what I did in public, even if I felt flustered. I was able to put myself out there, even though I hated the feeling of rejection. I did figure it out, bit by bit.

But if I could go back, I'd save myself SO much suffering and so much wasted time just by giving myself more realistic expectations. Having a business is MOSTLY about failing. You try 10 things, nine of them fail, but one works — and that's all you need.

Understanding this ratio gives you such a head start in becoming a successful coach. If you're willing to fail nine times in order to succeed once, you're going to get going sooner, make progress faster, and succeed earlier than someone who won't try until they feel sure they can do it perfectly.

#3 Your confidence as a coach matters more than having perfect coaching skills.

Ok, wait, what? Am I telling you that whether you have the skills and tools to coach effectively doesn't matter?!

No, definitely not. In fact, I run a coaching certification once a year and I pride myself on the fact that it was designed not only with my best-in-class coaching tools but with the input of a consultant who has a Ph.D. in behavioral change.

The tools and skills you are trained on make a HUGE difference in how effective your coaching is, and too many coaching certifications out there are just based on one person's anecdotal experience or, maybe worse, whatever curriculum ChatGPT spit out for them.

But here's the thing.

When you are not confident in your coaching, it doesn't matter how many tools you know or how good they are.

Because if you are not confident in your coaching, you will be all up in your head worrying about whether you're doing a good job, what your client thinks about you, whether they like you, and whether it's "working."

You'll be hyper-vigilant for anything your brain can distort to tell you that you're doing a bad job, aren't qualified, and can't help anyone.

And when we are thinking about ourselves and our own imposter syndrome, you know what we're not doing?

We're not thinking about other people. We're not listening carefully. We're not attentive to body language. We're not holding open safe energy for them. We're up in our own heads.

ASK ME HOW I KNOW. 😊

When I started coaching, this defined me to a T. I came from an educational background in which criticism was a virtue, and I could always find ways to do better and be better and perform better. So it was confusing when I tried to apply my critical skills to my own coaching and actually just got more nervous, more tongue-tied, and more afraid to coach boldly and strongly.

At this point, I'm an incredible coach. World class. But when I started? I was a beginner. And I made lots of beginner mistakes.

And yet, I was still able to help people change their lives.

Because it turned out that I didn't have to be an expert or perfect to help them. I just had to know a bit more than they did about how the brain worked, and be willing to show up curious, compassionate, and focused on them.

I didn't figure out how to do that until I realized that I had to *start* with the belief that I knew what I was doing before I would be able to actually feel calm enough to improve. I worked on feeling confident in my coaching, and that's what allowed me to become better and better at my skills.

So believe me when I say that your confidence matters just as much or not more than your tools.

Because when you feel confident in your coaching, you're able to focus on your client.

And it's a lot easier to feel confident in your coaching when you understand that you don't have to be light-years beyond your client to help them. You just need to be a little further down the path.

Plus, paradoxically, the more confident you are in your coaching, the better you get at it. Because you're able to take feedback on board, you're able to pivot and adapt if what you are saying doesn't land, and you are able to see opportunities for improvement without shame. (When people are arrogant or condescending, it's not because they are too confident — it's actually because they are insecure, and unfortunately that happens with coaches just like anyone else!)

I have coached so many new coaches, and without fail their biggest problem is that the certification they went through gave them tools to use with their clients *but did not give them tools to use with themselves*. So they don't know how to center themselves before a session, they don't know how to show up clearly and focus while coaching, and they don't know how to manage their minds afterwards.

That's why when I train coaches, whether they are brand new or have already been coaching for years, I focus not only on the tools they need to create incredible transformations for their clients — I focus on the tools they need to create incredible confidence for themselves. Because the more confident the coach is — truly confident, centered, and clear — the better the coach they become.

Bottom line: Yes, you should attend a high-quality certification program. It does matter where you get trained!

But what matters even more is feeling confident in your coaching — so you can actually show up, coach, and help people change their lives. It's the best job in the world.



Want to make sure you find out when I open up the next round of my coaching program for enrollment?

Click here to put your name on the early bird waitlist for first dibs and the best early-bird bonuses!