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**Host:** Robyn Logan and Andrea Lee  
**Topic:** CoachStreet #9 – Managing a Business and Coaching

## Welcome

Welcome to CoachStreet, the premium podcast that brings you insider coaching conversations in the fast lane. When coaches need to shift gears, they come to the CoachStreet podcast. Grab a coffee and buckle your seat belts as hosts Andrea Lee, from the Wealthy Thought Leader and Robyn Logan from Coach Campus, learn what drives the world's most successful coaches.

### INTRODUCTION

Hi everyone and welcome to CoachStreet, Episode 9. I'm Robyn Logan, here with my co-host Andrea Lee. We're bringing you a fantastic episode this week on managing business and coaching. Andrea, how are you?

**Andrea:** I'm terrific. I'm thrilled for this episode.

**Robyn:** We could all use it, running a business and being coaches at the same time. Listeners, just so you know, this is actually why we chose this topic. Just before this call Andrea and I were having a little de-brief on the challenges we've had being a coach and running a business.

### Managing Without Losing the Coach Approach

I'll just jump in and start with where I see the challenges and then we can move into some of the experiences you've had recently. My experience is, as a coach, coaching is all about empowering people, being positive, having people be self-directed in their learning, having people take responsibility for their own outcomes, client-focused, etc.

What I've noticed in my own personal experience in running a business is that my tendency is to manage with that approach. I don't like to be the person who is the leader, demanding results and not allowing people to do their own thing.

Even, for example, in the way our company is structured in work time, it's not a 9-to-5 company. We find a lot of staff, when they first start with us, have a challenge with that. They keep wanting to clock on a 9 o'clock and tell me they're here and tell me, "I'm just going down the street for half an hour."

It takes a while to train people into the idea that I don't really care—well, I do. We have a group chat going all day on Skype and if you're on green then you're at work. If you're not on green you're not at work. What I care about is the result at the end of the month. But it's a very flexible, fluid arrangement. My challenge has been how to manage without losing that sort of coach approach. It's a very, very fine line to walk, I think.

So that's where I'm coming from with this topic. What about you, Andrea?

**Andrea:** It's similar. I think in a coaching environment, when you are a coach, the dynamic is very clear. The client is the boss; you are the guide. When you use a coaching approach in running your business it can be a little blurry, like you are no longer letting somebody else be the boss. Your employees, your contractors, your team, they're not the boss of you. They don't get to dictate the agenda like your coaching clients do.

So because of that it can be a slippery slope for us who love to use the coaching approach. We can forget sometimes that a coaching approach still means that as a boss you have the authority and that you need to hang onto your authority and do so in a good style. You don't want to be a bully. You need to know who is the boss.

**Robyn:** You're not the boss of me now.

**Andrea:** [sings] *You're not the boss of me now.*

**Robyn:** They have that show on television. I've run into the room and started singing, "I am the boss of you now." Maybe that should be the induction for every new staff member. Sing that song, "I am the boss of you now."

How to have that authority without being a mean, horrible boss? How to be the boss of people but also have them empowered is the tricky thing.

**Andrea:** It is tricky, isn't it? I think some of the distinctions are our skills and tools in coaching that are 100% transferrable, like good listening or asking great questions or communicating clearly and cleanly. Those are straight-on great coaching skills and they're 100% transferrable to managing.

Then there are other skills that are more coach-like or there are other requirements of the management position that cannot be 100% fulfilled through a coaching approach, such as disciplining. Saying, "I asked for X and you didn't deliver X and now there's a consequence." That's a management skill, not a coaching skill.

**Robyn:** So there are two things. One is the coaching skills that would work well for managing. The manager as coach approach, if you like. Management is normally seen as being about telling, directing, this is the outcome I want, this is how you do it. Coaching has more of a reputation of being more facilitating, a partnership, etc.

But those are the skills that can be transferred. It can be collaborative. It can be using powerful questions rather than just telling. You can use all those things in managing but I think you need a clear framework. That's what I've discovered, anyway. It's the management framework which is the things you're talking about.

It's really accountability. Setting up some sort of accountability structure for actions and outcomes, which I guess is part of coaching, too, isn't it? Let me give you an example. Here's one way that I do it. One of my pet hates in business is being asked for feedback and then not having that feedback used.

I'm really careful not to be collaborative and consultative if I already know what I want. There's no point in asking everyone and doing a big strategic planning session when I already know what I want. That's the first thing. I don't do that.

What I tend to do is if I already know what I want, I put that out there. I always like to start with putting out some sort of vision, some sort of

leadership or direction for the company, and then I ask for consultation/feedback on that direction. Then people do get to feel ownership over it. It can change if some great ideas come up; then we change it. But it's really clear though that the organization is run by me, not through a client-directed or staff-directed approach.

The second thing is to try and break that up. You can use all sorts of things—words, strategies, goals, targets, outcomes. Just chunk it into really distinct projects with outcomes and then put as much effort as possible into communicating exactly what the end product would look like and being really clear on that.

Make sure the team is really clear on that. The clearer they are, the more able you are to then let everybody go and have more of a coach approach and then setting the accountability structure for reporting or deadlines or things like that. So that's one way I do it.

**Andrea:** That's such a gem. I hope everybody's really soaking it in. I think one of the things I'd love to list out a bit more is the timing of it. You might think that as a new coach and a newer entrepreneur, *I have my opinion but I'll let everybody else go first.*

From a management perspective that's actually really terrible. If you let everybody else go first and then you actually have an agenda and you come behind them and say, "Well, that's nice guys but this is actually how it's going to go," then all of a sudden...

**Robyn:** It's so disempowering, isn't it? I've had it happen to me and I hate it.

**Andrea:** Why did you ask my opinion if you already knew? So the timing of it, not being as consultative but also stepping out in leadership and putting out the vision first. That's just a key step.

**Robyn:** I think accountability is something I struggle with because I understand when deadlines are not met, which is sort of a strength and a weakness. You don't want to be one of those people that are just absolutely so fixed on a certain deadline and the outcomes for that deadline that you can't see something that might change in the environment.

In fact, I read a great book on holiday. I just had the most beautiful holiday in Bali where I did nothing but read and swim. I read this great book, *Insanely Simple: The Obsession That Drives Apple's Success*, about Steve Jobs and Apple.

What was really interesting was that I read the Steve Jobs biography last year when it came out and I got about halfway through it and I had to put it down because I just couldn't stand to be in that man's headspace for one more minute.

He was just horrible. In this bio he was portrayed as this tyrant who would just walk into meetings after people had spent months preparing documents and plans and then he'd just scrap it and say, "We're not doing that. It's hopeless." He'd have people in tears, all sorts of things, right? He was portrayed as this creative genius.

*Insanely Simple* is written by Ken Segall, who worked with him. It's a completely different perspective and a very interesting one. It's a great read and it really shows a style of management that I think could be a bit softer. I think Steve Jobs could have had a bit more of a coach approach.

What he wasn't afraid of was plans that change. It was completely okay at any point for anyone to walk in—they might be working on an ad campaign that had been completely locked down but they could walk in and say, "I had an idea last night. I really think it should go in this direction." And he was completely fine with doing that.

That doesn't often happen when people get over-invested in the accountability structures, like big companies where they put the plan in place and it's all on paper. You've got your goals, your strategies, your outcomes, targets. Then it goes to all the stakeholders and everybody agrees with it. Then it comes back and goes up to the next level of management and that gets endorsed.

Then that becomes "The Plan." You can't change The Plan. I try and walk that line between being flexible and being able to about-face and completely lose a month's work if we all think that's a good idea but at the same time not be doing that all the time. I don't know about you but I find that such a challenge and I always have to watch about being over-complex and letting complexity come in.

There are great stories in there like a piece about Final Cut Pro video editing software that Apple bought from another company to add to their software which normally filmmakers will pay \$20,000 just for that. They went through this whole process of designing two boxes and two brand names.

Jobs came into the meeting and said, “Get it, put it in that box there. We’re selling it like that. One box. Just give it to them because it’s cheaper and easier to just give it to them and have one product to sell rather than having to do the marketing and advertising and stock-keeping of two products.”

### **Managing is Quicker Than Coaching**

**Andrea:** I love it. I have another thought about managing versus coaching. You have a team of how many people there now and I’m running a team of three or four and several subcontractors and such. Managing is quicker. Coaching takes longer. You might, in certain circumstances, be able to get clearer desired results by doing a performance review or add responsibilities to a person’s plate.

You can get there through coaching but managing being much more black-and-white and directive, it’s almost like managing is like a list of bullet points and coaching is like an essay.

That’s one of those things that as an entrepreneur, as you seek to grow your coaching business, especially when you start getting into some good income, up to six figures, your time is at such a premium you’re not going to want to always have to coach someone around everything.

**Robyn:** Absolutely. And particularly coaches that are growing businesses and employing those first few people, like someone to do their website or somebody to be a VA, you do want to have a great relationship. You do need to connect with that person on a human level but really, I agree. It does take a long time.

It’s different, too, because when you’re coaching a client it’s okay for it to take a long time because it’s better for it to take longer and to come from the client. Then they will own it and it will actually happen rather than happen quickly and the client really isn’t onboard. It’s a different paradigm. In the management paradigm you are wanting to get things done as quickly as possible. You don’t have to be Steve Jobs, horrible.

I think something you said before we started recording about being a clear communicator is a really key piece of the puzzle, particularly at the beginning of any relationship. Really being able to communicate clearly what your expectations are and probably in writing is a good idea.

## **The Role of Manager Versus Coach**

**Andrea:** It's curious because I know some of our listeners may be more veteran coaches. I know I suffer from this, where coaching has started to really integrate with your identity. It's not so much that you're a "Coach" but the way you are, the coaching personality.

Managing, on the other hand, there really are some kinds of managing personalities but what I think helps me most is to remember that being the manager/boss is a job. It's a role, whereas being coach-like can be part of my personality.

The difference helps me because if I'm having to have a tough conversation as a boss then I can be that tough boss when I need to but it doesn't mean that I am that person. Yet I can still be that coach-like person.

**Robyn:** Yes, I cherish that part of my identity. I'd like to highlight that there is a role for coaching in organizations, as well, with staff. There are in-house coach programs, particularly in companies.

Another key difference is that the power relationship between a manager and a staff member is always there. You're employing that person and no matter how friendly and coach-like you appear to be, you can always let them go the next day for whatever reason. So there's a power dynamic there. That's not a coaching relationship.

A good coaching relationship is objective and with no vested interest. Your coach should not have a vested interest whereas with a manager you've totally got a vested interest. You really want that person to perform to their peak, not just for them but because it's got the better outcome for your business. So I think just being clear on the differences there is important.

Coaching is also fantastic for staff to have but probably best done by a different person.

**Andrea:** I think a good question to address here--as we wrap up and do some *Spot the Coaching* because that's our favorite way to end it here—is when do you know when you should manage and when you should coach? Like if you have just one virtual assistant and you're saying, "Okay, I get the differences from this podcast but when do you know?"

It's interesting because there are varying ways you can approach this. My opinion is that it's good to start from the more disciplinary or authoritarian role and soften from there. My husband used to be a substitute teacher and it was always like when you're a substitute teacher you go in with a bit stick and then you can crack a joke later. You do not play and crack a joke at the beginning of a class or it's all over.

So be a manager first, appropriately within your business, in the role where you are, in fact, the manager. Then as the relationship develops and different interactions occur then you can be more coach-like.

**Robyn:** I like that, too. I use that approach as well but I'm just wondering—with your dog, is that how you did it? Because I find with dogs and children it's a great way to practice your management skills and practice being, "Okay, I'm going to set some clear boundaries here." Then once they learn those, then it's okay to come in through the dog door if you like or whatever.

**Andrea:** You are so right. Everyone gets to practice. Maybe we'll do a *Spot the Coaching* in the future around trying to coach our dogs to do things.

**Robyn:** When we watch our trainer train our dog she is unbelievable. I just watch her in awe of her very clear boundaries and very—I guess you'd call her a benevolent dictator in her style of management. I said to her, "Listen, can you come back and do my kids?" She's great.

**Andrea:** I bet she hears that a lot, actually.

## **SPOT THE COACHING**

**Robyn:** This is about when we were returning—Australians will know this—but most of the flights out of Bali into Australia were midnight flights. Well, they used to be midnights but people got confused about midday and midnight so they made them 11 p.m. It was painful. A lot of people with young children are flying back at that time.



We got to the airport and our kids are pretty tired. My daughter, Tilda, went to sleep, which is fine. We'd just wake her up in a few minutes. But then what happened is they delayed the flight to 12:30 or 1 o'clock in the morning.

By that stage she'd had two or three hours sleep. There's a particular thing about Tilda. Ever since she was little, if you wake her up from a deep sleep she just goes nuts. It's some state of where she's not really awake. She'll scream and kick and it's very difficult. We were like, "Oh, what are we going to do when it comes time to board?"

Then it got worse. They announced the boarding gate and they had changed it to the gate at the furthest end of the airport. So we're getting our bags and thinking, 'We can wake Ryder up. He can drag a bag half-asleep but what are we going to do with Tilda?'

We both noticed this like kitchen trolley outside the kitchen that you put all the drinks on and move them off. So I said, "I'm going to get that trolley." Very purposefully I walked over like I was meant to get it and pulled it back.

It didn't work. Within two minutes I got a tap on the shoulder and it was a guy from the kitchen. He was like, "Oh ma'am, I'm sorry. You cannot have the trolley."

So then I was really grumpy—it was one in the morning. I started to argue but then I went, "Just hang on a minute."

What I needed to do here was work out what's really going on for him. This was where the coaching bit comes in. I jumped below the surface conversation and started to ask him questions. From that I worked out that his main concern wasn't about breaking the law or keeping an eye on trolleys or safety or anything.

His main concern was that if he didn't get that trolley back to the kitchen he would get the sack. So once I worked that out I changed the conversation. I went, "Okay. I 100% promise I'll bring this trolley back. In fact, you can come with us." He was so happy with that that he said, "Oh, I'll help, I'll help."

He took the trolley from me and wheeled her. It was quite good because it was one of those where the legs are really weird. It's not meant to have

sleeping children on it. So him doing it was 100 times better. He wheeled it the whole way. And not only that, but when we got there at that stage we were such good friends, chatting all the way down the airport, when we got there he ran into his friends at Garuda and grabbed a wheelchair for us.

We transported her to the wheelchair. Then when we approached the gate, because she was in a wheelchair—this was a little bit funny, actually—they pulled us through to the front of the line. I was trying to tell them she could walk but they said, “No, no, wheelchair, wheelchair.” So we all got to board first.

Actually, that was a little bit embarrassing. I was like, “What are we going to do in the morning when she jumps up and all of a sudden she can walk?” Anyway, we decided just to run with it. In the morning we just went, “It’s a miracle.”

**Andrea:** See, it is a miracle because it was a coaching approach that led to this beautiful, smooth boarding. What a great example of coaching happening in real life, out in the wild, when we don’t even notice.

**Robyn:** *CoachStreet*. I’m going to put the picture up with this episode so people can see. There’s a photo of her on the trolley.

So that’s a wrap for another episode. This was Episode 9. We’re coming up for Episode 10 with another juicy topic. We don’t even know what it is yet, do we?

**Andrea:** Very exciting. You never know what’s going to happen on *CoachStreet*.

**Robyn:** We’ll see you next time.

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