



Coach Approach Ministries Podcast

Episode 34: Why is it So Hard to Talk About Money?

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[Intro Music]

Brian Miller: Hey this is Brian Miller with Coach Approach Ministries, joined here by Bill Copper and Chad Hall. We are the leadership team of Coach Approach Ministries, and this is our QA podcast. Guys, the question has come to us, it's not so much a question as a statement that I want us to get some response on. I feel awkward when talking about money in the coaching, and I know that's been true for me. It might be the number one obstacle for me, is figuring out how to be comfortable talking about money. If you guys were to give a couple ideas to help us understand this, what would you say?

Bill Copper: I'm glad you brought that one up. That's one we hear a lot.

Chad Hall: Almost every class I teach, somebody brings this up. It's certainly a good one to talk about. Bill, you want to take the first stab, and I'm sure I'll have something to add.

Bill: A couple issues I typically raise. The first is that in talking about money with our coaching clients, this is not a time to coach. This is a time when they're looking for some direction, and we need to be confident in expressing how much we charge, what the terms are, how we're going to be paid, all of those things. This is an area that if we are uncertain, it's going to cause some uncertainty for our clients, so we've got to be comfortable with what we charge. We've got to be comfortable talking about it. This is one of those areas that I recommend people practice actually speaking the words out loud to a friend, or a colleague, or a partner until they get comfortable saying it because you've got to have some confidence here to make sure your clients have confidence in you. I think the other thing, principle wise, that I would say about this is that as we talk about money, the benefactor in us determining a fair exchange for our services is not just us.

We're not the only ones who benefit from having a fair exchange in payment for our services. Our clients benefit as well. Chad and I, and Brian, I know you have too, have opportunity at times to coach people who pay us directly. They personally write a check to us for our coaching services, and those folks come to the conversation ready. They're prepared, they're ready, they get maximum value from the coaching session. Others come to us because, perhaps their organization has paid for the coaching. They typically come ready as well because they know they're part of an organization that has paid for the coaching, but you can see a slight difference in their preparation and their expectations oftentimes for the coaching. We'll have others for whom the coaching's been paid by a third party that they're

probably unrelated to the client, maybe a grant organization. For whatever reason, the client is disconnected from the payment altogether, and they're much more likely to show up and not know what they want to talk about, to not follow up on their commitments, and they're much more likely to end the coaching relationship early by just bowing out and not completing it, and on the other end of the spectrum, we have people that we just don't charge. For whatever reason, we give free coaching to people, and they get the least out of it.

They oftentimes will not show up because something comes up. They're the least likely to show up ready and take big steps forward, and you might think the opposite would be true, that they would appreciate the fact that you're giving coaching to them, but the truth is, we value what has cost us something, so when we're talking to people about cost, and coaching, and charging them for coaching, we're not doing so just for our benefit. We're doing it also because the client's going to benefit because what costs them something, they're going to value, and they're going to get more out of it.

Brian: The only thing I might piggy back on that is that there are, for me at least, one or two folks, that I could do the coaching for free, and they'd get as much out of it as if they'd paid a thousand dollars. There's a few, but in general...

Bill: Yeah, I don't discount that.

Brian: But in general, free equates exactly to what you were saying. Chad, what would you add to that.

Chad: I'd say, if your mindset going into talking about money is how can I talk about this in a way that I can get the person convinced to give me money for the coaching that I'm going to provide, you're going to screw it up, and if your mindset instead is, this is an honest conversation, and we can talk about it, and gosh, we might find that this is not a good fit because of the money, and that's going to be okay, then you're going to nail it. It's going to be great. What I've found that gets in our way is we think, "I have to control this.

If I say it the wrong way, if it's too high, if it's too low, or if I put it in US dollars and it should have been in Japanese yen, or whatever, I'm going to mess this up, and they're not going to hire me." You're probably going to mess it up, and they're not going to hire you, but if you go in thinking, "This is just part of the logistics. This is on the same level as what number will you dial to reach me?" You don't have to control is so much. I just find that I talk about it much more smoothly, and that doesn't mean I talk about it so smoothly that people sign up. No, it just means it's not awkward. I think we've got to separate that those are two really different things. Not being awkward, not felling awkward is good. We should go for that. We don't do that just so people will hire us. They're going to hire us, or they're not going to hire us, and we can't necessarily control that.

Brian: I think that's exactly right. I think there's something in our head that says, "They'll go with us if we've got the price right," and that's not true. That's not true. So, I like when you said, "The same as the phone number." It's just a number, and for me, I can just say, out of the times, and there's been many of them early, that I try to immediately say the price is negotiable, was almost always a fail. Almost always a fail. I felt bad. They felt bad. So now, I use the hold my breath method which means that I say the price of my coaching per session, and then I immediately try to hold my breath so that I don't speak anymore, and I've found it goes fine.

Chad: That could keep you from saying, “If that’s okay with you.”

Brian: I definitely had ones very specific where I was trying to get a pastor to commit to it. He was interested. I told him my price, and I immediately said, “But I can do it cheaper,” and he immediately said, “I don’t want it then,” and he meant it. That was a sign of weakness for him. It’s not for everybody, but exactly right. What’s your number? Say your number, and be done. I did get to a point where I got my rate too high, and I knew it was too high because I stopped selling. It was that simple. So, then it’s too high, so then I backed it down a little bit, and then it started working again.

Chad; Go ahead, Bill.

Bill: I was just going to say, I think another dynamic here is, you have to believe that it’s worth it. So, if you go into it awkwardly, talking about it awkwardly, if you go into it doubting that the price is too high, or whatever, that is a signal that you’re really not going to bring that kind of value. I think that’s my biggest encouragement to everybody as they’re thinking about their price is to realize, you’re bringing an enormous value to the conversation, to the relationship, and don’t be shy about setting up an actual dollar amount to that value.

Brian: How would you finish it, Chad?

Chad: Yeah. A couple of other things. One thing that’s helped me is to have a backup plan if it is too high, and my backup plan is I’ll make a referral, and I know other coaches. They charge less. If the client says, “Gosh, that’s more than I can afford.” Again, to avoid the awkwardness and to create value for the potential client, whoever they coach with, I just kind of have this presence of saying, “It’s okay.” If I give my number, and the person says, “Ah. That’s really more than I can afford,” I say, “You know what? That’s okay. I’ve got some trusted colleagues. Honestly, I think they’re just as good a coach as I am, they just happen to charge less,” and I’m giving them names of three of them, and talk to them, and they will do a great job for you. It allows me to serve the person without having to do it at a rate that I’m not comfortable providing them coaching for.

The other thing that I do is I bring up the topic of the money. So, when we’re talking about the coaching, and how’s this work, and everything like this, if we go very long into that conversation, and they haven’t asked about the rate, I’ll say, “You know, a question you should be asking right now is, ‘How much does this cost?’ So, let’s talk about that for a minute.” That allows it to be just a part of the conversation. It’s kind of getting back to what Bill said which is you’re kind of making it safe for them. You’re showing that you’ve done this before. You’re confident in it. You’re sending the sign, “It’s okay.” So, I like to do that. I like to just bring up the topic, and talk about it, and it’s just something else to talk about. It’s part of the logistics, and not take it personally if they try not to go with me. I really believe God has a coach for every person.

Brian: I just think we feel rejected if they don’t go with us. We feel...Yeah. They feel rejected. What if I took my car in to get my oil changed, and they said, “It’s \$35.99,” and I’m like, “Ah. I really don’t want to pay that much,” and they’re walking around going, “That hurts. I can’t believe we lost that guy. I really wanted to change his oil.” I just think it’s a funny picture. I think we as coaches can take it real personal.

Chad: One way I'm taking it personally is we would say, "Oh. I'm rejected. I'm no good. It hurts so bad." The other is, we might walk into salesman mode. "Don't walk away. You really do want this, it's really worth it, and I'm going to convince you," and I just think neither one of those is one, very Christ like, and two, this isn't very effective as coaches. Who wants to go around either being a slick salesman or a wounded dog?

Bill: Brian, I think what Chad said earlier, I hope folks will pay attention to that. That third way that he described which is, "Oh, that's okay. I can still help you by helping you find another coach." Make that okay. Make that acceptable. That doesn't make it feel like they're compromising. So, to prepare for that, find some other coaches, get a relationship, be a network with other coaches. You've got a whole community here of coaches, and know what their rates are, and how they coach, and get familiar with them so that if you're in a conversation like this, and somebody says, "I just can't get those rates," have the names of some people, and say, "I can certainly recommend some others to you. I think they can do a great job for you. I know their rates are not quite as high, so let me put you in touch with them." Then, you're not the wounded dog. You're also not the slick salesman, but you're somebody who's still serving this client. So, prepare for that by making some connections.

Brian: And then you also just prepared somebody who might say, "Wow, you need a little better coach than me, and I know who to call," and they're going to call you because you referred people to them. This may be a little out of their league, they know who to call. They can call you. I think that's a great piece. So, give them two or three names of people, coaches, who are just as good as you but charge a little less, and then, just for fun, Chad, make sure you give them one name of a coach who charges a lot more and isn't half as good as you.

Chad: That's right, and how would they know that?

Brian: I tell them. I just tell them.

Chad: I also give some other options, by the way, and it helps me to have already thought through this, so if we get to the price, and it's too high, my first response is, "Man, I know some other coaches." I make referrals, that's going to serve you well, and they say, "I really want to work with you." I say, "What is your budget," and if they don't have a budget in mind, that first of all, probably means that I'm not over their budget if they don't have a budget in mind, so we might do a little coaching around what's their budget, but I've had some people say, "You know, my church is giving me X amount of money to work with a coach," and I say, "Let's talk about how I can be flexible."

One way to be flexible is, let's just do fewer sessions, and I think you get a lot of value, and instead of doing 10 sessions, which is my typical contract, for the amount of money you have, you can afford maybe 6 sessions, and sometimes, I'll even flex a little on that. If they only have half as much as it would take for 10, I might say, "Let's do 6." So, I've kind of lowered my rate a little bit in doing that. If you thing about per session, but it just shows, we can be somewhat flexible, but it's not that I'm just going to say, "Oh, I'll just do it for half price." They're giving, I'm giving, that's negotiation, that's fine. Another is, let's do shorter sessions, and my rate's \$200 a session, and you can afford \$150, well, let's do 45 minute sessions, and honestly, that doesn't really get me anything. It gets me 15 minutes, but it just shows that they really want it, and so, on the one hand, I'm pretty firm. This is my rate, and that's okay, and on the

other hand, I'm in this to coach people, and if it means flexing a little bit, I', okay with that too, but I certainly don't say, "My rate's \$200 a session, if you can afford that, but I can lower that if you want me to."

Brian: Yeah, but I think there's a way of doing it, too, an art of negotiation where if you say, "My rate is \$100 an hour," and they say, "I want to work with you, but I can't do that." You say, "Well, what is in your budget," and they say, "I've got \$75 in my budget," you can say, "I can do that." You have that ability, and you're not sounding weak, you're sounding gracious. So, I think that's another way of doing it too. Rather than saying, "I can do it for \$100, or whatever." You don't seem to know.

Bill: Just let me throw a caution out there about that. I can be gracious, and that is... Your approach Chad, there's a reason for lowering your rates, fewer sessions or less time, and that equates, and you're still getting roughly the same value for your time, but if you just simply say, "Okay. I'll just take \$75 instead of \$100," there's almost a little bit of well, why weren't you charging me \$75 in the first place? So, none of us are going to think that way, but just be cautious. If you're going to negotiate down to a lower rate, there should be a reason for it. Okay, shorter sessions, fewer sessions, something that justifies going to that lower rate rather than just, "Okay, since you asked for it, I'll go to a lower rate."

Brian: That's great.

Chad: You know, I may be really odd about this, but I never thought about negotiating. To me, we are not negotiating, we're partnering, and to me, negotiating is, I'm going to try to get as much money from you as I can. Now, there are times I negotiate. I negotiate when I go buy a car. I negotiate if I'm maybe buying a house. I'm trying to get the best rate possible for me, and those are conflict situations that, I win, you lose. When I'm working with a potential client, it's not a negotiation, it's not a conflict situation, it's a collaboration. This really has to be a win for both of us. I'm going to advocate just as much for the client as I do myself, but I'm not going to advocate for the client so much that I don't have any money. It's going to be a win for me and the client, but I've never thought about it as a negotiation.

Brian: You're right. That's a great way to think about it. This has been really helpful. I hope everybody's enjoyed this Q&A, and we look forward to bringing you another very soon. Thanks guys.

Bill: Take care Brian.

Chad: Thanks Brian.

[Outro Music]