



Coach Approach Ministries Podcast

Episode 88: Make Six Figures Coaching Full-Time

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Brian Miller: Are you a certified coach that needs some mentor coaching to improve your skills, grow your business, or renew your credential? Coach Approach Ministries loves to help you grow. To sign up for 10 hours of group mentor coaching that improves your skills and fulfills your credential requirements, go to coachapproachministries.org/coachmentor, or to hire a mentor coach who will help you grow your coaching practice, go to coachapproachministries.org/coachmentor. This is the decision that propelled me into full-time coaching.

[Intro Music]

Brian: I'm Brian Miller, strategic director for Coach Approach Ministries, CAM for short, and I am so excited to be joined by 2 coaches who are making 6 figures. They're not proud of that. They are not making a big deal out of that, but we also want to talk about getting clients today and being able to make money. We have Laura-Catherine Etheridge, LC, and Bryan Pettet from Stratos 2 Coaching. Welcome today. We're glad to have you.

LC: Thank you. Glad to be here.

Bryan: Good to be here, Brian.

Brian: this came to be because they had a relationship with Chad Hall. They were in chads home having a great conversation, and Chad immediately emailed me afterward, and said you have to talk to these folks. They were saying so many interesting things about getting clients. So, we want to talk to them today. We set out some principles here. They're doing very, very well. I want to make sure as we talk to them that we're bringing it to a couple of different levels as well. So, LC and Bryan, as we talk about this, I want to make sure that the person who has one, two, maybe even zero clients doesn't feel like, "Oh. I can't get anything from that because they're coaching... They are making six figures. They have lots and lots of clients." So, let's try and talk about it in a way that we can do that. What would be the first principle that you can think of that would really say this is how we do well getting clients?

LC: I would say the first thing really that comes to mind is we treat the conversation with, people were talking with about coaching, we treat it as a coaching conversation, and I can remember way back when I started as a coach. It was a little bit confusing. You read business books marketing books, and it talks

very heavily about sales, how do you get clients, how do you close deals? The more experience I had, and worked with mentor coaches, and those kind of things, the more I realized really a networking conversation is going to be very similar to a coaching conversation. You want to get with somebody. You want to do it in person. You want to be where you can have a very, very high-quality conversation with them, and they can feel something be different for them in that conversation, and if they can experience what coaching is and what it feels like, they will sell themselves on the coaching experience and want that.

Brian: I like that. So, I heard two things there. One is, you definitely said to do it in person. The people I know that do have lots and lots of clients, the first thing people seem to notice about them is they just like being around them. There's something about them that it's not just they like them. There's just a feeling of this person could bring something. By being in person and having a coaching conversation, you're trying to give them that experience of knowing this is going to feel good.

LC: Absolutely, and I know some of the coaches too, at least that influenced me early on, they didn't even have a website. They were very, very successful. They didn't have a website. Their business card really wasn't put together well. Their branding was messy, but they were busy. A lot of that, I think, was because they were so good with people. They really cared. They spent a lot of time with people, and they gave them very high-quality conversations, and people wanted more, and they had a full practice. I remember one of our good friends, she had two practices, one with a big church and one of her own practices, and she didn't have a website. That really challenged my thinking early on to say is it really a website and a business card that gets you clients, or is it really people and interactions with people that gets you clients, and that's a lot of what both of us have really built a practice on.

Bryan: Brian, we have a website. We have business cards, but really the practice isn't growing because of that. It's growing because we're relational, we're building trust. Clients are talking to their friends and coworkers about it, in other companies, in other industries, and word of mouth is happening. When you coach someone and do it well, it doesn't matter if you have 1 client, or 10, or 100. The fundamentals are the same. We started with none, just like everybody. You coach one or two. You learn. Build, measure, learn, right? You learn how to get better at it. You work on your fundamentals. You never quit learning as a coach. You get good training, all of those things. Then, as you get better, people start to have great experiences, and they begin to talk about it. That's really how we built this whole business. It has nothing to do with a website or a business card. It's important, but we tell people all the time that we mentor mentor coaches. If you would take half of the energy you are applying to your presentation of who you are as a business and apply that to coaching experience, you would get more clients.

Brian: The second thing that I heard from that initial piece that I really liked was you're not trying to sell your potential client on a particular thing. I can picture myself going in and saying, "You really need to build up these people. Here's what I can offer. Here's what I can do," but instead, you're coaching them through what they need. They self-identify that they need you to come in.

Bryan: That's right. We don't even have a program, and sometimes people look at that in an interesting way, especially other coaches, but we have no program to present, or we have a three-month of this to pitch it to them. Not at all. We've made good money in our careers out of coaching people who have a file cabinet full of assessments that have an inch of dust on them, and they don't even know what to do with that. Their an alphabet this, and a blue that, and a yellow that, and they don't even know what it

means. We just come in and talk to them, and help them, and encourage them, and bring value to them. Coaching is about bringing value to peoples' lives, whether it's one person or a team. We try to do that even in networking. We are giving it away. We are just encouraging people. "You can do this. sounds like you have a tough project ahead of you, or you have a difficult person to work with. Your boss sounds very difficult. You have people that maybe aren't as trained as you'd like." We just try to encourage these people, and it builds from there. Networking is coaching. Coaching is networking.

Brian: Another thing I'm hearing, that might be different for our listeners, is that you're approaching organizations. So, you're going to get multiple clients, typically, out of one organization, out of one network. Out of sitting down with one client, you might get, I don't know, five, six clients, as opposed to someone who's trying to get clients who aren't within an organization. If you were coaching small churches who only had solo pastors, or you were coaching stay at home moms, or whatever you were doing. So, that might have a different feel to it. it would take more work because you wouldn't get as many clients out of one conversation.

Bryan: That's true, but when you talk to corporate people, they seem to move slower.

Brian: They do.

Bryan: And most of our conversations are 6, 12, 18 months long corporately before a corporate person is ready to pull the trigger on that engagement. The fundamentals are really the same. We took things we learned by talking to individuals, and now we apply them to individuals that run departments, and teams, and companies, but we still have to sell that individual. It's really... If we were going to go back into private practice, we would do the same thing that we're doing corporately. you have to sell that person without pitching them by getting them to trust you, and I say give it away until they're ready to pay for it. Then it's a relationship.

Brian: I hear you saying that you're getting in front of somebody. We've talked enough, even before this, to know that a lot of that has come from word of mouth from other people. If you were trying to get in front of somebody now that they didn't know you, or the company, maybe you're doing some of this now, what kind of steps would you take, and maybe even internal, what would you be telling yourself to give you the confidence to make that call.

LC: Well, one of the things that I would really say is ask yourself the question, "What's it going to take for me to feel confident to make this call?" I remember early in my practice actually getting out and pen and paper and writing down here is what I want that client to be able to see, and that's what would make me feel confident. Just going through that exercise for myself so I knew maybe I need to read up on something, maybe I need to double check their LinkedIn, maybe I need to dress really nice that day. It's different things for different people, but know what it is for you to feel confident and to feel successful going into the conversation. Then you pick you it is, and you just swallow, and you just do it. Even to this day, we have conversations, and I think, "Man I wish I didn't have butterflies about this." I remember a Christian coach, she's in the world of coaching, people may know her, Anne Denmark. I remember her saying one time, "You don't get rid of your butterflies, you just learn to fly them in formation." I thought that was perfect because that's so much of what you do as a coach is you identify it, you prepare for it, and then you say you know what, this is what I need to do, and you just do it. You don't make an assumption about what they're going to say to you or what they're going to project about

you. I think sometimes as coaches we make all these assumptions, but to be a good coach we've got to stop making assumptions.

Bryan: Let me add to that if I could. We pray about everything. We work for God. we believe that were doing ministry, and we're his hands extended to these teams and companies. Someone working with single moms, or people transitioning out of military, or anything, health coaching, any of that. You're the hands extended of God as well. So, we pray about everything. Before we go into these conversations, afterwards, we pray about it. We have the benefit of being able to look at eat other afterwards and say, "How do you think that went?" Well, the female intuition picked up this, but the male picked up that part. We build on that. That's a strength that we have, but we pray about it all and give it to God, and we really ask him to join us in those conversations, and we feel that he does.

Brian: I remember asking another coach who has a lot of clients, "How do you get through that," and he said, "You have to trust the coaching. Coaching works." It's just kind of like, I'm a professional coach, but I have to remind myself, one, coaching works, and as a Christian coach, even if I'm doing business coaching, I remind myself I'm reaching out because God wants me to.

LC: It's a shift underneath, Brian, that I think every coach needs to work with. It goes from somehow in a coaching conversation, we're very much focused on the client. The stronger a coach is, they're more focused on the client, and I think that's a lot of times where it gets off maybe in the sales aspect has become very focused on us. I need them. I need this. What are they going to think of me? How do I feel confident, and those are not the questions we need to ask. We need to keep the focus where it's going to be because then, all of a sudden, you become their coach, and you're going to turn the whole relationship around? It just doesn't work so well that way.

Bryan: That's right. I think if you're selling or pitching, you're not able to listen. People say coaches listen like no one else. If you would network like that, and talk to people, and listen to people like that before you had a contract, you'd end up with more clients.

Brian: Now talk about networking for a second because I think for those who are not networking like they probably should be, I think they think there's a place where all the people go, and you probably have a drink or something, and you network. I don't know where this place is, and I know I'm not invited. So, what do you even mean when you say you network?

Bryan: We build relationships. It takes time, and you have to be patient. You cannot come across as desperate, like, "If I don't get this, or if I don't make something happen in the next six weeks, I'm going to have to go do something else." You have to get past that in your head because that bleeds through, and they feel it. Nobody wants to be around that. You have to have that calm, confidence, and if it works, it works. We believe that networking happens in time. It's never happened that fast for us. It just takes time and patience, and you have to be willing to engage people and give away with receiving nothing back in return, and you have to be willing to do that numerous, multiple times. We just got back from a week in Raleigh, NC where we were both networking together. I don't know what happened. I don't know what really came out of that, maybe something, maybe nothing. We have to be willing to do that from time to time. In our case, it was a week, but sometimes it's an hour, it's a half an hour. It's giving people things. It's sending people things they might want to read about or hear about. It's a relationship, and it's giving. It's not asking. We spend a lot of time listening to people and never asking

them for business until it clicks.

LC: I would add, too, there's a comedian, Michael Jr., we've heard him at a couple conferences. Great comedian, but in some of his videos online, he talks about a shift that happened in his work as a comedian where he really made the shift of feeling like God was saying to him, "You need to stop looking to get laughs out of people so you can get a paycheck, and start looking for the means to laugh." That happened in my business, and I started thinking about who are the people who most need to laugh, and I went and started doing my work for them, and work has pretty much exploded since then. To me, that was a really well put way of doing it because that's what I see in great coaches who are very busy. When it comes to that big word, networking, they look at it from who can, one, afford me because they don't just want to spend time with people who could use coaching, but who could afford me but also really needs coaching. They need it. Then you go to them and give that to them, let them experience it, let them taste it in a conversation or two over a meal at Panera Bread, and usually, they'll say, "I want more of this." Most of our networking conversations, we talk about them 90% of the hour, and the last, maybe 10 minutes or less, they'll say, "So, I want to do more of this. How can I do it? Can I have your card? When can we meet?" It's like almost none of the time is spent talking about us, it's talking about them, and I think that's what really turns the world of networking.

Brian: We need to have a different, I need to have a different, view of what networking means. There's another podcast that went out last year of a coach who ends up coaching a lot of doctors, and he got set up that way because he went to see a doctor, and at the end, the doctor said something strange which is, "Can you come over to my house next week?" So, obviously he showed up in a very human way. He wasn't selling coaching. He wasn't even thinking about that, but he was doing some coaching by listening, asking questions, and that was intriguing to the physician. I think in my head, I think networking is people I don't know that I probably don't have much of a chance of knowing, but if I'm trying to reach a specific niche, if that's on my heart, it's not my niche if I don't know some people. If I don't know somebody I could go talk to, it's probably not my niche.

LC: What I would say is great networkers, they're not focused as much on business as they are in building relationships or making friends. What I would say to somebody who's struggling with networking is go make friends with the kind of people you feel like you're supposed to work with. Go make five or six friends. If you can build five or six relationships with those people, you're probably going to be just fine as a coach in that arena.

Bryan: And we connect people all the time that we just met. Last week is a good example. I referenced networking, not knowing what it did for us, but we met somebody one day, met somebody another day, and connected the two of them together. That had nothing to do with us, but we thought they should know each other, and it's things like that. It's giving it away with no expectation.

Brian: You brought value to the relationship. That's part of networking that you said, "I know how I could bring some value into this person's life," and you didn't even think, "What could I get out of that?" You're just out there making value. So, I'm a slight introvert, so I don't think to myself, "Man, I could go out and meet five or six people. How great would that be?" I'm enough introvert that I think, "Mmm." Are you guys introverts, extroverts? Do you see that that makes a difference?

LC: Bryan's more introverted than I am. I would be more like an ambivert, pretty much down the middle.

I didn't come to coaching loving networking. As a kid, I was super, super shy, but I think what has really been the game changer for me is knowing that I was called to coaching. I believe that. I don't question that. I know it. I don't keep questioning it every time I struggle with networking. The other thing is knowing that coaching helps people. We believe in what coaching can do, and I don't keep questioning that, so to me, if I don't network, then I know one of those two things is amiss because I'm not getting out there and really trying to take this thing to people because I know it's going to help them. So, it's less about me and more about helping other people, I think, that drives me to go do it when maybe I'd rather stay home, and do an email, and send it in.

Bryan: Introversion or extroversion. I would be maybe a little more introverted, but the interesting thing is I was a pastor and missionary for 20 years, professional speaker and communicator. When it's your calling, and you say yes to it, God gives you energy for it. A lot of people don't know, some of the best communicators in the world are painfully shy and introverted. A great example of that would be Andy Stanley running a church of over 50,000 people. He's very shy in a hallway, but very passionate in his element.

Brian: I'm sure if you talk to him one-on-one and talk about what he wants to talk about, he's magnetic, but if you want to talk about the weather, he might not show up. This is so interesting. There was another principle we talked about before we got started. We talked a lot about having confidence in yourself, and just going into relationship. Trust your coaching even as your sales pitch. Coach them instead of sell, but you also talked about pitch a pilot project. Could you guys talk about that for a minute? I just think that's a pretty interesting idea.

Bryan: Okay, yeah. This surfaced when we were talking to Chad in his home, not long ago, and we were talking about large projects, and how to get those versus just how to get work in general. We have found that almost all of our contracts that we have and some of our contracts have extended into four years plus every year, or every so often. They all started as a pilot. It's something we tried. We thought, we don't really have the experience to go, and I don't have a resume to say I've done this for 10 years in corporations. Well, what they would bite and get ahold of was the concept that they could give us two or three people to work with for three months, or five or six people, whatever it is. Every time we have done that, it has extended and expanded often before the three-month trial period is over. Every time. For some reason, coaches seem to be hesitant to go after something like that, but we have found that to be incredibly useful. Don't be afraid to say yes to something that's maybe not even very interesting to you yet. You never know what will turn up, and where it will go.

LC: And I'm thinking, too, Brian, of your audience here on the podcast. A lot of them are doing maybe more life coaching or one-on-one, maybe not in a corporate sector, and one of the things too that both of us did early on in the practice before we were doing as much corporate work was the same idea. For some reason, in the world of coaching, there's a lot of books, there's a lot of training that says go sell a package, X-number of sessions a month for this many months, and try to sell it. What we found doing that was a lot of people don't know enough about coaching to know if they want to spend that much money and be that committed. You're putting them in a position where they have to make such a big decision that they'll probably say no. So, before the demand was high for our time, what both of us would do, individually, in our practices was to just go out and give somebody great conversation, and they say they want more, and say, "Hey, great." Pull out your phone calendar right then, or pull out your

paper calendar and say, “When do you want to talk again?” Put it on the calendar, and we would literally just go month to month with clients. At the end of the month, I have some private clients, and I’ll ask them, still to this day, “Hey, what looks good for you for next month?” They build a relationship, and they just keep extending that relationship month after month after month, and they never get backed into a corner of having to make some significant decision. So, I think that’s something I would say on the private side. Do that same approach, just do it by session instead of pilot project so to speak.

Brian: One more principle was coach who you know and expand it out. Let’s finish with that one. What would you say about coach who you know and expand it out?

Bryan: That’s a great thing. We don’t go after people that we don’t know. They either know us, or have heard of us, or we know them. It’s so important to start with what’s in your hand. A lot of them are principles connected to that, so we start with who we know. We have worked with people and didn’t know where it would go, and then they start to tell others. Sometimes they don’t even tell us they told someone else. It’s just you start with what you have, and everyone has someone they can talk to and someone they can give coaching to, whether you’re paid or not. I started out by giving 6 or 700 hours of coaching away and did so within the context of my job description. ICF accepted those hours as paid. Start with what you have, and what you know, and who you know, and give great coaching to that, and the niche will find you many times.

LC: I’ll just add, I think it’s Zig Ziglar that talks about help other people get what they want to get what you want, so when you get with a client or a potential client and you really give them a great conversation. They hear themselves. They feel things they haven’t felt in a long time, or maybe never. They experience coaching. They have a little bit of that. You work with them even just a month or two, and then you just ask them the question, “Who else do you think I should meet? Do you know anybody else who would really benefit from this? You’re getting a lot out of this.” Usually they’ll say, “Oh yeah. I’ve got this friend. So, we’ll just say, “Would you be willing to introduce us via email? Would you be willing to meet with us at the coffee shop, and introduce us to them, and spend a few minutes?” We get yes, yes, yes, yes, yes constantly on that request because to them, at that point, it’s not them going to twist the arm of a friend to write another check every month. It’s them saying this has really, really helped me, and I think it could really help you, and they’re excited because they’re adding value to their friend. So, I would say that too, don’t be afraid to ask them to introduce you to their circle of friends. You don’t have to bleed yours totally dry.

Bryan: The cool thing about that is they probably already have the relationship you don’t have with that person yet, but if that person who knows them... It works with companies too. One company introducing us to another company. The best introduction you could get. So, we have found that to be very useful. Don’t be afraid to do that. Let someone else’s influence open the door for you.

Brian: People are afraid to do that. They’re absolutely afraid to ask, “Who could you introduce me to,” because that’s the ultimate chance for rejection. “Eh. I don’t... Eh. We’re not friends like that.”

LC: Which goes back to we believe how powerful coaching is or have confidence in ourselves. That’s the difference between those two.

Brian: What a great conversation. How encouraging this is to me, hopefully to all our listeners. I just want to thank you so much for coming and letting me interview you, and pick your brains, and just be

[Transcribed by Alyssa Miller](#)

vulnerable. I appreciate it.

LC: You bet.

Bryan: Thank you.

Brian: Thanks so for those joining us. Don't miss any of our podcasts. Subscribe to our podcast at iTunes, Overcast, Stitcher, or Google Play by searching for Coach Approach Ministries Podcast. We'll see you next week.

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[Outro Music]