

Ep #102: Someone Who Understands: The Power of Coaching for Autism Moms



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With Your Host

Lisa Candra

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You are listening to episode 102 of *The Autism Mom Coach*, Someone Who Gets It.

Welcome to *The Autism Mom Coach* podcast, I am your host, Lisa Candra. I am a lawyer, a life coach, and most importantly, I am the full-time single mother of a teenager with Autism and other comorbid diagnoses. I know what it is like to wonder if you are doing enough or the right things for your child and to live in fear of their future.

I also know that constantly fueling yourself with fear and anxiety is not sustainable for you or of any benefit to your child. That is why in this podcast I will share practical strategies and tools you can use to shift from a chronic state of fight, flight to some calm and ease. You are your child's greatest resource, let's take care of you.

Hello everyone and welcome to the podcast. I hope you are doing well and I am so glad you are here. In today's episode I want to talk to you about my favorite thing about coaching, both as a coach and as someone who hires coaches. So just to back up, I first learned that life coaching even existed about four and a half years ago when I was listening to a podcast by an attorney who's a life coach about attorney, work, life, stress, that kind of a thing. And that was my first really introduction into what life coaching is, how it can help in your life. And I was intrigued.

Even though this podcast was specific to attorneys, the issues that were being talked about, things like stress, imposter syndrome, anxiety, compare and despair. All of the things that I did in my everyday life, both as an attorney and as a mother of a child with Autism. And so I started applying these concepts in my life at home and I saw improvements, I saw that I was feeling better. And that was pretty much it. I was all in. I hired my own coach. I got certified. I started coaching clients and I continue to be coached by coaches.

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I continue to further my education and my knowledge base and the resources that I have available to me and that I make available to my clients. And this has really just become a part of my life. It's a part of who I am. It's a part of how I operate. And it's just so interesting because now when I hire coaches it's so different than how I used to hire people in the past.

So for instance, let's just say a therapist. I would go to my insurance company. I would get the list of people who were covered. I might cross reference that from Psychology Today and filter for things, if I was doing it for my son, it would be Autism or anxiety. For me, it might be anxiety and my age bracket and all that kinds of things and see who you get. And you could get an idea of the person in terms of how many years of experience, where they went to school and what their areas of practice were but that was really about it.

And from there, you're really just making appointments, seeing if you're a fit and that's that. And while that's fine, well, first of all, it's a laborious process, let's face it. But then you don't really know who you're getting, and maybe you clique with them, maybe you don't. But then there is this whole introductory process where they're getting to know you, they're getting to know your situation.

And that's how I did it for years. And it's probably why I refuse to do it that way anymore because at least in terms of my own personal development, the most important criteria that I use now is whether someone gets my lived experience. That is really important to me because I believe that someone who gets it, that someone who understands where you're coming from, that can get you 95% of the way towards whatever goal you're trying to create, and that's huge, 95%. And I didn't come to that overnight.

I'm going to explain to you why I think that percentage is so high and I've seen it both in myself as the client and I've seen it in my clients. And it's just so interesting to me, because as an attorney I am so used to focusing on

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credentials. Just as the employers who have hired me, our training, the experience, the type of cases that we worked on, all of that stuff. They want to know what our professional experience is and that makes total sense and it matters to me, it really does in many areas.

But those formal credentials have come to mean less to me at least in terms of my own personal development, because first, I've done a lot of personal development on my own. And in my opinion, you can do a decent amount on your own, but you're really, you've kind of hit the wall in terms of how many books can you read, how many courses can you do. And I've done a lot of both. But at some point, I really think that if you're going to grow, you need to be interacting with another human.

You need to have somebody who is not in your brain, who can be neutral, who can reflect back to you, your thoughts, who can challenge you. I think that all of that is really an important and healthy piece of growth. And for me and for my personal development, I really do prefer to be with someone I know gets it. Because quite frankly, I don't have a lot of time to be sitting around and chitchat. And the last thing I want to do is catch somebody up on years and years and years of life just so they can help me figure out tomorrow better.

When I came to life coaching it was very goal oriented, which is what I love about life coaching. It's this is your issue, this is what it looks like, this is what you want it to look like and figuring out the steps from there. And to me this happens so much quicker when you're coaching with someone who just gets it.

Alright, so here are the five reasons that I am a huge fan both as a client and a coach of coaching with someone who gets it. So I'm going to share with you five reasons I think coaching with someone who gets it is such an amazing thing. And as a backdrop, I'm going to use the example from Friends.

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So just in case you've never seen Friends before or you don't remember this episode. There are two characters, Ross and Rachel. And Ross has a crush on Rachel. And Rachel finds out about it, and she starts considering the idea that she could actually get together with Ross, this guy that she knows, that she's been friends with, that she likes him a lot. All of their friends are friends together. They all do things together. And her friend, Phoebe says, "It would be like going out on your 10th date." And that made so much sense in the context of the relationship.

They had done all of the first, second date stuff where you're just slowly getting to know one another. You haven't met their friends. You haven't met their family. It's just a lot of warming up. And that's what happens a lot in personal development when you're meeting someone new, there's a lot of warming up. But when you're coaching with someone who gets it, you get to skip a lot of that, which is a beautiful thing. Because I just can't tell you how frustrated I have found it explaining Autism to a therapist or to someone who didn't get it.

It's really frustrating and I think this especially so for Autism parents, because we already feel a bit isolated and a bit misunderstood. So when we're actually having to go through the effort of explaining our child or our situation to someone who doesn't get it, it can feel invalidating. So starting with someone who just gets it, it's like starting on the 10th date, don't have to do all that warm up. It's a beautiful thing. And for me and for my clients, I view the warm up as the consultation.

That's the time where we get out what's going on, what the issues are and you get to tell your story. But then we get to work and we get to get to work in your first session because we've done the warm up. We're ready. I know your goals. Let's go.

So the second thing that I love about coaching with someone who gets it, is that you get to feel seen without judgment. I had a really recent experience with this. I was diagnosed with ADHD about six months ago and I decided

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that I wanted to hire a coach because I had a lot of questions about it. Getting this diagnosis was both shocking to me and very much a relief at the same time because it seemed to make a lot of sense. But when I talked to some of my friends about it, especially people who have only known me for the last six years, they just were really skeptical.

They were like, “No, you’re just under a lot of stress and anxiety, you’re the least ADHD person I know because you’re so together in terms of your schedule and you handle so many things so flawlessly. How could that be ADHD?” But I felt it and I saw it in my own experience and things that other people wouldn’t really necessarily understand. And I just wanted to talk to somebody who got it and I just didn’t feel like was judging me when I would tell them the things that I wanted to share with them.

And that’s exactly what happened when I hired my coach. She was also diagnosed in her mid-40s and now she coaches women who are diagnosed in their mid-40s. And I saw one reel that she did. And in that reel, I just knew instantly, she gets it. She understands what my problem is, or really, she understands what my struggle is and she understands how to help me. So in her first session, I just already felt seen without judgment, just actually by watching her reel.

And of course, as she did the intake and I shared with her some of the things that were going on. I just knew by her nods and some of her facial gestures that she got it and she understood me and she was seeing me, and she wasn’t judging me.

So that takes me to number three. When you are feeling seen without judgment, when you believe the other person gets you. You get to unburden yourself of all of the crap that you’ve been holding in. And I see this so much with my clients is that we’ll be in a consultation and they’ll say things. And they’ll say, “I’ve never said that to another human being before.” And I understand why, because some of it can feel shameful or we don’t

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want people to misunderstand. We don't want people to think we don't love our children, of course we do.

But some people will, quite frankly, say, "I hate Autism. I wish my kid wasn't Autistic. I wish they were normal." And I get it, I understand where all of that comes from. I'm not judging it at all. But you might not just say that to anyone, because you would be afraid that they would take it a different way. And because of that, you keep it in and maybe you're even judging yourself for having those thoughts to begin with. So it's a beautiful thing when someone just gets it. You're seen without judgment. You get to unburden yourself of all of that.

So then when all of that happens, you also get to drop your resistance and drop any defenses that you might have. I'll speak for myself in saying that I've been to a couple of therapists who have suggested things to me like meditation and self-care, all the things that people suggest. And it was met from me with a big eye roll because I just didn't receive it from them. And it was my own resistance because in my mind, I was saying you don't understand. That's so easy for you to say or this is just the spiel that you give everyone because I was resisting them.

And I was resisting them because I didn't feel like they understood me and because of that I had this wall up. And I'm not saying this is right. I'm just saying this is what happened. But I know for me when I'm coaching with someone who I know gets it, I drop a lot of my bullshit, which is a good thing. I notice this a lot with my clients during our sessions and how receptive I find them to my suggestions. And they will say to me, "That's been suggested to me before." And it's like, well, what's different now? They know that I get it.

They don't think I'm giving them a canned solution. And really, it's never a canned solution because it's very customized to whatever their situation is. But they just don't have the resistance when it's coming from someone they believe gets it. The same thing with me with my ADHD coach, and she's

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been on me about creating a schedule about when I do things like my podcast and all the content for the coaching. And basically the way I do it is I get it done when I get it done.

I don't have a really strict schedule that I keep myself to because, well, I have my full-time job and if something happens there then that just impacts the entire day. And then that means my night can look different. And I don't really know what my weekends are going to look like, or maybe something happens with Ben. I had all of these really great excuses. And the fact is I've hired her to help me with this.

This is the coaching. I can resist it for all the reasons that I think I'm a special snowflake or unicorn or whatever it is. But I don't want to resist her. I hired her for this reason. I know that I want the help. And what am I fighting for? Am I fighting for my limitations or am I fighting for my growth? And for me, I grow so much more and I resist so much less when I feel like I'm being held to account by someone, I just believe gets it. It's helpful for me. Maybe it's not helpful for everyone. But it's definitely something that has helped me get results faster and I see with my clients over and over.

Fifth and most importantly, because you're on the 10th date, you get to work right away. The first session we're off to the races. I get so much done with my clients in their first session. There is so much ground that we cover because we're not getting to know one another. We're not doing the slow dance of, tell me a little bit about yourself and how did that make you feel? We're just getting really to the core of the issue and we get there quickly. And because of all that, you make progress quickly. You get transformations right away.

And so that is the most beautiful thing about it, especially for me. I don't want to be in therapy every week for the rest of my life. When I come to coaching I come for very specific reasons. I mean, I think I will forever have a coach, but I'm not going to forever be working on some of the same issues. And so I like to be very targeted. This is what we're working for.

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This is the goal. What is it looking like? Do we need more time? What's working, what's not working? All of that happens in the coaching relationship.

And I just love that because I'm always coming away from every coaching session with something that's a takeaway. And the thing with my clients, because I give them takeaways all the time of what we did, what we accomplished so that they can go forward. And so you're never feeling like I'm not really even sure what we talked about today. That doesn't happen during a coaching session. And that is so important to me. And it's important to all of my clients because whether they're stay at home moms or full-time working moms, they're all very busy. They're very scheduled.

They have children with high needs, time is precious and so they want to get results. And in my opinion the best way to get those results is always to hit the ground running, which is exactly what I think you do when you're coaching with someone who gets it.

Alright, that's it, that's my two cents on why it is amazing to coach with someone who gets it. And for those of you who are listening, Autism moms or struggling with anxiety, stress, burnout, second guessing yourself, all of that are all things that I can help you with in my coaching program, The Resilient Autism Mom Coach program. If you want to learn more, get on my calendar now, schedule your consultation on my website. During the consultation call I want to get to know you a bit. I want to know what you're struggling with and I want to know what your goals are.

And we're going to talk about whether it makes sense for us to work together to get you where you want to be. So I urge you, if you've been waiting, if you've been delaying, if you've been wondering, nothing changes unless you do. And so I really encourage you, do this for yourself. Give yourself the gift of a consultation, an hour with somebody else taking in the information, listening to what you have to say. And then really discussing with you the best way forward.

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Alright, that is it for this week. I will talk to you next week. Take care.

Thanks for listening to *The Autism Mom Coach*. If you are ready to apply the principles you are learning in these episodes to your life, it is time to schedule a consultation call with me. Podcasts are great but the ahas are fleeting. Real change comes from application and implementation and this is exactly what we do in my one-on-one coaching program. To schedule your consultation, go to my website, theAutismmomcoach.com, Work With Me and take the first step to taking better care of yourself so that you can show up as the parent you want to be for your child with Autism.