

Ep. 5: Redefining Accountability: Removing Shame and Activating Empowerment

Sonja: Hello. Welcome back, everyone to the podcast. In today's episode, I wanna dig a little deep and share my thoughts and my experiences around accountability and the shame that gets attached to that term, especially in the coaching industry and why my take on it is quite different than many folks that you hear speaking about it today.

This episode is sponsored by life coaching with Sonja. And actually I'm being funny, but I am recording this episode in my sauna and I love a good alliteration, and so I'm thinking like, oh, these could be sauna sessions.

The reason why that would be a good series, or at least I think we'll see if it actually becomes a thing, is as we talk about or as I'm talking about accountability, this is a way, me recording this podcast inside of our sauna in our home is, is sort of a, an accountability experience for me because I am very committed and have made a conscious effort based on a desire that I have of the type of impact I wanna have in the world, and also a commitment to showing up for my brand, which will also facilitate the type of impact I wanna have on others and with the world. And I wanna do that through this podcast.

And so, I have so many amazing like thoughts that come up for me at any given time, which is why a lot of these podcast episodes are recorded and will be recorded, just FYI, in case you didn't know, on my iPhone and not using my really nice podcast mic. It's all in the effort of getting things done. Excuse me, getting out of my head and getting things done and not letting the, the like fear of things not being perfect or just right and overthinking, interfere with the result.

And the result is I know that through my experiences, through the experiences of my clients, through my voice and speaking is how I'm going to have lasting impact on multitudes of people all around the world. And if that means that I have an amazing thought or idea or you know, experience that I wanna share, and I happen to be in the sauna when it happens, well by God, we're gonna do it in the sauna.

Now, I don't know about a shower series because I get a lot of info and showers as well, but the sauna is definitely a more conducive space where I can do that. So, welcome to session one of the Sauna Session series. We'll see where that lands a couple more episodes if it actually becomes a thing.

But yeah, let's talk about accountability and removing the shame that surrounds it. And I actually have the idea to talk about this a little deeper after I had made a post on my Facebook page. By the way, if you are not following me on social, I am active on Facebook and Instagram. And just a little secret. I usually post... my, my main platform that I post and show up on is Facebook, and then I usually repurpose to Instagram unless I'm like doing a reel. Just FYI. Being transparent. So @sonjathompkins is my username on either platform. So, if you are not following me pick one of your favorites of those two to get all of my latest and of the moment content.

So yeah, I posted on my Facebook group, excuse me, not Facebook group, on my Facebook page last week at the time that I'm recording this. And I made a post that said, As a life coach, I promised to hold my clients accountable. And I do. That was the post. And the truth is, I actually do, and the reason that was such a statement for people in my audience, or, and especially even my peers that I've shared time with and built relationships with in a variety of different, like coaching containers. Especially in my business coaching containers that I've been a part of, or masterminds that I've been a part of, that has been sort of like a word that was sort of shunned over the last like two years.

And again, I always come from a place of believing that people are really just doing the best with what they have or what they know at any given time. I really don't give a lot of energy to anyone who's doing things in a malicious way. But in the coaching industry in particular, there seemed to have been a shift and a very strong, a very strong perspective on using the word accountability as it pertains to what you say you offer as a coach.

Whether you're a life coach, a business coach, a mindset coach, whatever kind of coach you are, saying that you give or you offer, or you provide accountability for your clients was starting to be shunned, you know? And for me, I can't speak for anyone else, but I will speak for myself. I always did that and I really prided myself on the fact that I was really good at helping people, helping my clients get shit done in their life, in their business, big or small. There's really no small, it's just, you know, it's all about just embodying the different possibilities and desires that you have. And I really prided myself on that.

And at one point I was inside of a coaching container, a business coaching container with a very well known business coach who I really admire and really respect. Doesn't change anything about that. But in that program, that coach was very adamant on teaching us, you know, as part of their strategy for, you know, growing a coaching business was, don't tell your clients that you're gonna hold them accountable. People who are really vested in what they do or what they are trying to do, people who are really committed to their end result won't need accountability. They won't need you to hold them accountable. They will, they will show up, they will do the work. They don't need handholding and other things like that.

And again, I really respect this person. And what happens a lot of times, and I would love to hear from you all, be sure to reach out to me in the dms on one of those platforms, Facebook or Instagram, if you've ever been in a situation right, where you hear something that makes really good logical sense and you really understand that perspective. It's like, oh yeah, I can totally see that. Right? And then before you know it, you're implementing that. You, you, you are walking around, you're doing that. You, you know, you've taken that on for yourself because that really, like, yeah, that makes sense. And I never thought about it like that. And I found myself doing that.

I really took on this per this person's process and this person's thoughts around accountability. And I did that for about a year and a half, and it was actually a lot of the testimonials that I get from clients who are offboarding with me. So if you work with me one-on-one, there's an offboarding process where I ask like, you know, of course we're talking throughout the program or throughout our time, coaching together, you know. We're working through every week we're talking about what your wins were and all of that.

But during the offboarding process I ask like for a specific, like in your own words, like what is your overall view of what your experience was? It helps me to be a better coach. It helps me to hold myself accountable. It helps me to see myself through the lens of others. And so I find that kind of information very useful. So, I always do an off-boarding process with my one-on-one clients and clients who have participated in my group coaching program.

And you know, I started looking at those and at the time I was wrapping up a couple of cohorts of my group coaching program. And so I had multiple of these offboarding feedback forms and information just readily available, and I'm looking at them and there was like common thread, common thread in terms of like, you know, what, what do you, you know, what really helped you move the needle forward? What was different in this program? Or you know, different

about working with Sonja than what you've done before? For those who had worked with someone previously.

And time and time again, it was things, you know, some people literally used the word, the accountability. Some people were not using that word specifically, but they were saying things like Sonja just has a way of getting me back on track. You know, I would fall off, I would start to be down on myself because I fell off. Sonja would reach out. She would, you know, help me reframe things. Sonja would remind me of why I was there, because sometimes I would forget. And you guys, this is what made me say, you know, what? That's a very smart, logical perspective that if you offer accountability, some clients can abuse that or they will use that as an excuse.

But I have never had that experience and so that made me really change my view on that thought that I had taken on. And I decided to ditch that thought. I made a choice that as logical as that thought was, and that process is, or experience was for that person, it really doesn't fit me. It does not align with my strategy. That is their strategy. And throughout a little bit of, of more time in that program or just, you know, learning more about that individual coach, I learned that that just is not a strategy that works for them. Did y'all hear that? That is not a strategy that works for them.

But when it comes to my unique strategy, and when I say my strategy, I'm not talking about my intellectual property. I'm not talking about like my strategy in terms of like my external formula or process that I teach. I'm talking about my spiritual strategy. I am spiritually designed to empower people to hold space for people, to hold people accountable. You guys, in my human design chart, for those of you who are into human design, I'm a manning. I have a manifestor in manifestor generator energy. That was a tongue twister because I try to avoid saying like, I'm a manifesting generator. Like that's my type. It's not who I am, it's just the energy that I work through. So a lot of times I'll, I'm still rewiring my brain around how I use that in my own life, right?

So, I have the energy of a manifesting generator and I'm a 2/4 profile line. It's getting hot in the sauna y'all. Profile line 2/4. And I have an emotional authority for those of you who are into human design. Now that being said, I have an undefined heart center right? Will center. So I by definition can amplify that in other people. And I have a, a lot of other like things in my chart, like gates and stuff like that. I don't wanna get too deep into human design here. By the way, let me know. You can let me know in the comments. Send me a DM or email me and let me know if you'd love to hear more about my human design experiment.

But I'm pretty much wired and divinely designed by the Creator to amplify and hold other people accountable. And when I use the word accountability, when I use the word accountable, I don't mean I'm there to make my clients do things. Accountability, in my experience and how I use accountability, it's not about handholding. It's not about making my clients do something that they don't wanna do. When I say as a life coach, I promise, like it's part of my values, it's part of my of, of, it's in my contract, you know? It's, I promise to keep you on track with what you came into this program wanting to do. I promise to, you know, remind you of the result that you want.

Accountability is me being another voice to pull you back to your why. And I don't have to do that by making someone do something. Like I don't have to make, and by the way, I can't, even if I tried, I can't. Right? And that's not about me DMing you 15 times a day or you know, hitting you up in our private Voxer channel. Like, why didn't you do that? Did you do that? Remember, you gotta do that. Come on. You need to do that. Like, I don't do that. I don't like, that's babysit babysitting. Right? And I work with, you know, whole adults who are just looking to elevate their whole adulthood.

But what I am very good at doing and what I don't mind doing and comes very easily for me to do is being like, Hey, okay, listen, this is what you decided, this is what you said. Now did that change? Like are we moving on a different program? Because like that can happen too. Let me know. You just let me know what it is you wanna do and I'm gonna roll with you and get you on track with that. You know what I mean? That's my version of accountability.

My, my version of accountability is like, oh, okay, so that's where you fell off. Okay. Have we done this? It's just reminding. Right? And we all need that. We all need reminders. We all need practicing of, of certain skills and strategies and thoughts and beliefs. We all need, you know, repetitive practice of these things in order for us to become proficient.

I think that accountability also for a lot of folks on the, the individual side or the client side can feel like, especially if that's sort of like the conversation happening, you know, in the coaching industry. And by the way, I've seen a lot of coaches post that, you know, for clients, for potential clients who are interested in working with them. I don't do accountability. Like you need to be ready to go if you, you know, like if you hire me, you need to already be ready to go. Like, what? I'm, I'm sorry. What is this idea that... I'm kinda like, if they already, if they already knew, y'all, let me... mm.

This is why, I'm telling you, this is like one of the reasons my clients like really love me. Because I'm of the thought, if they already knew what to do and could already do it by themselves and didn't need help or support in doing those things, they wouldn't need me. They wouldn't need a coach. They wouldn't need a business strategist. Like if, if you knew what to do and you knew how to do it, and you didn't need anybody else to help you along the way, why would they be hiring a coach?

Okay so that's those, those are my thoughts on that. And also I think because of that sort of projection out into the world, especially on social media accounts and things like that. As a potential client, when you see those sorts of things, you start to think, well... you might feel like how I felt. Like you might be like, oh, well I, I feel like I need accountability, but okay maybe I don't. Like, maybe I just need to get my shit together.

Maybe accountability from a professional coach who is there to support you in a trauma informed way is what you need so that you can keep going. Think about it. Why is it in the coaching industry, right? That's sort of like the only industry where it's like people don't, people wanna say like, accountability is bad. Or accountability is, is not as important. It shouldn't be like a pillar. It shouldn't be an important aspect to the process.

People go to the gym and hire personal trainers to do what? Why do people who want to lose weight have accountability partners? Why do professionals, corporate professionals, do things like, do things like have team building workshops or co-working hours, right? It's so that you have someone else there to help you, A, not feel alone. B, remind you of what to be doing and give you support or be a reminder to say, Hey. Did you do that? How did that go? Oh, you didn't do that? Okay. Okay. But when are you gonna do it? Cause girl, you know, or dude, you know, we gotta... like, cuz you had said it, right?

Accountability should never be something that you are shamed for, or that you shame yourself for, you are not broken because you need reminders. You are not less productive because you need someone alongside of you as you build this new muscle. This new mindset muscle. This new muscle in relaxation. This new muscle in being, you know, taking care of yourself. This new muscle in creating a wealthy abundant money mindset. This new muscle in seeing yourself in the relationship of your dreams.

Like, all of these things, if that is not your modus apparatus, if that is not something you are proficient in already or at this particular moment, you're gonna require practice. Accountability reminds you to practice, and it becomes a

place where you can feel safe asking for help doing that practice, right? It's not about less than. Not productive. Lazy. Accountability is empowerment. Accountability is just reminders to practice and reminders of your why.

That's how I define accountability. That's the, that's how my clients have received accountability in their experience in working with me. And they've gone on to do really amazing things. Not because I made them show up to a coaching call, not because I made them, you know, go through a particular exercise. I just gave the information. I reminded them of why they made the commitment for themselves cuz they didn't make a commitment to me. I mean, when you work with me, there's an on like, so just like there's an offboarding process, there's an onboarding process. So in the onboarding process, there is a coaching agreement, right?

But it's not just about like, cuz if you don't do this, then I can do that. It's not, it's, it's that, but it's more so like in that agreement and in your intake form, I wanna know. What are you here for? When I do sales calls, if you book a sales call with me to learn about hiring me as your life coach, as a co pilot in your co-creation of your life, I'm going to ask you more questions about what it is you want, what are your desires and what's in the way. What do you think is in the way, more than I'm gonna talk about things like price and any of the my process and my framework. No, no, no. We're gonna spend the majority of our time on a sales call talking about your desires, your goals, what's in the way, and then I get to tell you based on that, here's the plan of action. Here's why it'll work. Do you wanna move forward? It's really that simple.

So the commitments that I'm talking about you guys, it's always going to come back to the commitment that you made to yourself. It's not about your commitment to me. I'm more concerned with you holding your commitment to yourself really than I am with you holding your commitment to me. Because if you hold, or when I should say, when you hold your commitment to yourself, to your dreams, to your goals. You will not have any other choice than to hold your commitment to me.

Well, on that note... you guys, this is really fun. This is really hot. We're at 115 degrees now and I think this is a great place to go ahead and wrap this up, but I have a little info before I completely go. Thank you so much for listening. If you enjoyed this, please share it. Rate, leave a review on this podcast and share it with others and make sure you subscribe so that you don't miss any of our episodes. Okay.