



The 2026 Coaching Business Reality Check

What's Actually Working Now (And What to Stop Doing)

The market has changed. What worked in 2020-2021 doesn't work anymore.

During the pandemic, everyone was online, everyone was buying coaching, and standing out was easier. But now? The market is saturated. Parents are more careful with their money. And the coaches who are still thriving are the ones who've adapted.

If you're still using 2020's playbook, you're going to keep struggling. Here's what you need to know.

3 Strategies That Are Failing in 2026

These approaches worked when the market was hot. They don't work anymore. Stop doing them.

1. Trying to Be Everything to Everyone

What it looked like:

- "I help parents" with no further specificity
- Offering services for toddlers, teens, and everything in between
- Marketing to anyone who might possibly need parenting support

Why it fails now:

With so many coaches in the market, generic positioning makes you invisible. Parents are looking for specialists who understand their specific situation. If you try to serve everyone, you end up reaching no one.

2. Relying on Social Media Alone

What it looked like:

- Posting daily on Instagram and hoping people find you
- Building your business entirely on someone else's platform
- No email list, no direct connection with your audience

Why it fails now:

Algorithm changes have made organic reach nearly impossible. You can post every day and still reach only 5-10% of your followers. Without an email list, you don't own your audience—the platform does. When they change the rules, your business suffers.



3. Hoping Your Work Will Speak for Itself

What it looked like:

- Believing that if you just do great work, clients will find you
- Avoiding "marketing" because it feels uncomfortable
- Waiting for word-of-mouth referrals to sustain your business

Why it fails now:

Great coaching isn't enough anymore. There are hundreds of great coaches competing for the same clients. If people don't know you exist, they can't hire you. Marketing isn't optional—it's essential.

3 Approaches That Are Working in 2026

These are the strategies that successful coaches are using right now. If you want to thrive, not just survive, do these.

1. Niche Down Until It Feels Too Specific

What this looks like:

- "I help single moms of strong-willed preschoolers stop the daily power struggles"
- "I work with adoptive parents navigating attachment challenges with school-age kids"
- "I support parents of autistic teens through meltdowns and communication breakdowns"

Why this works:

Specificity attracts. When parents see your message and think "That's exactly me," they pay attention. You become the obvious choice for your specific audience instead of one option among hundreds.

Real Example:

Sarah went from "I help parents with difficult children" to "I help burned-out moms of ADHD kids ages 7-12 create calm mornings without yelling." Her inquiry rate tripled in 60 days.

2. Build Your Email List Like Your Business Depends on It (Because It Does)

What this looks like:

- Create a free resource that solves one specific problem
- Direct all social media traffic to your email list
- Email your list weekly with valuable content and authentic connection
- Make offers through email, not just social media



Why this works:

Your email list is the only audience you actually own. When you send an email, people see it. No algorithm decides whether your message reaches them. Email converts better than any other channel—consistently.

Real Example:

Marcus shifted his strategy from "grow my Instagram" to "grow my email list." In one year, he built a list of 800 subscribers. His last program launch brought in \$12,000—entirely through email.

3. Show Up Consistently with a Clear Marketing Rhythm

What this looks like:

- Choose ONE platform where your ideal clients actually are
- Post or send content 1-2 times per week (not daily—quality over quantity)
- Make an offer at least once a month
- Track what works and do more of it

Why this works:

Consistency builds trust. When people see you showing up regularly with valuable content, they start to see you as the expert. And when they're ready to invest, you're top of mind. The key is sustainable consistency—not burnout hustle.

Real Example:

Jessica committed to emailing her list every Tuesday and posting on Instagram twice a week. No more, no less. After six months of consistency, her enrollment rate doubled—not because she was doing more, but because she was doing it reliably.

The #1 Mindset Shift Conscious Coaches Need Right Now

Here's what I see happening with coaches who are struggling:

They're waiting to feel "ready" before they market themselves. They're waiting until they have more training, more confidence, more testimonials, more something.

But the market doesn't wait for you to feel ready. And your ideal clients are hiring someone *right now*—either you or someone else.

Want more support building your coaching business? Email Dajana.yoakley@delightinparenting.com
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The shift:

From: "I'll market when I feel more confident."

To: "I'll build confidence by showing up even when it's uncomfortable."

Marketing isn't something you do after you feel ready. Marketing is how you become ready.

Your Next Step:

Pick one thing from the "What's Working" section and commit to it for the next 90 days. Not all three—just one. Master it, see results, then add the next piece. The coaches who are thriving in 2026 aren't doing everything. They're doing the right things consistently.