4 Ways to Make Coaching Difficult Clients Easier

If you stay in the coaching business long enough, you are eventually going to run into what industry professionals call “problem clients.” These are clients that are difficult to deal with for whatever reason, and they often have to be handled with kid gloves. The behavior itself varies, and can run the gamut from anger to inappropriate comments or touching. You need to develop a strategy for dealing with these problem clients and see if you can change their behavior, and if not, your strategy should include a plan for parting ways with them.

1. **Be committed to their success but don’t let it go too far.** You want to be there for your clients and you want them to succeed but if you invest too much of yourself in their success, you are going to be crushed when they don’t make it. Don’t allow the outcome of a particular coaching project make you feel emotional or responsible. Also, make sure that you simply aren’t getting too close to your client personally as well.
2. **Watch out for warning signs:** There are often warning signs that you can look out for when you are working with clients to spot a problem long before it happens. Of course, this does take some experience so you may still have some problem clients at first that sneak up on your but just learn from each one and look for those warning signs in future clients so that you can cut them off before it goes too far.
3. **When your energy is waning, cut them loose:** If you have a client that is just draining your of your energy every time you talk to them, even if they aren’t doing it intentionally, you may want to consider cutting them loose. If you have a client that is making you feel badly after a session, it could easily leak into your personal life and your time with other clients.
4. **Say what you need to say:** Make sure that you are saying what you need to say and not being indirect or vague. Make sure that people understand you, and that you have laid down firm ground rules and are calling people on their BS when they need it. In addition, if you have a client that you no longer think is a good fit for your coaching, speak up and tell them rather than letting it continue, because you’re not doing either of you any favors.