

# The Coach/Client Relationship and the Mental Side of Fitness...

Mon, 1/31 3:44PM 49:39

## SUMMARY KEYWORDS

people, clients, counseling, person, trainers, snips, health, alcohol, mental health, gene, fitness, genetic test, science, years, nutrition, education, research, coaches, area, lewis

## SPEAKERS

Dr. Lisa Lewis, Dr. Mike T Nelson

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### Dr. Mike T Nelson 00:00

Hey, welcome back to the flex and diet podcast. I'm your host, Dr. Mike T. Nelson. And on this podcast we talk about all things to help you lift more weight, performance, body composition, add some more muscle. And today, excuse me, I've been inhaling shock in the gym, which isn't good. We've got my good friend, Dr. Lisa Lewis on the program. And we had a good discussion about the different aspects on more of the mental side of lifting and how to make progress. She is a licensed psychologist, certified addiction counselor, Doctor of Education in counseling and sports psychology. And she's also a fitness enthusiast. She's written for different websites such as tea nation, personal trainers Development Center, the presented at the fitness Summit, where I first met her and her husband, Tony gentle core, known Tony for a long time, we got to hang out with both a while back now. And she's also written for Girls Gone strong. She has a really great product out. It's one of those products where I wish I would have gone through this myself. Years ago when I started called psych skills for fitness pros. You will find a link for it here under whatever your podcast favorite player is. Note, I'm pretty sure it's an affiliate link. I don't know if the affiliate link is still working or not. But we'll just assume that it is. So I do make some money off of it, but really enjoyed the product. I think it's really good. She does a great job of having experience in both counseling and also working with fitness professionals. So enjoy this podcast with Dr. Lisa Lewis, as always is brought to you by the flex diet certification. If you're looking for a certification to get your arms around nutrition and recovery for yourself or for your clients, go to [flexdiet.com](http://flexdiet.com) FL exdt.com And you'll be able to get on the waitlist for the next time that it opens. I'll put you on the daily newsletter, lots of great free content, go to [flexdiet.com](http://flexdiet.com). And enjoy the program here. Dr. Lisa Lewis. Hey, welcome back to the podcast. And I'm here today with Dr. Lisa Lewis. Thank you so much for being on the podcast again. Or I don't remember if you've even been on here before but I know we've chatted before and people have I'm sure senior information around. So thank you for making the time.

### Dr. Lisa Lewis 02:46

You're welcome. And I do think I was on once in the in the past. So it's good to be back. It

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Dr. Mike T Nelson 02:50

was a while ago, I know that I'm starting to lose track of like who I've had on and who I haven't so

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Dr. Lisa Lewis 02:57

good sign. Yeah.

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Dr. Mike T Nelson 03:00

Today we're gonna chat about some mental health aspects of fitness. And in case if people have been living under a rock, give us a little bit of your background and you're doing some super interesting stuff. Now I know your time is split between two different areas.

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Dr. Lisa Lewis 03:14

Yeah, so I'm a therapist by trade. I have a bachelor's degree in Psych a master's degree in clinical psychology and a doctoral degree in counseling and sports psychology. So I started off being a master's level therapist and working with people who had mental illness either inpatient psychiatry, inpatient substance abuse, or community mental health. And then I worked in addiction specifically for about five years, I got a specialty in addiction counseling, and I ran an intensive outpatient program for people newly recovered from joggers for alcohol use for about five years. And then I earned the degree in counseling and sports psychology, which was more focused on positive psychology, thriving counseling and psychological intervention for everybody along the mental health spectrum, whether they're struggling with a mental illness for if they're healthy and functioning, but want to really level up whether that be in performance or professionally or just in their life and in their relationships. So what I love about my career is I've gotten the opportunity to work with people at every point along kind of the health spectrum, in terms of how well they're doing and where they want to take themselves how they want to evolve. So after I finished my doctoral degree, I worked in college counseling for some time, which I liked, because in that environment, you get to be a generalist and really work with everybody. It could be like your nine o'clock person is presenting because they're having their first episode of clinical depression and your 10 o'clock person is coming in because they had a nasty breakup. And they need to talk about it, you know, and I knew that I wanted to have a private practice and I wanted to do my own thing and because of sports psych being in that program, I knew that what I really cared about a lot was exercise psychology and motivation and wellness, what helps people to really take good care of themselves and to care about taking care of themselves. My dissertation was focused on that. So I opened a little tiny private practice and eventually left college counseling. And that's the practice I still have today, my LLC, which is probably half, seeing clients, and some clients, you know, have issues with anxiety, depression, trauma, eating, some clients don't have issues, they're really kicking a lot of ass, but they want to be kicking more ass. And that could be either performance related. Or lately, since the pandemic, it's been a lot more professionally related in in career. I mean, sometimes people just want to work on aspects of their relationship or their social skills, but really don't have a diagnosable disorder, they just want

more for themselves. And then there's this other niche, which is why we're talking which is in fitness and in wellness. And so in that, in this niche, I will present at conferences I'll do in services or workshops for people who are coaches. So either personal trainers, physical therapists, nutrition coaches, chiropractors, people who work with people around their body, but who needs psychological skills and who need communication skills, counseling skills. I also have a course that I've developed since working with these kinds of folks, that's called psych skills for fit pros. And that really embodies what my work is here in this world is how, if you are a fitness professional, how do you use psychological skills to help people get results, to retain people over time, and to help them to get the best out of themselves? And also just to have awareness and education around mental health? What is mental health? How do people take care of mental health and what's great about fitness is that pursuing health and fitness is fabulous for your mental health, as well. So even though a lot of fitness professionals might not identify themselves as like, being a mental health professional, they definitely interact with people's mental health and psychology. And they definitely can positively influence people's mental health and their psychology.

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Dr. Mike T Nelson 07:23

Yeah, I remember when I started training within the first five clients, I was like, Ah, I know a fair amount about exercise physiology. I had started my PhD in the area, but I had taken a fair amount of classes did a lot of minor in Chemistry, blah, blah, blah. And I'm like, Wow, this can't be too bad. And I realized very short, I was like, I should have not been an exercise physiology person, I should have been a psychologist, because this has almost nothing to do with exercise physiology, especially in the general population. I was just like, why am I doing and so I ended up going back and took a bunch of neurobiology classes just to try to have some basis to figure out like, what the hell's going on.

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Dr. Lisa Lewis 08:09

And that's, I think that's why I ended up really leaning into this space and developing the course is because time and time again, I would interact with coaches, who would say, some version of what you just said, you know, like, I know a lot about the x's and o's and program design and physiology. But I am not doing that day to day like I am dealing with people and people's, you know, difficulty getting out of their own way and their own psychologies and and I don't have any education or support around that.

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Dr. Mike T Nelson 08:39

Yeah. And then you're now working for a startup company to correct. Yeah, so there's nothing else going on.

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Dr. Lisa Lewis 08:49

And it all started as just a little consulting gig, you know, sometimes companies will approach me to write a little something or, you know, do a little something. So it started off as just a little something. And the company is called GE well health. It is a genomic based digital platform

that is designed to use genomics to inform health and wellness choices and behaviors. So I started off just maybe eight hours a week, being a part of meetings and kind of being a think tank for how to get this thing started and then creating content. And I really just loved it. You know, I never have been on the business end of things. And it is a collaboration with physicians with people who study genetics, with business and marketing people. So it's just been extremely fascinating to be part of a multidisciplinary team and to really think about really things like user experience, and how can behavioral science and psychology help people to engage to be motivated And to actually use some kind of technology to enhance their wellness or to change their behavior that actually lasts over time. And so, yeah, after eight or nine months of being involved, they asked me to come on board. So I'm there half my time during the week, and I'm the head of Behavioral Sciences, which has been exciting adventure to kind of learn about how I can help every arm of the company from product development and software, to the content to how we present the content, to working with the marketing team, and to helping to support the sales team. So it's a pretty cool gig where I get to like really cross train and learn a lot of stuff that is way outside of, you know, my own education. And it's been challenging, but it's been really a fun ride so far.

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Dr. Mike T Nelson 10:58

Is is the, the oversimplified thought pattern here that in the future, some people like a consumer, like me would do a genetic test, and that would kind of steer them in one direction for various aspects of health, including mental health, then are what is kind of the basis of it? Yeah.

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Dr. Lisa Lewis 11:17

So that's a good question, the focus, the primary focus of the app is musculoskeletal health. And so the idea is that a consumer or somebody who's an employee, so who we are speaking to now are insurers of employers who have, you know, a whole bunch of maybe teachers or truck drivers or employees who are under a health plan, and that the employer would offer this as part of their benefit. We are out there in the market as well. But we're thinking about this as a as a prevention or early intervention kind of application. So the user could have genomic testing. And right now, you know, we are looking at, I think it's maybe like 15, or 16 different areas, so maybe 30 snips. So pieces of genetic information, to look at whether or not people might have higher risk for things like osteoporosis, osteoarthritis, tendon, ligament injuries, other areas of musculoskeletal health, we are also looking at risk of alcohol use disorder, and depression. So you know, as you probably well know, this is an area of science that's very new, and is evolving all the time. So the team, all of us on the team have been very conservative about looking at the literature and saying, Okay, is there enough evidence to support us, you know, looking at a snip and saying, Yes, this means you might have higher risk or average risk, or below average risk even to develop some kind of condition. So our mission is really as the science moves forward, to follow the science and to look at more and more snips in different areas of health. You know, as the literature continues to grow, and looking at, in particular, like genome wide association studies, where we're looking at huge populations and the prevalence of certain variants in genetics, but that's only one piece of the puzzle. So we would present users with, you know, here's here are different risk areas for you. And here is we might recommend to let's say, somebody has a higher risk above average risk for developing osteoporosis. So what do they need to do, they need to take certain care of their nutrition, and

they need to pick up heavy stuff and do you know, weight bearing activity. So not that the recommendations we would provide are like way out there would be very disruptive because everybody should be eating well, and picking up heavy stuff, right. But that it would provide this extra layer of information about risk, which will may enhance motivation of people to really have more agency to take action just to provide that extra information about their health. So we're hoping that the genomic will inform decision making around health behaviors and then that we can use that to help them identify goals and things they want to work on. And then we provide content in six different areas which are nutrition, strength, sleep, wellness or mental health, recovery, and mobility. So again, there's a musculoskeletal focus, and there's content Arthur's the who are physical therapists, surgeons, non operative, orthopedic doctors, cardiology, we have a couple of sleep specialists, you know, those kinds of folks we have a health coach as well. And trying to offer structure You know, people getting little pieces of information like that might be on a feed with just pieces of information or suggestions about improving sleep, or sleep hygiene, and then bigger pieces of content, that would be maybe curriculum around a weight loss plan or learning about anti inflammatory nutritional habits, so on and so forth. So it's very much, you know, be still being developed. But we are out there in the market. And you know, I think there's a lot more to come in terms of how we evolve in which directions will grow, or what other kinds of snips will start looking at in the future.

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Dr. Mike T Nelson 15:40

Yeah, I've done a 123, like four genetic tests so far over the past maybe five years? And I don't know, I always go back and forth on it. I think from a research standpoint, this is definitely not my area of research at all. It's fascinating, and I keep hoping for more direct links, because I think it's something that people, the general population wants the answer, right, they want to know, what am I at risk for? What do I do? And as you know, yes, science is rarely ever that clear on frickin anything. And if it is, it takes 1020 30 years of even stuff like carbohydrates right there, we're still learning new stuff about carbohydrates. We've been looking at this for well over 150 years, we've poked needles but Bergstrom needle at 1963, we've done muscle biopsies to directly look at it for decades. And we still have questions. Right. But on the flip side, I think even if it only is enhancing the outcome, and the sciences, yeah, it's there. But maybe it's still early on. I think for a lot of people, if your goal is to get them to do a certain action, I found that testing works really well. Like I do an at home, fish oil test runs every lipid in their body, I can look at a dietary analysis and have a pretty damn good idea if they're going to be low in essential fatty acids or not, by in terms of getting them to do something I found and tested this over time that if I show them a report, that's a valid report that says hey, you're pretty low on these things. They're like, oh, oh, I didn't know like, what do I do? Right? There seems to be this kind of intrinsic motivation to kind of you want to win the test all the time. And I think that can be useful if the main goal is to drive change. So yeah, I'm always fascinated by this. Okay, here's what the hardcore research says, you know, how much of the bleeding edge Do you want to be on? And then what is your overall goal? Is your goal to be published in a journal? Or is your goal to get general population to do more of the things that we already know, but they weren't doing them before. So if this drives them in a better direction, in my opinion, that's okay, as long as you're not making huge grievous errors with stuff, which I wouldn't imagine that you would be,

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Dr. Lisa Lewis 18:06

right. And so I, this is a very important point that you're making, because we're way way, way

far away. I don't know if we're ever get to a place where we say, Here's your genetic test, here's exactly what you should do, we can predict your future. But the information I think is so compelling to people. And one example that I will use is, when I was looking at the literature around the genetics around alcohol use and alcohol use disorder, you know, they've looked at probably eight to 10 Different snips. And as I was combing through all this, there were really only two that I found compelling. And they were they had to do with production of the enzymes for alcohol dehydrogenase, a couple of different enzymes for that. And to me, they had like the really the strongest statistics behind them. And there were multiple studies that found that if you had this variant where you can produce more alcohol dehydrogenase, there's a higher likelihood that you could have a problem with alcohol or have alcohol use disorder. And so this is not saying to a person, oh, you've got the alcoholism gene, no thing that say, you might be a person or come from a family that is really able to metabolize alcohol well. And what that means is that you might naturally be able to drink more than all of your buddies when you're out drinking, and the more you drink, and the earlier you start drinking, the higher the chances are that you could get yourself into trouble. So it's not saying Oh, you're going to get alcohol. It's just saying the way your body chemistry works. It's set up for you to be able to drink more heavily and there was some controversy among me and my colleagues among whether or not we should include the sensitive information about alcohol and would people freak out if they saw this? And you know, number one, I I feel like when it comes to substance use and mental health, there's a stigma around that. But we're not saying that we're just saying what I feel is very compelling. Because if I was talking to someone in their 20s, or 30s, who was questioning their alcohol use? And I could say to them, okay, look, it looks like folks in your family or genetic background, you may have this predisposition to, like, be able to drink more and longer than other people, which means you might have a history of just drinking more. And, and that person would probably say, yeah, it's, I'm totally like, the first guy in on the last guy out, I'm the guy who drinks the most, and my family really gets after it. And like Uncle Bob, and Uncle Joe can really, you know, and so there's this connection, that I feel like what you're saying is extremely compelling. And just not that we're telling them something they don't already know, because that person probably knows that there's heavy drinkers in their family, or it probably is going to resonate. And then somebody who doesn't drink might say, well, I don't even drink I have, like, you know, a glass of wine twice a year, or whatever. So okay, it doesn't mean, it doesn't mean that you're going to develop alcoholism, you know, there's nothing for you to worry about. So the science is really a lot less sexy. I think, then maybe somebody who's uninformed might think it is it's not fortune telling. It's just, I think it could be really useful in giving people one more added reason to try to take better care of themselves.

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Dr. Mike T Nelson 21:31

Yeah, I, my view of a lot of testing now is even with heart rate variability, whatever is most of the time that I think the outside perception is that it makes your job easier, but I think it makes your job harder, but better. Right, it allows me to present something and be like, hey, it looks like you're really stressed. I don't see any change in your indicators. I don't see any training performance differences, like, you know, what's going on? Or if I didn't have that information, I probably would have never asked that question, I might have missed some huge event going on in their life. You know, I had this happen a couple years ago, I remember and the person's like, oh, I had my dog for 11 years. And he passed away, you know, two days ago. She never mentioned it never talked about it at all. And I don't think if I would have seen a change in stress that she probably would have not ever mentioned it. You know, some as I think of testing

as just ways, like when you said, Hey, you have a higher risk of this, does this match with what you're seeing? Maybe it does, maybe it doesn't. But I would guess that you would get more further into a conversation with that starting and then be like, Hey, what's going on?

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Dr. Lisa Lewis 22:42

Mm hmm. Yeah. So it definitely gives some pieces to talk about, I definitely think it could be compelling. And it's not, it's not ever going to be the end all be all. Yeah, it's so I mean, that's science is so complicated as, as you I think you are familiar with. And I think we have a long way to go in terms of understanding how all the dots connect, and how all factors, including the environment combine to create, you know, how we feel and how our health is and how we behave. But it's really cool to learn about it and to and to think about it, especially coming from a counseling background, which is like pure application and environment, you know?

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Dr. Mike T Nelson 23:26

Yeah. And I think some of those just genetic changes, predispose themselves to the more useful conversations, right? So one of the genetic tests I took said, I got what was it a CT scan one or three gene for like, sprinting? I don't remember what I had, I think I actually had it, which I was shocked. But then I'm like, okay, so if I'm using this on clients, and the clients goal is speed and power, and they already know, they're probably not going to be an Olympic athlete, because they're coming to me in their mid 30s, you know, probably not going to make the Olympic team now. And their goal is speed and power. And they have the gene and they don't have the gene, what I really train them any different, right? I think there's a lack of data to say, hey, we took this group of people, they had this version of the gene, we trained them this way, they got this much better. This group didn't have that version. So we did this different training method, which we got an equivalent result. And I think that's like the next level with at least on the performance side, like intervention stuff that we're missing. Right. So the clients probably not going to change their goal, and I'm left with, okay, you have the gene or don't have the gene. I don't know, for me as a coach, how I would train you any different. So I don't know how it would affect what I'm doing. Yeah. And I think that's the hard part was some of the genetic aspects too.

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Dr. Lisa Lewis 24:45

Mm hmm. Yeah, I mean, so far, we're just trying to see if we can identify common variants present with certain, you know, so there, you know, they call it the Sprinter gene. And some, I think in ancestry, they call it the Sprinter gene. And I end, there's another company I recently looked at, we don't call that snip the Sprinter gene, I forget if we call it muscle recovery or what but it's like, it's not sitting in our bodies called the Sprinter gene, right, we can associate the prevalence of that variant in that snip with certain kinds of traits or outcomes. So it really is a very young, very, very young science, but it's so cool. And it's so fascinating that I think it really piques people's interest. And whatever gets you in the door, you know, whatever gets you caring about doing something that's good for yourself. Let's go.

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Dr. Mike T Nelson 25:40



Yeah, yeah. And I think that's where, like I said that the error gets made, right, because you've got all the hardcore academics are like, ah, we just don't know enough about it's not useful. But like you said, maybe it gets you farther into a conversation that is with someone of your background, very useful, you know, for the person. And, you know, this point, I'm like, hey, if it gets you to eat better, and move more, even if the science is a little shaky, I'm probably okay with it. Right, which I know, a lot of people stick their head in the sand and yell at me, but you find any other intervention that's getting people to do something better. And, yeah, go for it. Because we're, we're definitely lacking in that area population, we

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Dr. Lisa Lewis 26:25

need all the tools in the toolbox. And even you know, I've worked with so many people who are big come in, because they're, they have trouble with anxiety, or they have trouble with depression, but they're not really taking a lot of action, they don't have a lot of agency, and even to be able to take a family history and to say, Okay, your dad struggles with serious clinical depression, your grandfather completed suicide, this uncle, you know, hasn't left the house in 15 years, like, you know, and just to have them see that and to say, there's a family history here, like, let's throw everything we got at it, like, get up and go outside in the morning and get the lightbox and take the vitamin D and exercise and do this. And you know, just to even be able to tell them, like, take a look at what your risk might be. And there's a lot of different ways we can come at this. I think even that is useful. So to have something in black and white, you know, from looking at your genetic blueprint. That's just another level of being able to have an impact on someone.

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Dr. Mike T Nelson 27:32

Yeah, I've always argued that if you like yourself, you're in the applied realm, right? Obviously, you've huge education background at a terminal degree a PhD. But you're working with people to get them better on a day by day basis, right? So you're definitely in the applied realm. You're living between these two worlds of the research side, it'll be hypercritical that you don't publish enough papers, you're not furthering the research, you're doing weird shit, the research doesn't approve of. When you have the experiential side, it's like, does a client that's sitting in front of you now give two fucks, about 17 studies you read last week, they don't really care. They want to get better. They're paying you money to get better. Obviously, you're going to use the research to do the best that you can. But you're not going to be 100% limited by it. Because, you know, you understand all the limits of research the population, the statistics, yeah, yeah. But it's interesting when you're in the middle, which I think we need more people to be there, because that's the applied knowledge. That's where everything actually gets moved forward. But you tend to take a lot of shit from both sides.

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Dr. Lisa Lewis 28:38

That's right. Yeah. When I first started at my, in my graduate program, the model was the scientist practitioner model. And I didn't really, I don't know, that didn't make a difference to me. And I didn't really think a lot about it. But now in my day to day life, I think a lot about that about those two worlds that you're describing, and how can I exist in the middle of that space? And I think it's the best space to be in and I think people really appreciate it because clients do



you know if you can say something to them about what's in the literature or whatever, the science that really matters to them a lot, but you have to say it like a human being you know, you cannot say out of out of an abstract or whatever. So it is a very cool but but tough line to walk.

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Dr. Mike T Nelson 29:29

Yeah, I mean, one of the things I've done with with hands on therapy that I do with some people in Minnesota is if I don't really think they're ready to open up as much and they seem just very nervous about stuff. I actually end up being more hyper clinical analytical, I'll talk to him and analytical, you know, here's your sore eyes, and here's where it attaches and this kind of stuff just right to go a little bit further on that side so that they can kind of relax a little bit more. If they seem more relaxed, and they're kind of trusting of the process. I, a lot of times don't really say much of anything about what I'm doing because I don't want to interrupt what other things may come up if they're at a point to release them. So I think that's something I've gotten a little bit better just by pure accident over time of judging, at least in that setting, like how far one side or the other do you go. And it's same thing, even with online clients to someone, you know, the hypercritical answer, some just want to be, you know, they trust you. And they're like, Okay, just do this cool, I'm good, I'm good, I don't need anything else. So it's just trying to, it's the art of trying to find where you are on that scale. And it's different for each person to

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Dr. Lisa Lewis 30:40

That's right. And that art, that is a psychological skills are like, people who are fitness professionals do use psychic skills, they do use count all the time, all the time, and what you're just saying they're like, that is a fabulous counting skill to just let there be quiet and open space to see what comes up and what's going to come out. And you're just waiting for the data that's like black belt level of, you know, cuz a lot of young professionals just want to fill up the space and talk, talk, talk, talk, talk and show how much they know. And, um, you know, fill that space. So to leave that empty space is is way harder. And then, like you said, to know, which client wants to hear every single little bit of feedback and wants a lot of education and wants their competency built, and what client just wants to like the enjoyment of being taken care of in a moment of silence, you know, that that it takes a lot of I think, like being seasoned, to be able to feel that out from person to person, and also to be thinking about what is going to be most useful, because sometimes clients don't want there to be quiet. But it really wouldn't be the best thing for them for you to fill up the space and for them to, you know, have a moment to see what comes up for them.

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Dr. Mike T Nelson 31:52

Yeah, and you're riding the line of providing them what they want, and they enjoy. So they come back so they stay compliant, and they stay with the program versus giving them also what they need at the same time. Right? Because at the end of the day, you're being paid for a result. And yeah, I could give them programming they love. But that's probably isn't gonna get them to the result. So how much of this stuff do they need? Can I weasel in, I think I've gotten a little better over time of just being straight up with them being like, Hey, okay, if you really

want to hit this goal, you need to do this. And this, if you don't want to hit this goal, or you want it to take three, four months longer, that's totally cool, we can back off on some of this, that's fine. But you can't do everything that you love to do and expect to hit this goal, right? Think in the past, have that conversation because I just wanted to avoid the whole thing all together. And then six months into it, they're mad that they didn't get the goal, and I'm thinking but you love your training, what's wrong? And yeah, I kind of hold that up.

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Dr. Lisa Lewis 32:56

That is some ninja shit right there to to really help teach, like, show that to the client that you could have this, right, that's what I'm involved. Or you could just have that. And you could do that. And that's fine with me. You know, that's really like top notch counseling skill. And I think that is the kind of thing that brings up so much anxiety and stress for trainers as they clients, they want their clients to be happy, they want to have a successful business. And at the same time, they're like, why don't the clients just do what I tell them to do? Why don't they you know, why is everybody is such a freaking hard to make them change. And and it is such a tough juggling act and in psychology and counseling, like we get a lot of training and a lot of formal education and informal, you know, supervision and encouragement around that kind of stuff. But you guys get zip. I don't know it's a really scary I think it's really scary, particularly for young people just coming into it like how do I do this dance? How do I walk this line? I'm so I'm so glad that you and other people are talking about it and saying like this is something really important because I think it's the reason that some people burn out and why they leave the industry. It's just really tricky.

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Dr. Mike T Nelson 34:10

Yeah, and even Adam, even right before I got on this call, I had an email from someone, I don't know the person who wanted a copy of the certification, I do the flextight cert for free. And I just don't have any money. And I'm like, No, we don't do that. Because people paid for it. You know, I know people who have saved up for six months, you know, in order to, you know, pay for it. So it's not fair to them to just give it for free to you lots of thinking it took me 13 years of my life to come up with it to aggregate all the data etc. And then the next email came back in and I said hey, here's another resource and get 180 videos. It's free. Basically pay whatever you want. Here's the newsletters free. Here's a whole bunch of free articles. And then the second email was the same thing of I don't have a credit card. I don't even have a penny. And it's so hard because I know I did the right thing. And I'm not going to change, yes. But at the same point, I told my wife, I'm like, okay, in the future, I will never see these emails, because Emotionally, I know, it's hard on me, because I know what it's like to start, I know what it's like to not have any money. I know what it's like to try to do something and have it be very difficult. But I also know that like, the stuff I got for free, I, consciously or unconsciously, did not appreciate as much as the stuff that I had to work for also. So not only is there a value thing, it's the sort of appreciation of it, especially until you get to a certain level and you understand how much effort went into something. Right? I think when you're new on the outside, it just looks like, oh, it's an ebook. It doesn't cost you anything, just give it to me for free. It's an online course doesn't cost you anything. It's like you don't appreciate how much time and effort anybody put into developing anything. I think as you've been around longer, you appreciate that. But especially as trainers, I think it's very easy to undervalue your service, because you just kind of feel like I don't know, I'm just having them do exercise. I'm like, but you might be

the only person like I've had people tell me stuff about, you know, alcohol addiction, all sorts of crazy stuff, which, you know, obviously, is a referral out. But most of the time, they were like, I haven't even told my spouse this, like they don't even know about it, you know, and that's the kind of things as a trainer, I think you're you're dealing with, which I would argue is a very high paid professional service. But the industry in general, I think, is, oh, you're just you're just counting reps, right? So I think it's very easy to kind of devalue and kind of give in to all these other crazy requests that also take kind of an emotional toll on you, too, which leads to trainers going, I don't know, I'm spending 40 hours a week, I'm not making any money. I just feel like I've emotionally like had it too.

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Dr. Lisa Lewis 36:55

Yeah, yeah, that stuff is also brutal. And just in the helping profession, this idea that you should give yourself away for free no matter what your service are. Because to your point, being a good coach means that you have been out there in the world having experience that you have an education that you continue, that you practice applying, so that you know how to progress and regress exercises that you know how to connect with a wide variety of clients so that you know how to get results with all different kinds of people. And that is, it may not be an article of clothing, or it may not be a piece of artwork, but it is a combination of skills and experiences that somebody is purchasing. And I totally think that it gets undervalued both in the industry and like during our education and our training, because I don't know, but when I was training, I gave my ass away for free for like a decade, you know, and then you come out of that and all of a sudden, you're supposed to charge a fee and right and then somebody asked you to have it a discount or have it for free. And of course our knee jerk is to like want to help the person to be like, Well, I didn't make any money in the last 10 years. Like, maybe this is okay, you know, it's really hard to switch into, like, now this is how much I'm worth. So again, it's it's a whole head game, to really learn how to ask for your worth and to stick to your boundaries. Like I think that's a really important story that you shared about. It was hard to to hold the line there and hold the boundary, but you know that you made the right decision for a number of different reasons.

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Dr. Mike T Nelson 38:28

Yeah. And I think that gets into just the whole I think about the entertainment industry a lot. Obviously, I'm a huge music fan. I used to DJ in college go to a lot of concerts, unfortunately not lately. But as a trainer you are at the end of the day providing an experience Yes, you have to be knowledgeable Yes, you have to provide them ways to get their goals but you are providing them an experience especially within person to a little bit lesser degree online and look at anything else that provides an experience generally is extremely expensive, right like if you want to go to a concert and you want to get front row seats, you want to go backstage you want to do VIP or whatever it is, name any band doesn't matter what you listen to, it's generally going to be quite expensive if you want to do better experience at a restaurant or wherever. But with fitness I think we've kind of relegated it to it's just the physiology or just counting reps, it's just overload when reality to me it should be those things are given you have to know how to do that you have to know the Exynos that's just that's just the baseline to get in the door. The next level is your providing experience for that person. And to me that should be something that is in general more expensive but not cheaper. And if people want other options of just you know how to do programming there's you know, different levels you can do but the

one on one I think should be the highest level in by definition, some people are not going to pay for it and that's okay I'm not saying not serve me One but have different levels. And at the highest level, it shouldn't be expensive, because you're paying for that experience, which is a little bit different to get through. I mean, I wish someone had told me that 15 years ago when I started because I was just so hyper focused on Oh, they got to do this super secret Russian periodized training programs like this last one talks about that, you know, I got better leverage by asking, Hey, what do you enjoy, and like one guy who told me when I was doing in person stuff, baseball, so I could give two craps about baseball, I just don't care. But I made it a point to look to see what was the twins doing? You know, how were the saints doing like before I had a session with him. So I could ask them about and at least appeared like I had some level of knowledge, right? I didn't care, but I knew it was important to him. And that showed that I cared about the process. And therefore it was more compliant and you know, did better. So it's all these weird little things are not necessarily related to programming that are more on the psychological aspect.

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Dr. Lisa Lewis 41:04

It's the relationship taking care of the relationship. I always say to coaches, the the health of the relationship is the most important piece of equipment that you have that rapport and your ability to connect is like will it will make the biggest difference overall in how well they respond and how much they engage? And how long the relationship lasts and their ability to be honest with you. I remember one time you shared about a client who just ate a lot of Oreos. Yeah. You didn't say you have to stop eating all the Oreos, you figured out a way to work with the Oreos. And that's just a much more realistic way to practice than telling people what to do and then getting pissed off when they don't do it.

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Dr. Mike T Nelson 41:46

Yeah. And last question for kind of related to trainers, do you think there's some maybe way for trainers to figure out if they even like doing a lot of the interactions like being a one on one trainer versus more online technician. Like one of things I figured out for myself just by brute force was, I don't like working with people one on one that much like I could do it for a couple hours a week. And once I started crossing 1015 20 hours a week, I hated my life, like I'd have a full day of doing it. And I could do it. Like if you dropped in on a session you probably wouldn't know. But man, I was toast for like two days after that. It was very energy intensive for me. And so when I switched to more online stuff, I could get clients who needed more technical information, because like a lifestyle, we can look at a bunch of other stuff. Yeah, I have people that fly in sometimes for a weekend. That's great, because I pick whoever I want, and it's super awesome to hang out with them for a weekend. But for me to do it every day is very hard. Right? No, no other people where they never have to talk about programming, someone does all the programming for them. They just execute what is written. Like they love it. They think that's like the, you know, some of the people trained for like Mark Fisher fitness, like some of the guys they're, like, they love it that if they could do that 60 hours a week, they're like happy as hell. So it's super interesting. I don't know if there's a way for people who are new listening to this, to kind of figure out maybe where you are on that spectrum, or is it just kind of reps,

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Dr. Lisa Lewis 43:20

I think you've got to check your tank, like you mentioned, you know, you said to me, I could do it, but then I was shot for two days. So if the if the activity fills the tank and you feel energized, and you feel fulfilled, that's a good sign. If you're zapped and you need whatever you need to refuel the tank, you know, if it drains you, then that's information, too. So I think you got to pay attention to what happens after you do it and then respect that. Just know what what I hate to hear from people is I'm just being lazy or I'm just being what don't you don't judge it. You just look at it like data and say if it's sucking the energy out of my tank, then that eventually is going to lead to diminishing returns as to something that makes you feel good or makes you feel like you've got more in the tank.

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Dr. Mike T Nelson 44:11

Yeah. My last quick comment on that and we'll wrap up is it also one of the big aha for me was when I realized I got this from Mike Bledsoe and Doug Larson was the things I was really good at. Were easy for me to do. And I equated the value of that on the amount of time it took me to execute a task. Right. So I did some research for some companies and like, oh, yeah, this is super easy. It took me a half hour, but I knew exactly where to look. I was well versed. I had read all most of the literature up until that point. So it only took me a half hour. You'll turns out later I found out they had some other people on staff that had been looking for weeks and couldn't find anything. But I charge them just for a half hour of my time like oh, here you go. I was easy. And they're like, No, you should charge more for that because it's a higher value to the people who are getting it and don't Based on the time it took you to do it, because if you're better at something, in general, it's gonna take you less time than if you're not so good at it. I was like, Oh crap,

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Dr. Lisa Lewis 45:13

and that they are benefiting from all of your experience, right reps you have in that you knew exactly where to go. So I think this is such an important point you're making that is part of your value is all of that ability you've accrued, and that the fact that you can execute it and a half an hour should cost more.

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Dr. Mike T Nelson 45:30

Yeah. And so for trainers who are out there, lamenting that it doesn't take them three hours to do a program now, like 10 years into their career, then it's okay, like, it should take you a lot less time and the program should be a lot better than what it was before. And consequently, you should charge more and more part of your mindset. It's yeah, it's easy to get kind of dragged down the other way.

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Dr. Lisa Lewis 45:53

Totally. 100%. Yeah, it's really great. You're talking about this, I hope everybody is absorbing it, and that they can absorb more, because I think we all who are helping people, and using the quote unquote, soft skills, I think we need to hear a lot more of this.

**D** Dr. Mike T Nelson 46:09

Yeah. And so tell us more where they can learn about your course, which I really loved. I thought it was awesome. And I've highly recommended it to a lot of people, because it's one of the things I wish I had when I started like many, many years ago would have, and it probably would have saved me like literally years. And a lot of headache. Thank you. So

**D** Dr. Lisa Lewis 46:27

the course is called syscalls to pit pros. And you can go to my website, which is my home base, that's Dr. Lewis consulting.com. And you can click on Products, and then access the course that way. Or you could just go to psych skills for fit proz.com. What is available now is volume one, which is all the foundations of motivation and behavior change. And I also would encourage people who are listening to follow me on Instagram. That's Dr. Lewis at Dr. Lewis consulting, which really is all content around strength training, fitness and mental health and how those two things combined how they help one another, how they're inextricably linked.

**D** Dr. Mike T Nelson 47:07

And you have a newsletter, too.

**D** Dr. Lisa Lewis 47:09

I do have a newsletter, which you can sign up for via my website. Thank you. I forgot to mention. Yeah.

**D** Dr. Mike T Nelson 47:15

And the main website again is Dr. Lewis consulting.com. Perfect. Awesome. Well, thank you so much for all your time today. I really appreciate it was always great to chat with you again. And hopefully we'll get to meet up in person again, at some point maybe this year, hopefully sometimes. Yeah. I

**D** Dr. Lisa Lewis 47:33

hope you fall. Yes,

**D** Dr. Mike T Nelson 47:34

it would for sure. Yeah. Awesome. Well, thanks again. Really appreciate it.

**D** Dr. Lisa Lewis 47:39



Dr. Lisa Lewis 47:39

Thanks, my Take care.



Dr. Mike T Nelson 47:42

Thank you so much for listening to the podcast. Really appreciate it. As you probably realized, I am back from Costa Rica. I made it out of quarantine. If you have no idea what I'm talking about. Listen to the last episode with my buddy, Ryan the cure. I kind of go into it a little bit, but I am back. So it is nice to be back home even though it is quite a bit colder than it was in Costa Rica. Thank you so much for listening to this podcast, Dr. Lisa Lewis. Give me some feedback. Let me know what you'd liked something you didn't like. We take all forms of reviews, whatever stars you want to give the podcast. If you enjoyed it, please hit the subscribe button. That helps us out a lot. Thank you so much. And for more information if you want on the nutrition and recovery side, go to [flexdiet.com](http://flexdiet.com) [flxdt.com](http://flxdt.com) For eight different interventions on how to maximize your ability to recover using nutrition and different recovery methods such as sleep and walking. This is also great for body composition without destroying your health. This is mainly designed for coaches. So it's a system on how you can coach your clients through it. But about 40% of the people who have picked it up so far have enrolled are actually more advanced fitness enthusiast so it works for them also, but was primarily designed as a complete system for coaches to walk people through nutrition. So go to [flexdiet.com](http://flexdiet.com), FL EXDT Click on to the waitlist there. They'll put you on the free newsletter. Thank you so much. Thank you to Dr. Lisa Lewis for doing this podcast. always wonderful to chat with her. We will talk to you again next week. See ya