



Episode Transcript

Danny Lennon: So actually nicely building off the back of our last discussion, I think this will be hopefully practically useful to you all, given the practitioners we have here for our discussion today. (The goal) is how to use non-tracking approaches with clients, particularly who want to improve body composition or performance. So this is a nice blend of what we've just discussed of: on one hand there are changes we want to make to body composition and performance. But if we don't want someone to have to track calories, what other options do we have? How do we go about that and how do we help people who maybe are having issues with certain types of tracking? So one of the things that we had noted that commonly crops up in this area is that there is almost to some degree a problematic statement of people thinking if someone's not following (the plan) , what are they doing wrong? Who's "at fault"? What are the problems with this? So maybe I'll start with you, Eric, because you are well known as someone who puts the fault on the client at all times (laughs) . So is it really true what we hear on the internet that if someone is not able to achieve their goals, it's purely their fault for not being able to follow a certain set of recommendations?

Eric Helms: There's actually a really simple flow chart here. So you are the coach, right? And then on Instagram you'll see other coaches. So then you go: "okay, is this my client or their client?" If it's your client, it's the client's fault,

right? And if it is another coach's client, it's that coach's fault and they should hire you! Then when they become your client, they go back to the start of the flow chart and it is their fault.

No, I'm just kidding. Yeah, my answer to this will actually be to reject the premise because I think if you're coaching from a perspective of where you're trying to identify whether it was your fault or the client's fault I wonder how much of your entire coaching philosophy is not collaborative enough or maybe not client-centered enough.

And more so, I think you should view yourself as someone who's there to try to help them achieve their goals, not the goals that you think they should have or what might be optimal for them. Your job is to help them and reflect on, help them have a better reflection on what's happening. So if they are unable to meet a set of protocols, you sit down with them and go, look, let's talk about our goals, or your goals.

And they established their goals, and then we go, all right, so when we first had our consultation, we thought this would be a good strategy to get there. It doesn't seem like it's helping you achieve your goals. Where do you see the issue is? And then you go from there. Notice I've said, okay, basically if I wanted to be mean about it: "you had these goals, you couldn't reach them, and you're not following the plan I set forth." You know, that's the way you don't do it!

And it actually is a different conversation, but you're able to help them just reflect on, these are the things I think I want, and that may have changed, they may have realized, no, that's not actually my goal anymore. And once that goal changed, then the motivation comes back. That's a possibility. That could come from this conversation.

Or it could be, yeah, we sat down and we both give our best guess collaboratively of what we thought would help me achieve those goals. It's not working. And you go, okay, let's go through that process again. And that, I think is really what it should look like.

I don't actually find any utility in framing it as, "oh, is this my bad or your bad?" That does work in marriage really well, though. In like any other relationship, that joke is to prove the point. That if you're trying to be

solution oriented rather than find fault, that's the only pathway to finding a pathway forward.

So I think it is a very understandable knee jerk to protect your feelings as a coach or your practices or your own thoughts of expertise or for the client. And this does happen to protect their perception that they haven't been being a quote unquote good client. And when the client does that, even though you are being like a coach centered at of person it can stuff you into it.

And I will admit that's happened to me where I get I think we're doing that whole thing I talked about, we're having, I'm being coach-centered and then they say "what have you done for me lately?" Basically, and the knee jerk thing is "here's the emails. What are you talking about? We had this, we agreed on this", and I think you don't want to take that bait. Instead, you want to sit back, listen, reflect, and go like, "all right so what were your expectations of me? And then here's what I think they should be". . And then try to get it back into that solution oriented.

Here are your goals. Here's what we agreed to do together. Here's how I'm trying to support you. Can I support you differently or better? So yeah, you always want to try to get it back to that framework of how do we work on achieving your goals and what's the mismatch? And don't get sucked into the "who's fault is it?" because I think it is only negative.

Danny Lennon: Sure. So if we've moved away from attaching fault and we're starting to go down this path now of how do we look at this failure of adherence to some sort of recommendation. And how do we fix that? Before we get to some strategies, I think Mackenzie I might ask you about how would we go about working out what is that bottleneck?

What is the reason for that lack of adherence? What might a conversation with someone look like to try and get to the bottom of okay, there is some failure to adhere here at this moment, but how do we work out why that is the case? What might a conversation look like?

Mackenzie Baker: Yeah, so that's a really good point you made. Firstly, is that there's a reason why someone isn't adherent. There's always a reason why someone struggles to adhere to an expectation or an intervention. And as a

practitioner working with a client, it's, part of your job is to try uncover what the barrier is and then develop collaboratively in a client-centered manner what the solution is.

Okay. So is the barrier ambivalence to change? Is it effort? Cost? The mission of tracking macros or following whatever meal plan or what have you, is that the reason? Is someone not interested in doing this particular thing? Are they not interested in doing a daily habit checklist?

They want to go hardcore and track their macros because they've got buy into that. So I think the crux of the conversation when you're trying to troubleshoot is to firstly ask the client what they think. Don't rush to provide the solution. Start off by asking. What they think and then that might uncover a few clues that can then formulate an open discussion around what to do next.

And I really my thing is not blaming the coach/the client. The thing I have the problem with is when a coach would say, *"I've given you the tools, I've given you a flexible dieting ebook. I've given you a link to my fitness pal. It's your choice. It's on you for not using those tools."*

That's the issue I have because it hasn't actually explored why are these issues why is, why are these tools not being used? So the conversation would go why do, why are you struggling with this? What do you feel is the barrier? And then open collaborative discussion where you're asking things like yeah, open questions that are exploring these notions. And then also it's saying we tried this. That's okay, that it didn't work out. That's fine. Not belittling or shaming, not making someone feel shameful for the lack of adherence and saying, okay, where do we want to steer the ship next? We've learned from this experience because every, every experience in nutrition or even life is a positive opportunity to learn and develop some positive lessons that you can apply moving forwards.

Okay. Macro tracking didn't work for you. What do you want to do next? And then you go through that, what I spoke about yesterday, where you're collaboratively determining the next how or how you might adjust that intervention. One point I forgot to mention is that one reason why someone might not adhere is because the goal doesn't actually align with their values.

And that's one thing that you might want to explore through that collaborative discussion. I hope that answers the question.

Danny Lennon: Very much so to build on that, because we've at this point talking about, okay, there's an importance to work out. Where, or what is maybe one of the causes for this lack of adherence, but maybe to put some kind of clear examples for people to connect to, to practice.

Maybe I'll ask you, Zoya, is there some specific examples that you could maybe talk us through of where a client has faced an issue where there has been an inability to adhere to whatever type of recommendation? And what was the kind of troubleshooting process to get to a strategy? Because presumably the strategy we put in place depends where they're having the issue. So maybe just to give an example for people, is there anything that comes to mind that either you've dealt with or you see commonly come up where people do struggle with adherence and how might a practitioner try and manage that?

Zoya Huschtscha: Yeah, absolutely. I think Mackenzie outlined a lot of different strategies in terms of yeah, tracking and non tracking methods.

It's about listening to the client and what they want and what their lifestyle is. So just to step back, it's really important at that first stage, one, to understand their values, but two, to understand exactly what their lifestyle is. Because you'll get clients that will say, yeah, I can do tracking.

They're at work in corporate workplace, they have corporate lunches all the time, and by providing them calorie tracking, it's just, it's not going to fit them despite their best intentions. So it's about really empowering them and getting them to build this "toolbox". I use Mackenzie's words and I use that with my clients too. Is building that toolbox and that toolbox for every single client is going to look very unique and it's going to be very different for every single one. So what I often see in the fitness industry is, we have our "macro Steves", and they just give out their calories and or macros or whatever. And that's the only tool that he uses. And pardon the expression, but if you throw shit at a wall, something's going to stick. And if you have a hundred clients, it's going to work for, a small amount, but the majority then it's not.

Some examples could be using that plate method, using meal plans. I personally like to use meal guides; so really flexible guidelines based on their current intake, so it's very individual for them. I have clients that don't eat breakfast because they're just, they're not hungry. It's not practical, it's not going to work for them. I don't force them to eat breakfast, and do use more of an intuitive approach in that aspect. But it's always different. It's, yeah very individual to the clients. So building that toolbox for yourselves and understanding what's going to work for your clients as well as individualizing it for them is super important.

Danny Lennon: One of the things that's I suppose is important to, to note is that moving to some of these non tracking methods or these different strategies isn't just a reason that we go to because of a lack of adherence to a certain protocol. Sometimes this could be through collaboration. Someone wants to do this.

So as example you may have a long-term client that has been perfectly adherent to using a very tight tracking strategy for a long period of time has no problems with adherence, but for whatever reason, discusses with you that they'd like to transition to something away from tracking for either a period of time or maybe forever.

And even though they might say that, there's still some degree of apprehension that can come up. So maybe to start with you, Eric. In that type of situation where someone has signaled they want to go in this direction, at least for a period of time, but they do have some reservations about moving away from the degree of safety they've built and the structure they've built through this constant adherence to some tracking. What does that kind of transition period look like and how I might we allay some of their fears of that initial transition?

Eric Helms: That's a great question, Danny, and it's one that I'm able to relate to, not only from clients who I've helped do it, but also my own personal experience. My first foray into non-tracking approaches or just not tracking, still came from the initial bias of tracking is ideal, tracking's good, so I'm going to have these non tracking approaches that basically try to funnel you back to tracking because it was still my "bank", and that was the tool I had.

When I threw shit at the wall like that stuck, like Zoya said. So I think because when I got away from tracking as a bodybuilder, when I realized like I couldn't justify why I was tracking, like my normal behaviors put me in a range that was pretty good.

And like in the off season, I'm four years out on Wednesday, does it really matter that I have 45 grams of carbs less and 20 grams of fat more? And I was like, why am I writing this down? What's wrong with me? Oh God, am I a bodybuilder or do I have a problem? So that the cognition I had around that and trying to move forward informant so I can empathize with the clients and I think some of the first things I like to do is just ask questions.

Try to understand what the root of their fears are and their apprehension. And a lot of the times they come down to, if I don't have control over this and if I'm not tracking it how do I know what's going to happen? And I think encouraging them to, to think about that a little more and asking questions and when they actually vocalize their own fears and they go, yeah, that doesn't make sense though.

I'm not going to stop tracking and eat 10 pounds of cake. Now sometimes they do have that fear, but then they don't, they're not in that position. That's a real thing. People have said, "if I don't track, I would just eat, forever". But when they're coming to me with a point of, "Hey, I want to try something that's non tracking", that's typically not where they're at.

And so I do it in an integrated approach. I don't dump them into the "deep end", if you will. Normally it's okay where are we currently tracking? If it's all three macros, what do you think about just giving protein and calories a shot? And if they need to, we can. We can go into some like educational stuff, like why it probably won't make a huge difference if there's that small variance in carbs and fat if we need to. That's not something I feel I need to front load. I don't think it matters too much in this context, but sometimes you do. So essentially it's individualized, like where are their apprehensions and then where are they currently at with their tracking? And then doing what you can to help answer questions and alleviate the apprehensions where they are for that individual.

And then on the spectrum of non tracking approaches, which could be some tracking to get less tracking to then eventually do something like portion

sizes or, there's many different non tracking strategies with, I think Mac did a great job outlining his presentation yesterday. So sometimes instead of my original bias of all the non tracking strategies are basically try to funnel you back to learning what actually is good and real flexible dieting, which is having three numbers that dictate your life. My old bias now, it's oh that's an option. This is an option. This is an option. This is an option. This is an option. What's the best one? And okay, where are we currently? Oh, we're rigidly stuck in tracking. Okay. Let's just expand the definition of tracking a little bit.

Maybe it's just body weight and protein and water, because those are the things that if you just wing did a little more that you wouldn't hit, and then from there, okay, we changed some habits and then we shift to what's the best option for you and what are you most comfortable with initially. And my goal eventually is to have them be Batman.

So if they have the whole toolkit and they got battering, they can, do the thing when it shoots and it pulls them up, and then they grab the person, they go up, what's that called? Grab and pull up thing. Yeah, the grab and pull up thing. So I wanted to have all the tools in their tool belt and typically that's not where they're at or they wouldn't, all they're going is I am tracking currently.

I don't want to do that, but I dunno what else to do. So once we can get them exposure to all of these, and you can not only give them more opportunities to succeed in different environments, but they can figure out what works best for them and it will change. In my last contest prep, I used a non tracking approach until I needed my banky again.

And then I used a semi tracking approach during the recovery period, and then I went to non tracking and something intuitive eating esque in the off season. Not really though, actually wasn't, I'm trying to get bigger, but with a lot more similarities to some of that framework than otherwise.

So I think if I had never gotten outside of my comfort zone, I wouldn't be able to fit those different strategies to where I was. And the same thing is true with my clients, but where the apprehension comes from to summarize my points, figure out the apprehension, help them alleviate it, and then shift them into a less restrictive version of whatever they're currently doing before you open the door to doing something completely different , because you can, you

actually can confirm their fears if they're currently rigidly tracking within plus or minus five grams on if it fits your macros and you go, you know what, we're going to do something totally different and includes none of that. Then it's oh, why did I leave? Gosh, I gotta go back to track it. So I think you, you can be a little too overzealous in that transition. I think you have to be cautious there and individualized.

Danny Lennon: Yeah, really good point. So one of the things I wanted to pull back to that you mentioned a moment ago, Mackenzie, was when we're thinking about this idea of adherence, rather than just thinking of specific strategies will lead to better adherence, it's a kind of more global question.

And one of those big global questions is the client's values and how we can connect something to those values, and by doing that, we can therefore lead to some greater degree of adherence to whatever we're trying to do. Can you maybe just speak more to values, what exactly people should conceptualize by that and how we can integrate that into the coaching process?

Mackenzie Baker: Yeah, so all of this is built upon taking the time to get to know the client and listening to them and having a conversation, which is a mission. It takes time, it takes mental resources. You gotta sit and listen, you got other shit to do, you don't want to do it. Okay. So I'm not precisely sure how to answer this question, so I'll do my best. Cause I feel like there's a few different ways to attack it. Considering one's values, in the context of the intervention, but also the goal. So I once had a client, and I always use this client cause it's just like the first example that comes into my mind.

I once had a client who was a pastry chef. And part of her job her financial health is built upon her ability to be at work and just be taste testing things and, going around and trying, like it's not really going to fit with because it's so random. It's like how much is, what's the portion size, you can't really track it.

So for that person, based on her values of her career and that the intervention of tracking wouldn't be something that would probably work out too well. And the second thing is, because of those values of I love my career, I freaking love chocolate croons or whatever, if she said to me, I want to go and compete in I want to work I want to compete in body building and win whatever show.

Then that's probably a goal that is going to set up it, it's setting her up for failure because it doesn't fit within her priorities and there is a conflict there. So if that was the situation, I don't know if I'm actually answering your question.

If that was the situation and someone wanted to do that, let's say this pastry chef client was like, I want to compete in this federation and I want to actually do like really well. So you're not going to say, oh, you're an idiot. You can't do this. This goal isn't for you, blah, blah, blah.

Because that's just going to create resistance between you and the client. And the other thing is she might just go, oh, screw you. I'm just going to go down the road, world Gym whatever, and hit up "macro coach Eric", who's just going to give me the macros that I want.

So by having this open collaborative discussion, and I think you touched on this before, you can, the client can talk through the pros and cons and the trade offs to their priorities. Okay, if I go for this goal, the trade off will be that my financial health will suffer because it'll affect my ability to earn money and or I just really love pastries.

It's like my biggest thing in life that might suffer as well. It's almost if you had a client who was like, they loved being social or they loved going out with their friends. There would be an element of something that's important to them that would take a hit.

So the first thing is, through these discussions where you're like, oh, okay, have, what do you see are the pros and cons of going for this particular approach or goal? Have you thought about the risk or the implications, if you will going through that conversation, they might realize on their own that actually maybe the goal should be at least reframed.

And it's cognizant of their values. But the other thing is people are going to do what they want to do. If someone wants to track their macros, if someone wants to, doesn't matter what they're in, if they're like, super at risk of hectic eating disorder, whatever, if they want to go and track their macros, you know they're going to do it.

And you can't tell them to not. You can say, this is out of scope, I don't feel safe. Like I'm worried about your health. I'm sorry, I can't work with you, and here's a referral to an eating disorder specialist or whatever. But if you feel like you can still work with this client, often the best thing to do is work with them. Let them do what they want, but just try and keep them safe. And then after a couple weeks, they'll realize that this goal is impacting their life negatively overall. Or they will struggle with adherence and they'll realize that maybe it's not feasible for them. And by doing it that way, they've come to that conclusion on their own.

They haven't been told that this goal or and or this intervention is shit for them. They've come to this conclusion on their. So you are not telling them what to do. They actually and at that point they might have a little bit more interest in listening to what you, your ideas and suggestions or at least open the discussion of, maybe tracking isn't for me or maybe this body building show isn't for me either. I think that's it.

Zoya Huschtscha: Great points. I have a bit more of a practical approach because I use a values worksheet with my clients at their initial assessment every time, and it's the best tool that you can use because when they don't eat here, you can go back to it. So essentially the worksheet is a range of different values I get them to rank their top five or even top three, and that's their reason why.

So when they aren't adhering to whatever intervention that you have, let's say it's, a mom, she just wants to feel, good so that, she can chase after her kids. That's her reason why, and that's what's going to motivate her again. So when things do get hard, you always go back to those values again, like Mackenzie said, if socialization and going out is high value, top three values, your intervention for them needs to involve that type of lifestyle, or at least education around that. So you can, set your client off for success, that's what I was going to add.

Danny Lennon: Yeah. Really useful point. One of the other things that I wanted to touch on a lot, maybe ask each of you, and this came up when Mackenzie was talking about the pros and cons that we that, that are there is essentially that relates to client expectations, not only what they can achieve, but what do it take to achieve a specific type of goal and what is involved in that. And so you may have this initial collaboration where they say, okay, I'm

pretty sure like this is my goal that I want to achieve. Let's go towards that but they may do that without really understanding what that process entails, which then sets them up for some potential problems.

So Eric, I'll start with you with that idea of client expectations and what a process would take again for practitioner. At the outset, how can we have that conversation with people and what might that kind of look like in practice?

Eric Helms: Can you reframe the question?

Danny Lennon: So how can we make sure that people, number one, that we collaborate with them to, that they've set a goal that for themselves, based on these set values, but also beyond that, that they understand what is involved to get, , and by doing that, then that might change the calculus of if they do want to go ahead or not. Does that make sense?

Eric Helms: Yeah. Yeah. This is a, an interesting one that I think people who are trying to do a good job of being, like a client-centered coach sometimes run into, is they they go a little too on like the motivational interviewing side where it's like, I am not even here. All I'm going to do is reflect back to you and ask questions.

And then I'm essentially just going to you actually, you need to tell me what to tell you to do. And I think that's not really the intentional the intention of some of these strategies. You are the expert in this field. They're the experts in their own motivations and what goals they want to achieve.

But you're the one who can help, and it is collaborative who can help them understand what the expectations are. Who here coaches bodybuilders or has competed? That's a lot of people. So first time competitors. I want to know, put your hand back up if you agree with me. One of the most important things a coach can do is normalize some of the experiences they're going through because it is very different outside of what they've been through.

Oh, you're going to be really hungry for a while. Yes, this is normal. Okay. And we're pushing a little too hard. This is abnormal. Would you guys agree with that? Put your hand back up if you think. Okay. That's pretty much

everybody. So yeah, like they don't know that they can't know that you know that.

So I think if you view it from that perspective, when someone comes to you with goals, it's understandable and normal that the goals they might set and the timeline's a very common thing in body building and maybe the amount of weight they need to lose. That's just this body building example.

They're misaligned and I think it is a semi tricky conversation to help them understand the misalignment without, threatening their autonomy or telling them, no, that's dumb, we're not going to do that. So I think it's important to listen, reflect, make sure that you both understand why they set the goal they've set.

And then at that point you go, so do you mind if I give you my thoughts on the approach or the timeline or whatever you think is not aligned. And that's when you talk about, say, here's what I typically see. Here's my experience and blah, blah, blah. So given that, what do you think about X, Y and Z?

That's basically the approach I take and you don't have to beat around the bush or make sure I think people are probably a little too cautious around this. Like most clients understand that they have sought you out because you're the expert on this and it doesn't give you full license to be like, all right, here's what you need to do.

Completely. But at the same time, it's a hundred percent okay for you to let them know, here's what you should expect. Here's the process. If we use these tools, here's what you've told me is going on in your life. I would predict X, Y, and Z to happen. Here are some of my concerns. Hey, what do you think about that?

And here's what would suggest, how does that align with what you're thinking? That's how I approach that. So I do think in this whole client-centered coaching approach we're talking about, you don't want to get into that trap, you feel like you're not allowed to say anything because you absolutely are.

It's just, you need to consider, it's not that it's all about them, it is a collaboration and you need to understand like what does human motivation

consist of, so the goal is to be autonomy supportive. And if someone doesn't have the competence or the knowledge or the experience.

to actually have their autonomy work out for them, if they are approaching a goal that does, as Mackenzie said, set them up for failure in some cases. Yeah, absolutely. You give them a safe, environment to try that out and oh, learn from it. But if they're coming to you and like, Hey, what do you think, Eric? I want to know your opinion unless they're coming to you. I know exactly what I need to do. I just want you to observe my greatness, oh, you're paying me for that. Okay. But but I think in most cases people are coming to you with an, some degree of openness as to what should be the approach we're going to take. And I think that's that balance.

Mackenzie Baker: Just wanted to add some points to so and reiterate what he were saying. So the client is the expert of their own life, but you are the expert of the field in which you coach in my context, nutrition. But a lot of what you're saying there as well is I think, look, okay.

So if you want to get onto the next Australian Instagram Fitness circle joke topic. It's definitely motivational interviewing in my opinion. That's the next thing, right? But, people are going to take this and the pendulum's going to swing too far the other way where, it's just I'm just going to sit here and just give you different forms of reflection, which is a motivational interviewing.

Eric Helms: I can't wait for you to debate Jackson next year about motivational interviewing. That's going to be great. Yeah.

Mackenzie Baker: Yeah, and it's easy to the pendulum can swing too far the other way now, but you it's easy to forget that you are still the expert, but the thing is you haven't used your writing reflex whereby you have given the solution or the answer before asking the client first or getting permission to provide the answer.

So it's elicit provide elicit; EPE. You are eliciting the client's thoughts you're asking them "brandon, what do you think, bro?" And then they're like, I think this. Or they're like, I don't fucking know. What do you think? They've just given you permission for you to go sit down, here's the options.

And then after that, you're not just saying, okay, so here's the options. We're going to do this one, you are then eliciting do, are you interested in this? Which one do you like? What are your thoughts? So it's this whole idea of yes, you can provide answers and solutions, but you just want to ask for permission. Thank you, Danny.

Danny Lennon: So a couple of times we've mentioned that we need to acknowledge clients to have autonomy, which we typically should see as a good thing. And one of the issues though that can come up from a coach's perspective is that given that people want to help, And much of these questions around improving adherence comes from the perspective of, look, I have these certain clients that are struggling with this and this.

I'm not going to blame them, like you said. So I'm looking for strategies, how to help them. And we can start trying to put all these things in place, but ultimately it's incredibly unlikely that every coach is going to have a hundred percent perfection with all these clients, that all of them get to their exact goal all the time, bar from by the gods amongst us.

And I think sometimes there can be a misconception that this is a failure on the coach's part, and I think a lot of them have vocalized to me that this makes them feel like I'm definitely doing something wrong, right? I'm here to help the client and help collaborate.

We're doing this, and this, but I just can't get it to work. And therefore, certainly because of the perception I see online of all the successful coaches are just helping everyone. And I think this can lead to a really negative self-talk about, I'm not good enough as a coach because there's a certain number of my clients that I'm, I've just been unable to help.

So maybe I'll go to you, Zoya, with this. To start off, how do we, first of all, Think through that, or for coaches maybe who are particularly in the early stages of their career, thinking about I must be a problem because not all of my clients are doing well, and then how do we let go of that?

So there's need to be able to help absolutely everyone perfectly and understand that may not be doable despite our best intentions or even the client's best intentions.

Zoya Huschtscha: Yeah, it's, that's a tough one because, I struggle with that as well. Cause I have clients that, great, really adherent and then you have ones that are really struggle, they are really hard to work with. And yeah, trying to get any sort of anything out of them can be really hard. And I think there's a few things there. As a allied health professional, we have, we've been trained to always self-reflect. If you find that you have had consult with a client, just write down some notes.

What worked, what didn't what you think might, you might be able to do in the future. Always, professional development, motivational interviewing. I know you guys are slamming it. I don't know what's going on there, but...

Eric Helms: No, just the misuse of it...

Zoya Huschtscha: It's a really great tool. I have a few dietitians that I mentor and have got them onto motivational interviewing and it's completely changed their practice and the way that they work with clients. I think you just it's about acceptance that sometimes you're just going to have clients that just coasting and they just like this idea of having a coach and paying a coach.

But always checking in with them. It's is there anything else I can do for you? Are you happy with your progress? Where would you like to see yourself or, asking questions like, if you continue to do the things that you're doing now, do you how do you, how would you feel like if you're making this progress now in one month, six months, 12 months, how would that make you feel?

And it makes them self-reflect because the biggest the clients that I struggle the most with are the ones that can't self-reflect and self-reflection is a huge skill. And as health professionals, we are there to try to facilitate some of that. But sometimes you're just not going to get clients that do that.

And I don't work with bodybuilders. I work with strength athletes and gen pop, so that's 50/50 split. So my gen pop predominantly females and I have a, I do a lot of trauma informed care. Because as you probably know, nutrition is complex. It has a lot of emotional attachment as well.

And I'm not there to, I'm there to work within my practice, but to facilitate and understand and get them to work out okay, there might be some trauma

here that's actually connected to it. And a lot of people might really struggle to change their habits because that's, that feels safe to them.

So for them to let go of whatever, let's say it's emotional eating is huge, especially if they're not getting therapy and they're not having those supports. So having that, just having that understanding and that compassion can be just the world of difference with your clients. So yeah really making sure that, yeah there's more to it than just that. And it's not always just you that the client might not be giving you enough to reflect back on as well. So yeah, I think that's probably it.

Danny Lennon: Yeah. Really useful. So given the time we have maybe to wrap up, going to come to each of you and if there's any open loops that we have yet to close on this topic or if there's anything we haven't brought up that you think is a particularly useful point or even a kinda summary point of anything related to improving adherence in clients' use of non tracking methods, et cetera. Maybe they'll ask you each to leave us on something. So I'll start with you, Eric, and we'll work our way down. So anything you want to finish off with?

Eric Helms: Yeah, point 1: motivational interviewing is actually great, just to be clear. I think just when some people first get presented with it, especially if they came from a much more prescriptive background they "oh man, I'm not allowed to say anything" and I think it can some behaviors that aren't actually aligned with motivational interviewing, to be clear, but absolutely fantastic tool to ensure client autonomy, make sure their goals are their goals, their motivations, or their motivations and greatly increases success in my experience. And it does apply to athletes as well, a hundred percent. It's not just oh, the gen pop stuff, that's one very minor point.

Another one, a really useful model that I find when trying to diagnose what is going on with adherence is the COM-B. So that is Competence Opportunity and Motivation leads to Behavior change. So COM to B. That kind of provides a checklist where you can sit down with a client and you can go through.

Okay, so do they not have the skillset needed to get to where they need to go or they not have the resources or the environment like our pastry chef, the opportunity like Yeah, sure, they can track macro. , but they're a pastry chef. So this, the opportunity is not in place here. Or the motivation, which is

actually the much more tricky one, is like trauma informed, practice or thinking about okay, are their goals actually aligned with their values?

Like Mac was saying, and you open up motivation you open up like S D T and a whole other stuff. That's a lot. I can't give a lot on there. But motivation, competence, or opportunity. If any of those is out of alignment, they're probably not going to see consistent behavior change.

And that can be used as a coach to go through those and be like, so that, I find that very useful to try to as a diagnostic checklist. And then the final thing I would say, to really back up your point, Zoya on self-reflection. When you do have a client, you don't feel like you can help.

Personally, I find I trend towards the two bipolar extremes. My knee jerks are to self defend "no, I did a good job." I'm not a bad coach, because I'm immediately like thinking, oh, like I screwed up. Or then to go to the other extreme of no I need to take this on. There's always an opportunity to improve. It is everything is my fault always. And that's, extreme ownership. Like I'm going to take that position without really being intelligent and in the middle and rational, and I'm just trying to swing between these extremes. So it's either all my fault or no, it's all the client's fault. I struggle to, to find the middle and I find the most helpful thing.

is to have colleagues who are a little more emotionally removed from that client interaction. So I can sit down and be like, Hey, Burto. Hey Jeff. Can I just want to go through some of the things that I went in their video and like what do you think? Did I miss anything here? And please, this is not.

Help your friend Power Hour " no, hun you just, he was bad for you". That's that's not what I'm trying to get Berto. Like where is an opportunity for me to hear improve and what's your objective take? I think that's a really valuable thing because I find self-reflection incredibly important, but difficult to do by myself.

Ironically, in some of these more charged negative interactions with clients. They're not frequent, but they do really, I think they can shake the confidence of a coach if they don't have the ability to do that in a more object.

Mackenzie Baker: Yes. Thank you. Very good point. Thank you. So I wanted to say that my point wanted to be about the toolkit and non tracking strategies and everything like.

I personally feel like in the evidence-based space, macro checking or flexible dieting is the stock standard default. It's like the go-to, it's the evidence-based thing. And I get it, it's very easy to call it personalized because you've got personalized macros and from a checking perspective, if the way you approach coaching is just what calories did you hit each day?

What protein, how much protein did you eat each day? And you're just doing it that way. And then you're looking at body weight trends and you're like, oh, you lost. Keep everything the same or you didn't lose weight while you would adhere it. If you weren't adhere it, try harder if you weren't adherent.

Let's just shave off a bit of calories there. Like that's a very, you don't need to think I feel anyway. And look, I could be wrong, slam me if you want, call me out on Instagram. Do a video where you're recording and then you've freaking, get me up on the reels or whatever. That's fine. I respect that. But I view that as very straightforward and low effort cost coaching. It's not going to take you too long to do. It's not, it doesn't require this thinking and this question asking and this open collaborative discussion, which can sap your mental resources and take a lot of time, but why did you get into coaching?

Did you get into coaching because you wanted to coach 300 clients a week and drive 10 Lamborghini? Or do you get into coaching because you care about improving people's lives and you're passionate about it? If you are passionate about it, then you want to try and give people the tool and the toolkit that's best for them.

So don't be a one trick pony. Have an array of different tools, and select the tool for the right tool for the job. And remember that in a context of just fat loss, like what are we trying to achieve fundamentally with a fat loss goal? Fundamentally, we're trying to control calorie intake and achieve a caloric deficit on average over time.

Tracking is just one way that we can achieve that outcome. It's like the ti, it's one element, like one little bit of that toolkit it takes, it occupies a little slither of space. There are so many other ways that you can achieve calorie control.

That does not involve my fitness power. And this isn't saying that MyFitnessPal bad and tracking's bad.

Like I feel like people think I'm anti tracking. Definitely not anti tracking. I'm just saying that there are so many other tools in the. Don't be a one trick pony. If you want to help people and make their lives better, then take the effort, take the time and try and choose. Work with them to find the right tool for the job.

Zoya Huschtscha: I have two quick little points, so I'm sure you're all aware of readiness for change, but it's, that's so important when assessing values and goals. The amount of clients that I've had that have come to me for fat loss and oh, they've just had so much stuff going on in their life, like their daughters have just been diagnosed with cancer or someone has just died, like honestly, like got lots of grief associated stuff, but.

Understanding that's them trying to control something in their lives and either saying, look, it's probably not the best time to do that now. Maybe come to me in a few months. Or maybe let's not focus on fat loss. Let's focus on X, Y, Z, just to, fuel yourself, feel good about, what's, feel good in your body. And I guess the this, oh my god, I've forgot the thought. My second point. That's it. .

Eric Helms: That's a good point. It was a good point. Yeah.

Danny Lennon: So with that, we'll round out, so a big round of applause....