

Transition Your Current Clients

How to Gracefully Transition Current
Clients from Your Outdated Rates to Your
New and Improved Pricing Structure



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Module 4: How to Gracefully Transition Current Clients from Your Outdated Rates to Your New and Improved Pricing Structure

You may be still feeling quite nervous at the thought of your current clients' reaction to new rates—especially if there is a significant increase. You may decide to grand

If you decide to grandfather your current clients' rates, it's essential to take two specific actions (especially if they have joined your affiliate program).

Let them know that...

- Keeping their rates the same is a reward for their long-term business—and their hard work and results
- These rates are unique to them—new clients should expect your new fee structure

One other essential with the grandfathering system:

Make sure that your decision to grandfather your current clients' rates has a *solid business rationale* behind it and is not done out of timidity.

Never grandfather a client simply because you are too hen-hearted to face up to telling that client there will be an increase. Confront and deal with the issue that is making you feel this way; otherwise that lack of confidence will infuse every other area of your business and inhibit your results.

When deciding whether or not to grandfather a client, consider:

- How hard she works
- What results she is achieving
- Her value to you as a success example
- Her value to you as a current or future interview guest or JV partner
- Whether or not her growing expertise is a valuable asset to any membership clubs or groups you are running for your high-end clients

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But what about new clients? How do you convince them your high fees are worth it, when they have not yet experienced your coaching?

Your provable and very real client success stories (and interviews) go a long way to providing social proof and building trust; as does your highly-targeted strategy session.

If you are going to make a leap to charging top prices, however, another strategy to consider is offering payment plans.

Step 1: Making Payment Plans Work for Both You and Your Client

Many coaches look down on payment plans. You still see a lot of “if you can’t afford my prices, you aren’t my client” positioning; sometimes in a macho, hard-nosed way.

While you certainly don’t even want to attract clients who can’t pay, there’s another, kinder and ultimately more practical way to think of payment plans:

- Payment Plans are handy tools to hook you dream clients who otherwise couldn’t afford you... right now
- You are doing your dream clients a favor, and acknowledging that this isn’t Beverly Hills, Hollywood: If they could afford to drop several thousand in your lap, they probably wouldn’t need coaching!

Well, okay, we’re being a little tongue-in-cheek with that last statement—we’ll be the first to admit that the best coaches make good use of coaches for themselves: But it’s naïve to think that if only your perfect client appreciated your genius and what you can help them do, they can dredge three to six thousand out of thin air and drop it in your lap—even if your offer “goes away in 24 hours!”

An important concept to understand—and to make sure potential clients understand—is that payment plans are not “pay as you go” arrangements. That is, you are not offering to let them put you “on hold” for six months while they potter around getting ready for the next installment.

It is important to lay it out clearly that...

Installment payments are completely independent of course delivery and progress. They are set up at *pre-arranged, fixed-time intervals*, strictly as a privilege to allow your client to afford top-quality coaching. No refunds; no delays!

It's similar to the difference between deposits and retainers:

- **A deposit** can be refunded if a client changes her mind about your product
- **A retainer** is non-refundable: You are asking it because you are blocking off time and turning down other clients. They are paying for the spot in your schedule with that retainer—not for service.

Deposits usually pertain to products, and retainers are collected when services are involved.

Apply the retainer principle to your coaching—whether or not you are offering actual one-on-one coaching or high-value packages or courses.

Make sure that people understand that:

- If they stop paying, service stops happening
- They are on the hook for the entire amount and the post-dated checks they sent you WILL be deposited on the dates specified—whether they have been keeping up with their coaching or not

By all means stress that you are a cool person who understands the financial realities of life—but also make sure you stress that payment plans are a privilege that you graciously instituted strictly to make your coaching affordable for keen and dedicated client candidates.

Don't spring this on clients when they try to cancel and stop payments, however: Let them know up front, very clearly, how your payment plans work—either on your landing page or your “Strategy Session” page.

And reinforce it by telling them the terms again, clearly, in person, if you discuss payment plans at the end of your free call.

Step 2: Closing the Sale

This is the point at which even coaches often choke. Unacknowledged interior thoughts like “I'm asking for so much money” get in the way, knocking our confidence into a stumble and making us awkward or tentative—the kiss of death—when we attempt to get them to commit their cash.

All you need is a conscious tweak to your mindset.

Instead of thinking of it as “closing a sale,” understand that you are merely presenting your potential client with options.

The ball is in your caller's park: It's up to her which program or package (and which payment options) she chooses.

And if you have done a diligent job of letting potential clients know that you expect a commitment—and that you will be evaluating them too as a potential client—“which option” should be a no-brainer: Particularly if you have provided payment plans.

Think of it this way:

- You have helped your free caller clarify her plan of action or solved a particular problem with your Strategy Session
- You pre-qualified her, so it was a rewarding, enjoyable call, getting to know exactly the type of person you love to help
- She already knows from your landing page or Strategy Session form that she is expected to make a significant financial commitment if the session goes well
- Your packages and prices are right there for her to think about before the call
- It is 100% up to her which coaching option she picks. You are sitting back and letting her choose

There is no “sale.” Not at the end of your free Strategy Session. (All your selling was done at the front end—on your landing page, in your promotional video or webinar and in the material you guided her to access, listen to, watch or read, pre-call.)

There is no “closing.” Instead, there is choice and commitment.

And those actions are for your potential client to ponder, decide on—and take. The action is all on her end.

You've done your part.

Step 3: When to Walk Away

Don't get caught by surprise at this stage, however, when this wonderful new potential client regretfully tells you she can't afford your rates.

Anticipate objections—and decide in advance how you will address these. It doesn't mean that whoa, suddenly your feelings of "sales-closing" awkwardness are back: You are merely:

- Pointing out options
- Offering alternative plans or packages
- Helping her brainstorm how to afford your rates

Sometimes, however, it is better to walk away, and chalk it up as a learning experience—or her loss!

And not for the reasons you might think, either (e.g. "bad client," "needy client," *et cetera*.)

You should walk away after presenting your options and choices, if she still refuses them. Once is enough.

There are coaches who will go into an aggressive "sales mode" but this never really works: Even if you make the sale, you start out on your client-coach journey with someone who feels they have been "forced" into it. That usually goes bad very quickly, with the client not completing actions and complaining about you to her peers.

Or she feels embarrassed, and what was an inspiring session turns on a dime, leaving her as the one who feels awkward, embarrassed and all those unpleasant emotions.

If this happens, you've lost her for good. You'll be a memory that makes her cringe, and she won't check out any more offers—and may even start to dislike seeing your emails (the reminder of her embarrassment).

Worst of all, if you keep pushing and using "sales talk" after your caller has said "no"—you'll come off as if all you care about is her money: Not her business.

Better to have an alternative option ready. Tell her about your free or reasonably-priced membership site, where she can have access to you in a group setting: Or tell her she can find lots of information about [whatever her next step is] in your book.

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Tell her you will follow up with her and send her a link to “more affordable options”—then do it. (These can be your free resources, affiliate products you are promoting, or your self-serve workshops.)

Keep the focus on being helpful—on her problems and goals. This way, you will let her know, without having to say so specifically, that her financial challenges are hers alone—and so is her choices.

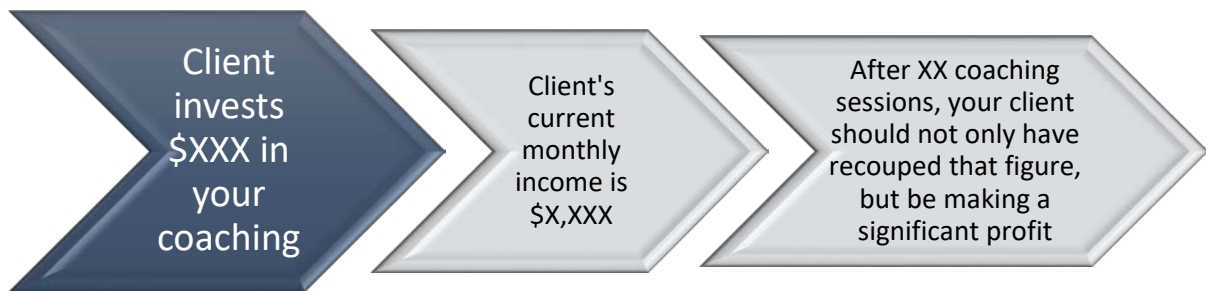
Sometimes walking away can actually give the right potential client a new goal: To quickly reach a position where she can afford your coaching!

Use Your Advantages:

There are other advantages—and disadvantages—you can point out, when you are concluding your free call.

For example, if you are really busy, and you genuinely know spots tend to fill up fast, point out to her this may happen while she is “thinking about it.”

Before closing your sale, some time during your Strategy Session, seize any natural opportunity to point out that by investing what may feel like a large sum of money, she is dramatically fast-tracking the even greater financial returns she is going to get on it!



Focus on the benefits and advantages.

And watch out for any warning signs that this is not the right client for you!

Energy Vampires—Five Common Warning Signs you Shouldn't Ignore:

You are probably far more familiar with these types than you'd like to be, but since

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we're talking about when to let potential clients walk away, let's quickly create a "checklist" to watch for, during your free Strategy Session:

<p>The Arguer: This type of caller loves to play "devil's advocate." He questions everything you tell him. If you're in any doubt, listen for repeating phrases like:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">○ "Yes, but..."○ "What if...?"
<p>The Whiner: This one is pretty easy to spot. She will either present herself as a victim or start complaining about your prices at the beginning of the call. (She will also most likely ask you what she "should do" if she can't complete actions by her next session date or "has to cancel" sessions.)</p>
<p>The Negative Nellie: This type of caller adopts a critical tone of voice from the get-go, and as you approach the end of the call you are either just plain annoyed or your feel wrung out and drained. You have NO problem losing this caller, and present an option so over-priced, she cannot accept it.</p>
<p>The Prima Donna: This one has probably already been rude to your VA or customer service rep (or even you, when you started the call!) He projects an aura of self-importance, and makes it obvious he expects you to be at his beck and call any time he "needs" you.</p> <p>(You can also tell him by the way he easily oversteps natural, professional boundaries by doing things like demanding your home phone number!)</p>
<p>The Needy Nora: This potential client is more interested in unloading her life history (with particular emphasis on her "bad luck") than in focusing on a single call topic. You run away, shuddering: You have no intention of wearing yourself out with constant handholding.</p>

You probably could add several of your own Problem Client Categories, but the important take-away here is to **decide in advance** how you will respond, if one turns up on a call.

But if you have followed all the steps laid out in these modules, you will have done everything possible to steer energy vampires away from you—and attract your perfect client.

Step 4: How to Upgrade Your Clients to Higher-Value Programs and Products

So you've landed that ideal client. That as you know is only the start of your journey together.

And what about your existing clients (perhaps grandfathered in at your "old" rates)? You can maximize your income potential in an honest and ethical way by being both **proactive** and **responsive** to your clients' needs.

You can:

- **Cut your production costs** by repurposing existing products you've created into new products and packages—specifically designed to please new and existing clients
- **Outsource and start team-building** to save time—so you have more time to engage in high-end client activities you love

Factor team building into your coaching business plan early. Do solid research until you know exactly what you can expect to pay.

Doing this will help you justify your prices, when you know that your clients are going to need you to grow ahead of them—and that requires hiring help.

How to Create New Packages They'll Love:

One of the best ways to delight your clients—really pay attention to:

- Wishes they express ("I wish I had software to do that particular job...")
- Complaints they make ("It always takes me days to...")
- Questions they ask ("But where do I learn about...")

If you listen to your clients, they will tell you what new packages and programs to create—without even knowing they are doing this.

And when you anticipate their needs and price your extra packages, products and programs correctly, you will feel as if they are thanking you for creating them, as they almost unanimously start hitting the "buy" button.

High-Value Upsells:

Don't just think "extra packages and programs." Think *high-end* ones.

What happens as your client list grows?

You have a waiting list: That's what.

That's when it is time to raise your prices—you're in demand, and you can't meet it. You can now afford to focus on wealthier clients who will be able to afford your "in demand" prices.

Wealthy clients are different from intermediate or entry level clients. They want:

- Less handholding; More service.

They are the ones who respond the most to sales pitches with the bark stripped off.

They want you to save them time while both simplifying and speeding up your coaching-journey process.

And they don't mind paying top dollar.

If you're a great coach who gets results, you will soon have wealthy clients ready for more of what you can offer. If you don't provide it, you'll lose them.

And you are going to "lose" them anyway, because they will progress in leaps and bounds—and they have the financial resources to start making money sooner than the average single-business entrepreneur.

So what you want to do is:

- Keep your "graduates" recommending you
- Keep them coming back

The best way to do this: Offer the commodity they want more than any other:

- Your undivided time
- Your exclusive ear

Create single offers (repeated at regular intervals: e.g. twice a year) for *V.I.P options*.

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Don't provide them on demand (unless you really want to be reactive!) Stick to your pre-decided intervals.

Doing so keeps your V.I.P. options seen as:

- Rare
- Prized
- Exclusive
- Not to be missed

Plan for V.I.P. Days—and let your clients know you only have a limited number of slots.

You can start charging pretty much at four figures and upwards for V.I.P Days. (\$997 is the lowest figure you should even consider for giving your undivided attention to a client for an entire day.

If that doesn't feel right to you as a minimum charge, break your entire V.I.P Day down by your hourly rate, you will soon have an accurate idea of what to charge—and how it aligns with your regular coaching prices.)

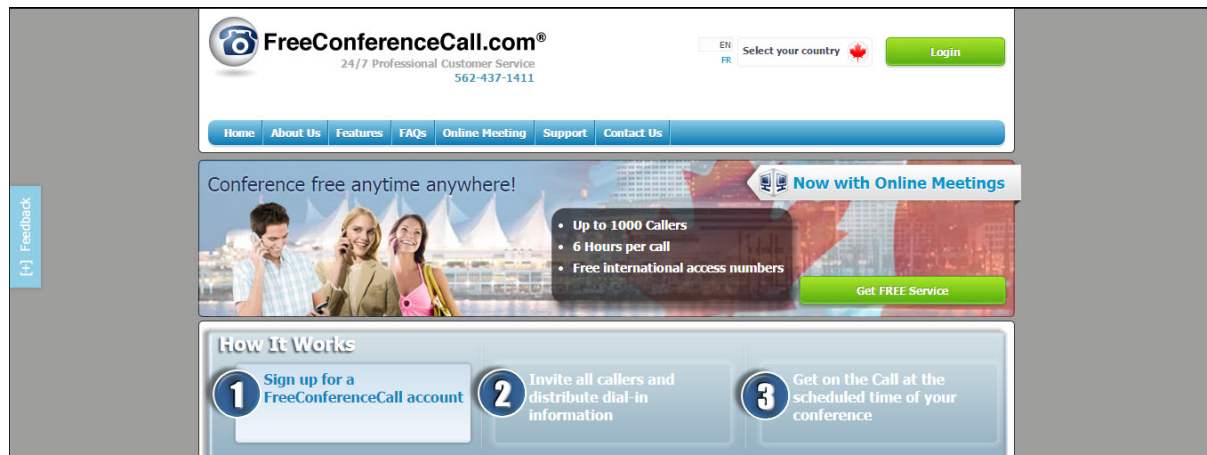
If the thought of running a V.I.P Day unnerves you, relax! They are actually easy to do, and not marathons of long silences where you both stare at each other.

You can run a V.I.P Day as an “in person” session at your office or a room you have booked for the day (or even your home, if that suits your style). Or you can run it online, using any or all of the following:

- Skype video
- Telephone
- Private chat room or forum

Use a webinar service like FreeConferenceCall.com to record your sessions, so you can present it to your client as an unannounced bonus gift.

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Just be sure to:

- Confirm where your client is calling from
- Set up the appropriate telephone line for that country

(A common problem for Canadian clients: Coaches who don't realize that their US calling number won't work. You will need to give your Canadian client access to an international line.)

In addition to V.I.P Days, you can start planning and adding:

- Exclusive, limited-numbers, V.I.P mastermind retreats
- "Accelerator" learning-intensive packages for the driven client
- Round-table summits with top-level guests
- "Custom" packages to tackle extra areas your clients are desperate to master

(Choose your Mastermind Retreat members carefully, so that you pair up people who will inspire and energize each other.)

Just remember that each high-end offer should bear your branding, as well as all the hallmarks of a dynamic, attractive offer:

- A single focus or goal
- A strong identity
- A catchy, energizing name

It should radiate "quality" all the way.

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And once your clients are out there, making a name for themselves and eclipsing you—time to enlist their help in creating top-level multi-day workshops—so you can all share the profits and strengthen each other’s branding and reputations.

High-level offers and healthy price structuring is a win-win situation all around: You’ll attract a better, more professional class of client, generate great testimonials and buzz—and build your professional reputation.

Get rid of the energy vampires and infuse your coaching business with energy and joy.



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