

Call #2-Lynn

Alright Lynn, we got the recording started.

That is a pretty cool way to announce it.

It is pretty fun. It is Freeconferencecall.com. I love the system.

That is nice.

Repeat what you said before we started the recording.

Basically, I was with [a certain software] up until March/April. I discovered the new rules that were to be put into place for recertification in March. At that point something hit me. It is just screaming, "No! This is not right. No! You cannot do this." I keep telling myself, "Ok, this is great and ok, you can do this." Whatever it takes, right? Anyway. I made the decision not to recertify with them. To find new systems. That required me to find new systems. I decide to take on rebuilding my own website and it is a Wordpress site and I have a lot of leeway with it, which is awesome. I kept telling myself, "This is for the best. If this was going to happen, better it happen sooner than later." No matter what I've done and do, it is like there is something missing. I kept questioning. There is something I left out. The [a certain software] had this package, were clients could sign up and get their website and system set up for them by a VA. I was assigned this one individual, her name is XYZ client. She had some learning disabilities. No one... Apparently this was her third time through. She could not decide what her target was for her practice. We actually got that resolved. Which is amazing. It took us a few months. We got that resolved. Anyway, when I stopped working with [a certain software], I still had her as a client for an extra few months. She started slip flopping back and forth about what her target was. She could not remember what we spoke about before. I guess she had other issues that were taking hold of her thoughts. She could not focus at all and we would talk and I would get her back on track, but then by the next call it was back to square one. I ended up doing a backup of her system and basically let her go. By the time Summer hit, I was really exhausted. I really, really questioned if I was still supposed to do this. "Do I continue? What do I do? Yes, you like doing this work. Do it. Do it. Maybe something will turn up." I took on a new client and it was exciting. I wanted to work with this client for over a year. I wanted to meet this client and I did. I actually went to Chicago and meet ABC Client. I loved what he did. Apparently he actually needed a VA. It worked out so well. I should have been so happy, but I was not. There was still something that was missing. Recently, I read an email about Shannon. She talked about hitting a wall. "Oh my goodness, I think this is what it is, I think I have hit a wall." As much as I love my work. I love the people I work with. There is something missing. I need to be moving forward and I'm not moving forward. I'm not.. I do not know. There is definitely something else that I need to be doing now. In addition to what I'm doing or something completely different. I do not know that.

My life is all about curiosity. It makes me curious. Before all this upheaval with the [a piece of software], the certification you had and the system you were using, was everything hunky-dory before? Before they made the announcement about the changes?

It was. It really was. I was not crazy about the one client, about XYZ client. I was not crazy about not having the choice of who I work with. That was the start of the issue with the recertification. It took more of that away from me. Before, we had the choice of who we wanted to work with.

With this packaging, all of a sudden it was taking out and that did not sit well with me. Before that, yes. I was actually using the [a certain software] as my system. Potential clients would approach me and we would have a chat and say, "Yes, let us work together." I knew the system. I'm the type of person, I'm kind of a perfectionist that way. When I use a system, I need to know it inside and out. I work until I do know it inside and out. It had some limitations that I saw as something I can work around. And I did, I found a work around. I was one of their top VAs there. I was pretty proud of that and I just felt pretty special about it too. I think there is another clue in there too. I'm not feeling really special anymore.

You mentioned that in your application.

Yeah, something I actually come to me while I was filling that out. It was a big help. Twenty sixteen was an awesome year. I was thinking forward to twenty seventeen, it would be even better. I got this system down, no matter what new upgrades come out. I'm always on top of it. I do not know, I just felt really great. I felt on top of the world. I was able to take time off, to go see family. I have kids all over the place. Every year they expect you to get recertified. The first year it took like three months. That was unbelievable. The second year only required a week. I was fine with... I took a week and did what they require and got it handed in or submitted and it was all great. I even had the owners recommended me to clients. To people she was working with. That was a big compliment. Another thing that happened. When I decided to leave, I wrote to her and she never responded or anything. It was like, "Oh well, next." There was no one that actually cared that I stayed or went. I do not know. That kind of bothered me too.

Without breaking any confidence. If there is anything confidential that you cannot say about [a certain software] and all that. I'm curious what the things were that they were asking you to do that caused you to break up with them. I heard you say one of them was, you were no longer allowed to choose who you wanted to work with. They took sort of that sovereignty away from you. What else happened? What other thing?

The way the system was before, they listed our names, on the website. Any coach who we used our system had access to our names. They could reach out to the individuals based on their website and bios. We even did a little recording so they could hear our voices. The only choose who would reach out to us, felt a connection before they actually spoke to us. I thought that was amazing. Seriously, I may have had only one person I have turned away. Those are pretty good odds. Anyway, what they wanted to do, they wanted coaches to approach them. From there they would sign a coach to the individual VAs. It was no longer our choice of which coach we worked with. I do not know why they even decided to do that? It puts so much work on them. I'm not even sure why they decided to go that route. I have no idea. I did not get a chance to ask them about that. That was one thing. Anybody new that would approach us. For example, if we were referred by another coach and we had someone approach us that was using the [a certain software], we could not go ahead and work with them. We had to go ahead and submit our name to them. Then they would decide if we could work with them or not. We were no longer able to invoice the individual ourselves. We had to be paid through the [a piece of software], so they would get their cut basically. We no longer allowed to offer packages. We basically offered what they told us to offer. The recertified costs, there were certain levels. If you decided to pay for them, let us just call it bronze, I'm not even sure what they had anyway. You could opt to recertify, but they would not recommend you to anybody, if you took that bottom level. You would have to do your own. It did not makes sense if they excepted you to turn around and submit the name to the [a certain software] for approval. The next level, let us

say silver, there is no level above that. They would choose for you. You had to use their system and you had to pay for their system. Regardless, they would not let you use the system at a discounted price. You had to pay them the same prices as coaches pay for the system. Which it did not make sense to me. The previous year, I got a considerable discount. We were providing a service for them, is the way I saw it. We were providing a service for them. As much as we went through the certification process, which also had a cost. That was the thing with twenty seventeen. There was a separate cost for the recertification as well as having to pay for the [a certain software], the use of the [a certain software]. I saw was greed, capital letters. They were so greedy, they were finding a way to make sure that they got a piece of the pie, no matter what we did.

Yeah. Fundamentally their whole entire business model shifted and you did not agree.

Yeah.

Let us shift gears and tell me how you felt special being part of their team.

The fact that no matter what I did or asked of me, I could do it and I could do it quickly. I was able because of my computer background, there was nothing that I can't learn quickly or make it special. One of the clients I was working with, she entered into this contest they were having. She was one of the top winners. I made her website just pop. She said, "I really want my website to look like this. I really do not want my website to look like the one from the [a certain software]." And I did. I made her website look amazing. Everybody was really impressed and she was really going far with the [a certain software]. She had just come back from Atlanta, were they had a big special conference. The way that I was able to make the coaches stand out, no matter what they had on their website, made their website unique. I was able to really stand out and be one of the top VAs in that organization. I do not if it goes down to feeling special. We used to have weekly calls and a lot of the new girls. I mean, they were just starting out. I would be like, "Here is a trick for you." Every call there was something that they were learning from me. That is something I believed in. If I learned something new, I would always share it. It did not bother me that someone else would take my idea and use it. I wanted everyone there, the VA's to succeed and do really well.

Have you really acknowledged that over a year you have been mourning a death?

That is a very interesting way to look at it.

You were part of a team. You were part of an entity, a group that you received regular feedback from. You received clients from, that you were able to do phenomenal work for. That you were able to also do some teaching with. Then very suddenly and it was of your own choosing, but it kind of wasn't also. That just disappeared.

It did. What really kind of hurts even more is that I have gone through that at least twice before. If not three times.

More about that. Say more about that.

Well before that... We have to back up a little bit. After I had my third child, I decided to go back to school and I went back for the two years to get my executive office administration diploma. I really excluded. I was loving it. I took extra classes and courses in accounting, law, commuter

programming. There are a couple more in there. I did yearbook. It was just go, go, go. I love the challenge. It was a challenge for me and I really love a challenge. I enjoy doing. Again, being a part of this whole team thing is starting to be a constant in these talks. By the end of it, I actually had a few job offers. I decided to work for the college for the Summer. At the end of Summer, it was just a short little contract and it gave me a chance to dive into a higher end position. At the end of the Summer I had all these offers. I was kind of feeling like, "ahhh." The same kind of way, do I really want to do this? I had one of the chair persons approach me and ask me if I wanted to teach. I looked at him and said, "Are you sure, are you serious?" I was teaching one on one in the classroom and when someone got stuck on something I would teach them. I never taught a class before. I told him, "I will make a deal with you. I will try it and if it goes over well, awesome. If it does not, I'm wasting your time and my time." I absolutely loved it. I stopped doing that because after twelve or fifteen years, it was like they were trying to phase me out or something. I had those evaluations and everything went well. Part of the continuing education, they decided to put me on a day shift and work with the regular office administration program. It went great. The whole behavior of students coming out of high school and going into college. They are eighteen and nineteen years old. Oh my goodness, their attitudes. Slap them across the head. Seriously, no respect. They expected everything to be handed to them on a silver platter and they starting going behind my back and saying I was doing all these things when I wasn't. There were some older students in the class and they warned me about them. They said, "Lynn, I'm really sorry, we think you are doing an amazing job, we are learning so much from you. These students are causing..." I do not know, apparently this was a normal thing. None of the other teachers supported me and let me know about this type of behaviour. I ended up leaving. I said, "I don't get paid enough for this." I left and it really left a kind of black ABC Client on me. Not even having the support of the college and then telling me, "You know, our students are more important." That is basically what they are saying. Their students are more important than me, too bad, too sad. It would have been nice to hear from the other teachers, "Oh yeah, I went through that, this is how I handled it." At that point, they did not even inform me of my rights. I asked. It kind of went south. I looked for something else to do. I got this job at a call center and they wanted me to teach. I wanted to work with numbers but they wanted me to teach. I said, "I will try it for a while." I did that for five years. An opportunity came up to go beyond that and become a manager for five different call centers. They were all teaching the same program. I thought, "Oh my goodness, I would be so perfect for that." Apparently, my initial boss who hired me, she was amazing. She left to go to another location. Apparently, this new boss was... I do not know what her problem was with me, she had a major problem. She made my life so difficult and decided that I was not good enough for this. She even tried to start a fight between me and my coworkers. It was so immature and petty. I personally went to the other person and said, "This is crazy." I could not even see her behaving this way or talking like this to my actual coworkers. I took her aside when we were training out of town. I said to her, "Whatever is going on, we need to clear this up." This is when we discovered it was the boss being the instigator and putting us against each other. Why would she even do that? Through it all I... The whole virtual position of working with all these locations was not an option anymore. I spoke to the guy who was actually the manager of her. I was a basket case by that time. She really got to me. She did end up being fired. But through the stress of it all, developed medical issues. I ended up in the hospital and I went on medical leave for three months. It was pretty extreme and intense. Each time things were going so great. At the call center we had so many problems. Every time there was a power outage and the systems were not coming up. Something. I always had a solution. Everyone of the trainers would come to me and say, "Lynn, ok, this is the problem," I would say, "OK, these are our options. Let us do this." We did it and it

was great and everything went well. We had really good relationships. Except towards the end when my boss tried to sabotage my whole career. Interestingly enough, the whole concept about working with people virtually got me curious. I got a few books on it and started looking into it. I was curious before I left. It was something that piqued my interest. It is interesting that I went into the VA world after that. Which I never even heard of before. I went to see an appointment consular. I thought, "Oh wow, this is great." When I went into being a VA, I was really excited about it and I become certified. I did everything I could to make sure I did a good job. An excellent job, that is just who I am. I like perfection. I have learned to compromise, but still if I can do better I will. It just seems like every time I get established or things are going so great, it is like a hammer comes down and kicks me right out. Why? I'm supposed to grow? I'm supposed to move on? What am I supposed to do? That question has come up again.

It is a little bit of a mystery. On one hand you talk about how working with clients and doing the virtual work is still very satisfying to you. Something is missing. I keep writing down these things, you love a challenge and teaching changes your voice when you talk about it. It lights you up. There is something about being part of a team that really matters to you. You have used the word "protection" several times. I'm rolling this around in my head and I'm thinking, "Gosh! Are there other virtual assistant teams out there? You can approach and say you have a great reputation in the industry. Because you have done your homework to find out who they are. And I would really like to join your team and here is what I'm looking for." Is there a cohort of VA's that you can pull together, were all of you can pull together to support each other? And your clients... Is there a college nearby that you can go and teach other people how to be a VA through the college?

That is actually an interesting point, you mentioning that. After I became certified, I noticed that the college was starting to introduce this course. They were doing it virtually through a campus that was half an hour away. I thought, "You know what, if I can go into the local college and talk about it. To be able to answer questions that potential VAs may have, I can do that."

You join their team.

They have a mentor type thing. I do not know if they would.

I do not know either. These are just the things that are bubbling up for me. They would satisfy your need to be part of a team. To feel recognized for your good work. This is loud and clear coming through to me. To be recognized by somebody for your good work is really important to you. You have not mentioned money one single time, but you have mentioned recognition both in writing and as we are talking several times.

Yeah. It is so silly. The whole time I was growing up, it was not something that was there. At all. I really never thought it bothered me. I always just did things on my own and I'd be happy with what I did and I still do. When I accomplish something that I'm proud of, I'm proud of it. Whether someone says anything or not, I do not feel I need it. I personally love what I did. Then why does it bother me when somebody doesn't take two minutes to say, "Wow, I love it."

In actuality, I think you do want it. You don't need a trophy or a certificate or medal or anything like that. A few words of "good job" will reenergize you and keep you going for weeks.

Yeah.

Tell me where I'm wrong.

Silly human habits. Oh my goodness. Money is an issue. I grew up with none. Money is not important to me as far as, some people. If I could have some extra money now, the house needs renovation. I would love to be able to help my kids out. I have five. Four are out of the house now. One is married. Three babies of her own. I would love to spoil them. I would like to find something or be able to do something to make that extra money.

Here is another thing that is dinging around in my head and it is worth saying these things out loud. Not because they are always the answer. Just to get you thinking in another more creative way. You worked extensively with coaches. There are some coaches out there that are absolutely rocking it. They are making millions and millions of dollars every year. They are building these empires. I would bet that they are always on the lookout for team members. A lot of these coaches hire a virtual team. It would be interesting for me to have you sit down and think about this a little bit. Who are the coaches out there that you admire? That you would want to work for and be part of their team. How can you approach them? With your tremendous skill set. Your amazing problem solving abilities, your insistence on doing the best job that you can do. To the point of wanting it to be perfect.

I'm crazy.

That is valued in a business. Are there any big coaches out there that you can join their team? It could be virtual, Daniela Port has a team of thirteen people now. They are all virtual.

Thirteen.

Yeah.

That is incredible. Wow. I can try to... A colleague is a VA for a particular coach. She brought me on and something was not right there. I think it was matter of the coach herself. I really did not connect with. Initially, I thought that was a great idea. After a couple of months, even after the first month, I reached out to her and said, "I think we need to review." She definitely appreciated that. If things are not going well, I'm not going to continue. It is not fair to either individual. I reached out to her and she said, "Yeah, I was kind of thinking that way." It is better we cleared that out and work with people you connect with. I need to do some homework and the start charging accordingly. Cause I'm not right now. Otherwise I'd be online.

Absolutely, charge for your work. What you are saying to me, your skill set level is deep. It is board, you know how to do many things. You also have this depth of knowledge, just through working with the [a piece of software], you honed your skill set. That is worth a lot of money, it really is.

That was part of my problem. Even when I first started. I really did not know my worth and did not have the confidence enough to actually go that next level up. I'm ok with charging fifty an hour. I know the one coach, I was actually charging her Canadian. I'm from Canada by the way. I was charging her in Canadian funds. She was like, "Oh my goodness, why am I paying this much?" I told her that is was in Canadian and it actually converts into this in U.S. Which is actually less than fifty dollars. That is when I decided I would just charge U.S. funds. What was my point? Even charging...

Yes, you knowing and holding your worth and acknowledging it.

I definitely need to work on that.

I would encourage you to do some dreaming and scheming now. You know? The first step is to acknowledge that you have been through a grieving process for the last year. Really you have. Even being brave enough to just talk about this with me, means you are ready to look at new possibilities.

I'm so ready.

Take that thread of energy, take that thread of possibility and dream and scheme really big. I mean, go bigger than you have ever let yourself dream before. What would you really want to do? And who would you want to do it with?

There is a new question that is coming into the picture. It was not there before. I never even went past working beyond just with me. Me, myself and I.

Maybe it could be you, yourself and you. You are getting that feedback that you need because you have a robust stable of clients, who give you that feedback.

They do. Honestly. Every so often they will, "Wow this is awesome Lynn!" They do recognize that. What I do for them. I do not know. Maybe I was not allowing myself to appreciate that because of this inner thing that I could not get passed.

Maybe.

Yeah. It has crossed my mind too, last year. If I could come up with something that I could teach people, I think that would go a long way. I started looking into something last year. Again, the one individual, she just exhausted me so much. I just did not have any energy left for it. It kind of went by the wayside. I think I will pick that up again. To see if there is just something. I do not know. That is just it, what can I teach? I know I have all this knowledge, but it is like what is there in there that I can actually teach?

I think there is a lot you can actually teach. It is you deciding what totally jazes you up? What lights you up to talk about? You love to give tricks and ideas and here are the sort cuts I have learned. When I run into a problem I do trouble shooting. What are those things? Those things will be so much fun for you to teach.

Yes. Finding a topic. That is the struggle.

No, that is the opportunity.

Ok, there we go. Opportunity. I will put that in cap letters, right now. Underlines and exclamation ABC Client.

There you go. There are community colleges and regular colleges, universities, online colleges in universities, VA university, WordPress University... There are enumerable places you can potentially teach.

That has never even crossed my mind, that aspect of it. Offer some online course to put on my website, but if I get into teaching for these to her institutions, something will probably come up with a common thread. I would focus on that and maybe create a course from that.

Yeah.

Oh my goodness. There it is. Thank you.

You are welcome.

I never even thought of that before. It is silly, cause I taught the college. You would think that would be one of the first things I thought about. Even to go so far as me thinking of going and speaking for an hour or so and speaking for potential VAs. I never got passed that.

You could do a lot to teach a business seminar to business owners too. Who need and want a D.I.Y. help through the small business centers. All the community colleges and all the universities.

I could. This city, it is actually a city now. They are not very big, they are so old school. Nobody has even heard of a VA before. Every person I meet asks what a VA is, what a virtual assistant is.

You can be the thought leader in your town.

Oh my goodness. That would be awesome.

That would be kind of awesome.

That would be really awesome.

There you go. Now it is time for you to do some dreaming and scheming.

That is amazing. I do not know how I'm going to do it yet. But you know what? The thought is there. It is a matter of, "Hey, let us do this."

You will figure out the how, now that you have lifted your head to the possibility.

Yeah. This is amazing. All before the top of the hour.

That is right.

This is really... Oh my goodness. Tell me more about your way finding journey that you are going to go beyond this now.

The way finding is really what we just sat down to do. It is really uncovering what you want. Or at least teasing the thread out and at least getting closer to understanding what it is that you want. Helping you or anybody put a plan together to go after it. Things will come up. Mindset and soul set issues will come up. Stories we tell yourself, the way we get stopped and hung up as we are moving towards the thing we want. My way finding journeys are six and twelve sessions to help somebody really uncover what they want, honing on it and make a plan to go get it.

Wow. You are going to do so well. People are going to benefit so much from you.

I think so.

Yes, thank you. I will definitely be following your progression.

Thank you, I'm glad that you will. If you hear of somebody saying, "I lost my way, " or "I need to find my way." I'm the person.

I actually think I'm going to write a blog post.

Oh good.

I think I will write a blog post about this.

Good.

I will want to read it. I will probably send it to you to read first. Make sure I have all the points right. Of course I will listen to the recording again.

I will give that to you as soon as they process it.

I think writing about it too will reinforce everything.

We are right at the top of the hour and I want to let you go and just sit with this. The excitement and wonder you are feeling about this new possibility and new opportunities. Spend sometime with them and figure out what the next right action is and go and do that.

Thank you so much.

You are welcome.

You have an awesome day.

Thank you, I will. You too.

Thank you.

Alright, be well.

You too.

Bye-bye.