

Kathryn: Welcome to episode 25 of Compass, I'm your host Kathryn Hunter. Do you have a difficult time feeling good about what you charge? In today's episode, Linnea Molander and I talk about that and more when we discuss becoming a dating coach. You're listening to Compass, where we talk with location independent womxn about their work and the paths that got them there. We get into their stories of struggle and success, finding clients, figuring out what to charge, and of course, we talk money. Join us and take the next step in finding your direction. Linnea, welcome to the show.

Linnea: Thank you so much. This is the first podcast I'm doing in English, so I'm really excited.

Kathryn: I like to start with your early life and see where that influences you later on. What did you want to be when you were five?

Linnea: Well, I don't know if it was as early as five, but I remember like in my childhood, wanting to, like become an actress, going into theater and later in my life I got super obsessed with musical theater and Broadway shows and things like that. So I did for a while go into that, but that's not where I ended up.

Kathryn: When you were graduating high school, was that still where the musical theater focus was or had it shifted?

Linnea: No, no, it was in full bloom then. So after high school I did a few years of musical theater training in some different schools and that was like the only place where my head was at for a very long time. And it took me almost as long to get out of that space. And like if I, if I'm not going to do this, what on earth could I do that could be as exciting as filling as this. And there was a like in between time where I was a bus driver out of all things and I was driving my bus back and forth. There was an airport bus so I was going back and forth to the airport every day and reading a lot of books on personal development and business and psychology and I was like, "what on earth can I, can I do, which I'm not going to do this musical theater thing?". What, what could I do? And then I found the the coaching program at the university that I went to, after.

Kathryn: What did you focus on in university?

Linnea: Well, the program was focused around cognitive neuroscience, which is well, brain science and specifically how like the, the abstract mind correlates with the physical brain. Very exciting field and also positive psychology and happiness research also connected to the brain. Like what happens in the brain when we are happy and like what are the benefits of happiness and how they get there, combined with evidence based coaching

Kathryn: So you use all of that kind of combined in what you do now?

Linnea: Yeah, yeah there was no dating stuff, in the university training, but I was at that point super into dating psychology, attraction psychology for my own sake. So constantly I was like every lecture and everything that I learned at university I always had like at the back of my head like how can you use this knowledge to improve your love life or

improve your dating life or understand your emotions and connections better? So that was like the lens or the filter that I saw my entire university studies through. So that made it like connected for me.

Kathryn: How did you get into being location independent?

Linnea: Ooh I think, I guess when I realized that it, it's a thing that you can do a, it was immediately attractive to me, because I have never been very good at being or doing like fitting into the box. I could for a long time. Like when I was younger in childhood, I could fit into the society's box of how you should be, but then exploring the happiness research and like really understanding that there is this field of science around understanding yourself and not having the end goal to be happy but actually how happiness and designing your own life can lead to, to other things. Like it's not I'm going to do this and then I'm going to be happy. It's more like when I am filled with positive emotions then I am better prepared to create the things that I want to create in my life and when I realize that it gets relayed to like life design, like how do I want to live my life and I'm like I don't want to be stuck in an office.

Linnea: I want to do like, like things my way and I don't want to work all the time. And before I had like the money or the courage to travel, I made sure to be time independent. Like, if I can't move around physically the way I want to, at least I want to be in charge of my time. And I started exploring with like my own productive flow of like I don't want to work just because it's Monday. I will work on the day that I feel inspired to work even if that is Saturday afternoon. And that is like the, the philosophy that I've expanded on and now it's only, not only like when do I want to work, but where do I want to be for the next few months or few weeks. So I started practically with the, with the, the traveling and the location independence through making smaller trips.

Linnea: Cause I have this idea that I wanted to split my, my year into time zones. So I'm happy to spend like the spring and summertime in Sweden. And then since I'm a Broadway nerd, I want to go to New York in the fall and see all the publish shows. And in the winter I want to be somewhere warm and exotic. But I couldn't really do that like with the full year. But I started out with going for three weeks to New York and then back to Sweden, then going three weeks to Bali and then back to Sweden. And then I expanded that from there.

Kathryn: How do you describe your job to people who are just being polite?

Linnea: I don't really like decide my response in how they, how interested they seem to be, but rather in how, how much in the mood I am to talk about it. If I want to talk about it. I just drop the dating coach bomb, but people have a million questions about it regardless if they're just asking to be polite. It usually triggers some kind of interest and curiosity. And if I don't feel like having that whole conversation, I just say I coach women who think too much and that usually it causes less follow up questions.

Kathryn: And when you're talking to someone who does have a lot of questions and really wants to know the details, what do you say?

Linnea: I explain that I mainly coach high achieving women who do think too much but also feel too little. They aren't really in connection with their emotional side and that it's about mostly about understanding yourself and your own inner world and your own emotional landscape to create a better, like a platform for dating and meeting new people.

Kathryn: How did you get started in this?

Linnea: Well it got started because I realized that there was a need for it. At first I had all the problems that I'm helping other people with today, but I thought it was just me as to do they. And then when I gradually got the courage to talk about these things with people, so many said like, yeah me too, and yeah that's a thing for me too. And Yeah, I'm struggling with that and I'm like, "Oh wasn't just me, this is super common." And I realized that all, around the same time that I graduated from the coaching program and that was also this the same time that Tinder got launched. So that was a very lucky timing thing as well. But it took me a long time to, to express fully that I'm working as a dating coach because it wasn't big step in my like self image to go from, this is the thing that I have the most problems with too. I'm now I'm the expert at this. So there was like a space in the in between road like yeah, I'm a happiness slash dating coach mmhmm. It was very unclear. But the more when I actually like could stand up for the title and like know, I know what I'm talking about, I can really help people with this. That's when it really started to to work out and and get rolling.

Kathryn: How did you find your first client?

Linnea: I have never really had the feeling that I find the clients. It's more like they find me and I think they do that because I have been seen a lot in media in Sweden before I even started coaching for real, I was a freelance journalist so I was writing about happiness research and dating psychology in like all of the magazines, it's like 20 class magazines. So I, I've been very like visible in magazines and online and with yeah, blogging and things like that.

Linnea: So since being seen that that creates credibility and that creates PR obviously. So I think that is what has mainly brought me my, my first clients and then that overlapped with like more and more coaching and less than this writing but still a lot of visibility in radio and on TV and things like that. So while the rest of the world are like YouTubers and having millions of followers on Instagram, I am not very successful in those arenas. But I am, I've been very much in TV and radio and things like that. And even if that doesn't have a, create like a direct impact when you go into my website and see that I have done all of those things, that creates a credibility. And when you like collect all of those things on one page, people are like, okay, she, she has been around, she knows what she's doing, she's credible.

Linnea: I will book her. And also another important thing that I do that that makes the clients connect with me and reach out about coaching is that I have very clearly, like specified their pain points. Like I have a blog where I write like blog posts that are so very personal to their problems and their pain points. And again with the like what I said that you don't, you think you're alone with this or when you read like blog post after blog post from someone and really experienced, "wow, this coach and this person really

understands me. I have never felt understood. No one has put words to my problems like this before." That immediately creates a connection as well because like when you feel that I understand your problems, you trust that I can have the solution for it as well. So I would say those are the, the main things that make you make the clients come to me.

Kathryn: Tell us about your first major struggle.

Linnea: I think my major struggle has been more of like an internal mindset thing than a practical issue. Even in the beginning I had a very like intuitive sense of how I want to run my business and how I want to work. And that goes against most of the advice that's out there. Like I read all these business books and I'm like, "no, I'm not going to work hard." Like there's this idea that sure you can run, you could start a business, but you have to work really hard and you have to put in all the hours that you want to have a salary for years and you'll have to struggle. And, and most companies fail in five years. I'm like, "Oof, I don't want to do that. I want to like work in flow and create epic things that I really feel that are meaningful."

Linnea: So me and for the people who are receiving them and I want to make my money through helping a lot of people while living a calm, peaceful, joyful, happy life. And there aren't a lot of business books for that. And in the beginning it was really hard to, to hold up my vision because I didn't have the results to prove for it. Like, it sounds strange when someone who doesn't make a lot of money or doesn't have a lot of clients, it's like, no, I'm going to do it in my own way. This has to be fluffy fairy way. But then the more I get into it and now after a few years I know that it works really well. Like doing this, this way is really my way of doing it. It's the only way I'm interested in doing it. And now people can actually listen when I say it because I have proof that it, that it works pretty well. But keeping up with that like philosophy and that idea of how to do it has been, um, a big struggle along the way.

Kathryn: And now about your first major success?

Linnea: Ooh, I don't know if there was like one major... Yeah. The things like one thing comes up now when you, when you ask, cause there have been like milestones along the way. But, uh, one thing that I'm thinking about now is that actually while I was still in university, I started the business. While I still had two years at university because like in Sweden, studying is free and you also get like help from the government to support yourself while you're studying. So I started the company while I was still studying so I could, for two years, try out this running my business thing while not being required to support myself financially from it. So I just, I gave myself two years of just trying things out.

Linnea: And one thing that literally fell into my lap by then was that a, um, a school in Finland, connected and reached out and asked if I could do, um, some public speaking for the students, like give a talk on, on happiness research. And I was like, "what? What was it like, I haven't even finished my studies. Like, what, what, who do they think that I am? Like, I can't do this." Uh, but the, I couldn't say no when a possibility like that falls into your lap. So I said, yes, I was super nervous. I went all by myself, did this talk and uh, it

was really challenging and I didn't have a lot of experience in public speaking, it freaked me out a lot. But I, I did it and it was a really good feeling afterwards to have actually got a professional paid gig to speak at a pretty like epic place.

Linnea: I call it international, I call it myself an international speaker from being once in Finland, but like technically it was international, it was outside of Sweden and that really boosted my confidence and made me realize that yeah, these things are actually possible here. Like there is an interest for this knowledge and I think I can do it.

Kathryn: If you could start fresh today, knowing everything you know, is there anything you would do differently?

Linnea: Yes, a lot of things. I spent a lot of time in the beginning being afraid of stuff. I wouldn't do that again. I'm not as, at all as fearful now as I was before. I was in the beginning, really scared of being misunderstood and now I've reached a point where instead of like, well, "I hope I hope or nothing like that, people don't misinterpret that." I'm like, "I have to say these things. You better listen." Like I've gotten to this point where where I just have to share the things and if someone doesn't understand it, they can ask me about it. But I don't have that, I don't have to waste this much time and energy on sitting around worrying. So if I started like it all over again now, I would enjoy it more and be less fearful.

Kathryn: Odds are, there's no such thing as a typical day for you. Do you want to give us what a random day looks like

Linnea: A random day? Yes. I wake up when I wake up, I don't use alarm clocks and I like soft, peaceful mornings, so I wake up when I wake up, I probably may meditate for a little bit. I like to do some exercising before lunch. Either swimming or walking the forest. I did a lot of crossfit before, but right now I'm really into more soft and peaceful things. Even when it comes to exercise, then I'll probably have some lunch and answer emails and then maybe create something like a blog post or a newsletter and in the afternoon I will have a few coaching sessions and maybe meet a friend in the evening. Yeah, something like that.

Kathryn: Do you keep up with any kinds of continuing education, formal or informal?

Linnea: Yeah, I'm, I'm a sucker for online courses. Like I love learning. There are so many exciting things in this world to learn about. Uh, so I pretty much always have at least one online course going, uh, to feed my mind or my heart or my soul. And I'm, I seeing myself as a reader. I've noticed that, that I, I've buy more books than I read, but yes, I need to keep my mind busy with creative and constructive things or it will start doing stupid things.

Kathryn: What are you excited about right now in the dating field?

Linnea: Oh, I'm excited about it growing, hopefully. Like still, I've been doing this for like six or seven years and I'm still pretty much the only dating coach there is in Sweden, I'm for sure the only one with a university degree in coaching and I'm pretty lonely doing it as a

woman as well. There are some like dating coaches or pickup coaches for men, but the way that I'm doing a trauma, more like evidence-based or like psychological view of, of seeing it as a, as a field of science and there's also a lot of like we can add like energy and spirituality to it as well, but actually taking this field or this problem and people's lives seriously and seeing it as something that you can improve just like your career or your health or anything else.

Linnea: I'm excited about that, like view of the whole thing and people's lives growing. And I also like one of the reasons that I started it was that I wanted to break this taboo of, of women actually having dating problems because with the whole pickup industry there is this awareness around the men struggling with their dating life that there is still this idea that women simply need to exist in order for like amazing men to approach them and want to be with them. And this is a very human problem. It's around like attachment psychology and it's also like a social skill that you can develop and learn. And I want to spread that idea and I would love for other people to come along and spread that idea and other people to see it as a field of psychology, social psychology and, and more like a skill that you can learn rather than something that just happens when it happens. So I'm hoping that more dating coaches will, will appear and that I will have more colleagues and that this field will grow.

Kathryn: Now, it's time to get into the numbers. What is your income range and how long have you been doing the work?

Linnea: I finished my university studies, I think about six or seven years ago and that's when I started. And I have since thought a lot about, like it's a strange thing to give your salary to yourself, whereas other people, if you're employed, you have this discussion with someone and have to like defend yourself and ask for money. Whereas like, if you're a self employed, you have to have that conversation with yourself. And also it's very interesting with being location independent like the, the life costs, uh, w will be very different depending on where you are. Like this winter when I was in Bali, that's a very cheap place to live and I spent a lot of time in Stockholm, which is an expensive place, but, but I have um, consciously created a lifestyle that doesn't require a lot of income.

Linnea: Like I have really prioritized my freedom over my time because I noticed that time is another currency. Like if you have a lot of time, you don't need as much money. Like so many things are cheaper on a Tuesday morning than on a Saturday evening, like going to the gym or getting a haircut or buying a train ticket. Like I figured out so many ways where I can have like live a luxurious or adventurous life but not, but using the currency of time is the currency of money. And again with with like differences between, for example, the US and Sweden, I don't have to spend money on um, health insurance because health care is free here. So, so depending on where I am located, my salary will like differ. And with that said, if you want to get into the numbers of for, for this year? I'm guessing that it will end up with somewhere between like \$35,000 or \$40,000 for my salary, but it will, it will go up and down probably between like \$2000 or \$3,000 per month going into my private account.

Kathryn: What would you say the beginning range would be for someone just starting out?

Linnea: Well, it could be anything. It mostly depends on, on how like how courageous you are in your pricing because a lot of people just starting out think that like I, I need to get more experience before I can charge more. And I don't agree even though I felt that way when I started as well. But I also knew that I am one of very few like university trained coaches in Sweden. I have better training and more knowledge than most people. I can really make a difference. And when I started like the, the main thing was that it was so unknown.

Linnea: Like no one knew who I was then. It wasn't very, like I, I didn't have a lot of business. So I think a starter with the income around like a \$1000 or \$12,000 per month or hundred, \$1200. That again was like dependent on me having created a life that didn't cost very much. So I was having a great time enjoying the freedom of, of of the time but I could have charged more back then. I could also have worked more back then. So I think it's, it's a lot of depending on how much you, you feel confident in charging, um, so boost your confidence and charge your prices and also how, how visible you are.

Kathryn: And what would you say that top range would be?

Linnea: Well, my whole philosophy around money is that the more people you help, the more money you earn. And there are a lot of people who need help. So I don't think there is a top range or a ceiling to that. I've been doing a lot of one on one coaching, but, which is very efficient for the person that I'm coaching. But it's not super efficient for me if I want to help a lot of people and now I'm really putting my energy towards helping more people with, without being there physically, without spending my time through online courses and writing books, etc. And if you can create digital products or something that, that will help people without you being there, there's literally no limits to how many people you can help, which also means building too much money you can make,

Kathryn: How do you decide what to charge?

Linnea: Actually the best advice that I've gotten on this, um, is that like if you just feel into, like imagine a number and then you feel like how excited am I to do the work if I get this amount of money? And if you're like, oh yeah, no, no, it's not going to be worth it. Like that, is that feeling of this resistance, then raise the price a little bit. Like if you got this much, would it be exciting? Yeah. Yeah, I was on that. Yeah. They're more really like, like let me get my juices flowing. I would love to help this person and give them everything I've got and finding that like emotional sweet spot or like what could make me excited to do this work. Because I often talk about like if, if I want to make a big difference for someone, the balance between what I'm giving and what I'm receiving needs to work out.

Linnea: I can't give more than I am receiving. So if someone wants to like cut their prices, they have to offer crappier coaching because otherwise it creates imbalances in the universe and that doesn't work. And I have, through experience, learned that I really create a difference in people's lives and that is worth a lot of money and I do it quickly. Like I don't see my clients most of the time, more than five times. A lot of people are like, well that's a lot of money for just five sessions. I'm like, yes, that's what you're paying but to not have to come to me for a full year or something like that. So if you can focus on like

the result that you are offering, the difference that you're making in someone's life and seeing like what is that worth for that person and what will also be a price tag that will make me super excited to help this person.

Kathryn: Is there anything you do to keep your income stable?

Linnea: Interesting question. Well of course there must be a, I just haven't really thought about it in that way. There were, have been times where it's been super wobbly and now I'm at a point where I have clients coming in on a regular basis so I don't have to like chase them or worry. And I also, a few years back, I had a colab with Match the dating site where I was blogging for them for a year and a half. That gave me consistent income during that time. Um, so that was a good thing of, of actually having like a consistent collaboration with a big company that could provide me like steady income. That was also like that year and a half muscles while I was still building up my company. And now what I do to keep it consistent is probably mostly updating the blog and doing the newsletter.

Linnea: Like keep being consistent with my output of content. That's my audience is really connecting with, that is the only thing that I am quote unquote and doing to make myself seen and, and promote myself and I, I just see it working really well. Like all the clients that I get, they consistently tell me like, yeah, um, I've been reading your blog and then I really connect with it. Or I've been like reading your newsletters for a year and then really made me make up my mind. That was so helpful that I now decided that I would come to you for coaching. So those are the consistent things in my work day or in my business life that I keep doing. And that is also what keeps to, like seems to be giving me consistent clients.

Kathryn: What's your number one tip for women looking to get into dating coaching?

Linnea: Mm, coach a lot. Learn how to coach and get a solid background like know, know what you are doing. Um, and also find a niche like whatever kind of coaching you're doing, if it's dating or otherwise be super specific on who you want to help. Like at first I was very open with like either if you're a 22 year old woman who just broke up with your boyfriend or you're a newly divorced 50 year old man that you're, you probably would have the same problems. Like I was talking to all of them, like both of them and everyone in between, which meant that everyone like who came to my website or saw my work were like yeah, I'm not sure this is for me. And then the moment that I specified, like are you a high achieving woman who is successful with everything else in your life and you're struggling with adapting to the other person or having dates that that just like end up going nowhere and you have possibly had some struggle in your family and you learn to adapt there and be like this good girl do you like resonate with this.

Linnea: So many clients just came flooding in like, yes, yes, yes I agree with all those points, it's me that you're describing. Please help me. So that connected so strongly with them, like recognizing themselves in what I was talking about. And I still think that I could help more than, than just those people, but don't have time to coach everyone in the entire world. So just like for my sake and for theirs, I have chosen to be very specific about

who I want to help and then they will feel really connected to what I'm talking about and understand it and they will know that I am the coach for them. So that would be my advice. Like really figure out to who it is that you want to help and talk to them specifically.

Kathryn: What are your next steps?

Linnea: I think working with groups. I'm not really excited about in group coaching or public speaking but, what I do want to do is coach in front of an audience cause I have noticed after like I coached over a thousand clients by this point and so many of them have the exact same problems and the exact same background which means that many, like I am having very similar coaching sessions over and over again, which is fun because it makes me feel really good at my work and I know that I can help them.

Linnea: But I also think that since it's so similar for so many people and you don't necessarily need to sit with me in the coaching session, like if I'm having the coaching session with one person and then there is an audience of 10 or a hundred or a thousand people who are listening and who really resonate with the client and her problems, they can get almost as much out of just listening to someone else's coaching session than they would from having a session of their own. So I would really love to do that. And also like I mentioned, doing more like digital products, writing more books and I'm very excited to do more international work. I've been doing, like I've been successful in Sweden, but I know that this is like Sweden, it's one of the loneliest countries in the world. We have so many singles here and so people are very lonely. But I know that this is a very common problem in a lot of places and I would love to do more work in English and internationally.

Kathryn: Where can listeners find you?

Linnea: Yeah. If you speak Swedish, you can go to happydating.se. If you don't, you can go to linneamolander.com which is my English website where you can read more about what I do and some blog posts and some HuffPost articles that I've written, some other exciting things.

Kathryn: Linnea, thank you so much for joining us. This has been great.

Linnea: Thank you so much.

Kathryn: If you want your own location independent life and are eager to take that next step, join us in compass insiders where every week I send you actionable tips, inspiration, and motivation so you can take that next step towards going remote. Join us now at compasspod.com/insiders Did you enjoy this episode of Compass? If so, please take a moment to write a review. Leaving a review helps other women find us so they can find their direction too. Thank you for listening to Compass. You can find today's show notes at compasspod.com/025 that's compasspod.com/025. Next week we'll be talking with Elena Manavis, business developer.

