

## Ep #10: Byron Katie Lessons



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**With Your Host**

**Brooke Castillo**

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Welcome to The Life Coach School podcast, where it's all about real clients, real problems and real coaching. And now your host, Master Coach Instructor, Brooke Castillo.

Hey, everybody, I'm super excited today. It is our 10th episode. That is 10 podcasts under my belt. I am officially an experienced beginner. Let's call it that, and since I did every 10 episodes, what I'm going to do is share one of my favorite teachers and what they've taught me. In this episode, I'm going to talk about Byron Katie. Byron Katie is probably the most influential teacher I have ever had the experience, luxury of learning from. Katie, as most of our students call her, is I think one of the modern-day gurus that deserves that title. She's unbelievable. When I first, I was introduced to her work, I actually went to a coach training and that was what they taught. It wasn't even, it was Martha Beck's training but she taught Byron Katie's work.

I delved into that work and was obsessed with it and loved it so much. I will always be, going to that training was one of the best choices I've ever made in my life because The Work of Byron Katie completely changed me in every way. You can check out Katie's work by going to [thework.com](http://thework.com), and you can hear more about her story and how basically she literally just woke up one day from a very deep depression and saw the world in a completely different way. She has been teaching her vision, the way that she sees the world ever since to anyone that will listen, and there are thousands of us that are willing to listen and want to learn from her.

I just love her. I love her so much. I love everything she teaches. I love the kind of person that she is and I'd love so much what she's taught me. She's most known for what she calls The Work, which is four questions and a turnaround, and I'm not going to spend time on this recording doing The Work or talking about The Work in a lot of detail, because although I did a lot of The Work when I first was introduced to it, and I really can say with no hesitation that doing The Work changed my life. I have since evolved my own version of The Work into my own way, which is what I call

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the model that I use in my everyday life. It's a little bit different, but I will say it is completely based on all of the concepts I learned from Byron Katie.

The four questions that she has you ask, based on any thought that you have in your mind is: is it true? Can you absolutely know that it's true? How do you react? What happens when you believe that thought? Who would you be without that thought? Then you do a turnaround on the thought. I started doing this work and I just never stopped. I did it all day every day for I would say probably 2 years. I love The Work. If you've never been exposed to it, please go to [thework.com](http://thework.com), print out a Judge your Neighbor worksheet and practice doing this and see what you think. It is amazing.

When I first became a coach, I did a lot of The Work with my clients, and I found that some of them loved it as much as I did. Many of them were really turned off by it. It didn't resonate with them, and that's one of the reasons why I developed The Model. It's a different way of approaching the same exact concept, but I wanted something a little bit different that was more accessible to some of the people who weren't responding as well to it as I totally did.

What I want to do in this podcast is really talk about the lessons that I learned from Katie, and what she taught me that I use every day in my life now, and has become a part of what I call my own belief system religion. It's how I run my life is based on some of the things that I have learned from her. One of my favorite books that Katie has written is called Loving What Is, and even just the title there sums up what Katie is all about. She's all about loving what is, saying yes to everything in your life. I had spent so much of my life resisting what is and trying to create something different than what is, that when I was introduced to this concept in this way, it blew my mind. I really started exploring like what if you didn't resist what is. What if you just accepted everything? That's pretty much what she's teaching, not just accepting everything but loving everything.

I remember there was a time when she was going through some eye surgery that was going to possibly render her blind and leave her without

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any sight, and she's going in for the surgery and she kept saying, "Eye surgery, it's my favorite. Going blind, that could be my favorite. Yeah, I'm always open to loving whatever is." I was like, "You said what? Loving going blind? How could that possibly be true?" It was for her, and you could tell she was totally genuine about loving everything and because of that, she always seemed to be happy and loving and kind and wonderful, and I really wanted that for myself and so I followed her everywhere and learned everything I could from her.

I'm going to go through some of the main lessons that I learned. Most of them are found in *Loving What Is*, and you can pick up a copy of that book at Amazon, and really take your time with understanding *The Work*. A lot of times in the beginning it may be frustrating. Maybe you don't quite get it, but give it a chance. She has many recordings too of her doing *The Work* with her clients online that you can listen to and it's magical in my opinion.

One of the first things that she taught me was no one can hurt me. That's my job. I had always believed that other people could hurt me. I always believed that, and she's talking emotionally here, right, that other people could hurt my feelings. That's how I had been raised. That's what I had believed, and Katie really taught me that no one can hurt me unless I believe what they're saying, unless I find truth in what they're saying and I accept what they're saying. Otherwise, it has no power over me.

One of the examples that I use with my clients based on this is if someone says to you, "Eww, gross. I hate your blue hair. It's so ugly.", that's probably not going to hurt you because you don't have blue hair. Well, most of you don't have blue hair, and you would not take it personally or take it on as something that you believed at all, so it would just brush right over you. If someone said, "I don't like your body.", you may take that personally because on some level, you may believe it.

This idea rocks my world because I felt so empowered by this idea that nobody could hurt me, and it's influenced all *The Work* and the tools that I've created at the Life Coach School and brought so much empowerment to my own life, because it allows me to allow other people to

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be who they are and say what they want to say and have the opinions that they want to have and judge me as much as they want, and know that none of that can hurt me. I don't need to control them. The only time that I'm ever hurt is when I hurt myself. I got that from Katie, no one can hurt me. That's my job.

The second thing that I take away from her teaching is our thinking is all we need to change. It's all we can change and that is very good news. I couldn't agree with this more because I have spent so much of my life trying to control the world and change the world and change everyone in my world and change how they treat me and change how they act and change what they do, and change the circumstances of my life that, I don't know about you guys but I get excited from it all. If the only thing I need to change is my thinking and I can learn how to change my thinking and I know how to change my thinking, then yes I agree. It's a very good news.

It's not what's happening outside of me. It's not what's happening in the world. It's what's happening between my ears. It's what's happening in my brain that is causing me trouble, and that is good news because I know how to manage my brain and I know that there is no circumstance that won't allow for me to manage my brain, so yes, very good news. The next thing she taught me is we only do three things in life. We stand, we sit and we lie horizontal. When I first heard this concept from her, I was like, "What are you talking about? What do you mean?" It's like separating out the facts worksheet that I do with my clients. It's like taking everything and just putting it down to the very bare facts.

The ultimate thing that we're doing is we're just standing. Someone can be talking to us. We can be standing in the front of 1,000 people on the stage but we're still just standing. If we can bring everything back to just the bare facts, then we can realize that most everything else is just a story that we're telling ourselves. It's just some thinking that we're having about what it means to be in certain situations, but at any point in our life, we can just remind ourselves that we're either standing, we're sitting or we're lying horizontal.

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To hear her talk about this concept is really, just like the simplification of it is so relieving. At the end of the day, that's all we're doing. That's all anybody's doing and everything else is really just a story about what it means. I love that concept. The next one is could it be, that all along, I have lived a life I should have lived and that everything I've done has been what I should have done. Could it be that all along, I have lived the life I should have lived and that everything I've done has been what I should have done?

I read that twice because that's kind of a mindblower, and it's one of the things that I have worked on with many, many, many of my clients. I wrote a book on this called, "It was Always Meant to Happen this Way." This was a concept that I got from Byron Katie that really set me free. It set me free not only from my past, which included my childhood, but it also sets me free from anything that I did yesterday that I'm currently trying to regret, or anything that I did 5 minutes ago that I want to worry about. Everything happens exactly as it should happen. Could it be that all along, I've lived a life I should have lived and everything I've done has been what I should have done, is the most relieving thing because you just can relax into knowing that that's how it was always going to go down.

I would say of the three things, the three main things that Katie taught me, that was one of the most important things is never to argue with reality. She says when you argue with reality, you lose, but only 100% of the time. That's when we argue with our past, the past is over. It's a reality we can't change. When we argue with it and believe that it should have been different, we'd lose. When we argue with our current circumstances and what's going on in our current circumstances, we'd lose because if we can't change them immediately in this moment, we're going to lose, and when we argue with the reality of what's inevitably going to happen, we'd lose. When we can accept and say yes to the reality of what is, when we can love what is, that's when we win because we release that resistance.

Now I know for many people, this is a very challenging concept because we've believed for so long that our past should have been

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different. We should have been raised different. We should have had different parents. We never should have been abused. We never should have been treated that way by that boyfriend. We never should have gone through that horrible accident, but when you can look at it and say, "No, that was always going to happen that way. That's how it should have been.", and you would say, "How do you know it should have been that way?", because it was that way. That's how you know. That's the way of it, she would say. That's reality.

If you can wrap your mind around that, that everything so far has gone down the way it should have gone down, you can look at your life from a whole new perspective. You can look at it in a way that breeds acceptance and breeds peace, and not only for what happened to you or for what you've done but also for who you are, like you should have done that. How do you know you should have done it? Because you did, and then there's peace and argument can end.

The next thing she taught me is nothing outside you can ever give you what you're looking for. Oh gosh, is that true and so hard to believe, because we believe that money will give it to us. We believe our lover will give it to us. We believe our kids can give it to us. We believe that the house and the car and the job and the people that are in our lives can give it to us, but the truth is only we can give it to us, and we only are the only ones that are ever giving it to us. No matter what is happening in our life, the reason why we're feeling the way we want to feel is because we're thinking about it in a certain way and we're allowing ourselves to experience something in a certain way, and that's why we feel what we feel.

Everything we want is really within us now. We have the ability to get what we want now, and it doesn't mean that we don't go after our dreams. It doesn't mean that we don't create. It doesn't mean that we don't enjoy other people. We just know that nothing outside of us can give us what we want. Again, I think that's fantastic news.

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The next thing she taught me, and this has been really important for many of my weight loss clients and for myself, is bodies don't think, care or have a problem with themselves. I love that. I love knowing that my body is totally accepting of itself. The only thing that's not accepting of my body is my mind. My body is at one with itself. It's completely accepting of itself. It doesn't judge itself. It doesn't think about itself. It doesn't have any problem with itself. It just is. That concept, in and of itself, makes me like my body more because I like that my body is totally cool with my body. My mind is the only thing that isn't cool with my body, and that distinction can really help you because it can help you look at your thinking in a way that you know that you can change it. You can change your thinking about your body. Your body, in and of itself, is not hating on you. You are just hating on your body.

The next concept is where there's no thought, there's no problem. Really think about that, all of our problems are thoughts. Where there is no thought, there's no problem. Something can happen and it's not a problem until we have a thought about it. Even like a bodily injury, even like an arm breaking, is not a problem until we think it is a problem. There's no such thing as a problem child until we label them a problem child. People will say, "My child is failing." Why is that a problem? Because you have a thought that failing is a problem. Without any thought, there is no problem. I think this is so mind-boggling awesome. I remember when I learned this, I felt like, "Oh my gosh, I've won the emotion lottery because if all of my negative feelings are caused by thoughts and I have the ability to change my thoughts, I've found the secret to the universe."

I really do feel that way, so if you can, and I know for some of you, this maybe a hard concept to wrap your mind around and to understand but I want you to just stay with me for a minute. If there is no thought, there is no problem. Could that be true? Just allow yourself to play around with that. I know when I first heard that, that resonated but I didn't really intellectually understand it until I practiced it for a while.

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The next thought is the body is never our problem. Our problem is always a thought we innocently believe. I love the way she uses innocently there, and here's why. I think when we start being exposed to this cognitive work and we start understanding the power of our thoughts and how our thoughts are really affecting how we experience the world and how we experience ourselves, it's very tempting then to start blaming ourselves and to start beating ourselves up about how we've been thinking, and I love that she uses the word innocently, because we innocently believe our thoughts because we don't really know that they're just thoughts and we don't know how much pain they're causing us and we don't know how many problems they're causing us.

When I look at all my thoughts about things that are negative, and I can say, "Oh no, I'm just innocently believing them. I'm not doing those on purpose.", it opens up this space for me to be able to look at them from a compassionate perspective, and from there, I'm much more willing to change those thoughts without beating myself up.

The next concept is everything happens for me, not to me. For those of us who think that people are living their lives at us, don't you feel like some people are just living at us? They're walking at us, they're talking at us. Their whole being is at us, against us, right? I think this idea that everything happens for me, not to me, is unbelievable. Again, these are just thoughts you can choose to believe or not, but when you believe this, when you believe that everything happens for you, it really changes the way you see the world because when you see something happening, you're like, "Oh, this is rigged in my favor. This is for me.", even though it may not look that way now, this is definitely for me, well then you can start looking for ways that it is for you, and you can start exploring what you can learn from it and how it can make you stronger and what you can use from it.

Instead of letting it beat you down and put you in a victim mode, you can start looking at it in a way that's much more positive and self-serving, which is always going to be the direction that you want to take your life in.

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You want to take it in a way where you can feel good about it. Everything happens for me, not to me.

The next concept she taught me was suffering is a natural alarm, warning us that we're attaching to a thought. When we don't listen, we come to accept this suffering as an inevitable part of life, and it's not. Suffering is a natural alarm, warning us that we're attaching to a thought. I just want to repeat the first part of that there, because I think all feelings are signals. They're telling us what we're thinking. If we're having a negative thought, we're going to have a negative emotion. If we're having suffering in our lives, it's because we're having suffering in our thinking. If we know that suffering is an alarm and it's warning us we're attaching to a thought, we can pay attention to what that thought is, and then possibly change it.

When we're not aware that suffering is attaching to a thought, then we don't think we have any power over that suffering and we just continue to suffer, and most of us don't even suffer. We just resist the suffering, and then we end up in all of those avoidance behaviors that cause us so many additional issues and increase our suffering even more. Suffering is just an indicator. Katie really taught me that whenever I'm suffering, and suffering is always optional, that's what she says, that I just have a thought that I need to inquire about. I just need to go and see what's going on in my brain, and knowing that it's just that indication, that it's that natural alarm, that it's time to do some thought work, has really opened me up to a life that is fairly free of suffering.

The next thing here is she's talking about The Work, and she says The Work, which she's referring to the four questions and the turnaround that I brought up earlier on the recording, The Work reveals that what you think shouldn't have happened should have happened. It should have happened because it did, and no thinking in the world can change it. This doesn't mean that you condone it or approve of it. It just means that you can see things without resistance and without the confusion of your inner struggle. This just builds on that whole idea that you know what was supposed to happen because it did. Everything happens for us, not to us.

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How do you know it should have happened? It did happen, and that's what anything in your life that you believe shouldn't have happened, you can learn that it should have happened, and it should have happened because it did, and no thinking will change it.

It doesn't mean that you condone it. It doesn't mean that you approve of it. It just means that it is. If you can see things without resistance, if you can see them as just plain reality as something that happened and you don't attach a story to it, then you can just let it be. I'm always teaching, and I've taught here on this podcast before, that there are no thoughts from our past. All of our thinking is now, so any painful story that you have about your past is on you. You're the one causing yourself the pain in this moment. The painful thing that happened to you in the past is not happening, and the reason why it's still causing you pain is because you're believing that it shouldn't have happened. You're believing that if it hadn't happened, you'd be in a different place.

I really think this concept is a game changer. I really think that if you can not just forgive your past, that's not what she's suggesting. She's not suggesting that you believe that it shouldn't have happened and you forgive it. She's suggesting that you accept that it should have happened because it did happen. That's a whole another layer. It releases the argument with it.

The next concept that she teaches, and I absolutely love it, is she says there are three kinds of business, the universe's business, my business, your business. Whose business are you in is what she's asking all the time. A lot of the times, we're in other people's business telling them how they should live, what they should do, how they should run their lives, how they should speak to us, what job they should have, how hard they should work, how they should behave, when they should take the garbage out. That's when we're in someone else's business.

A lot of times, we're in God's or the universe's business. There shouldn't be this kind of weather. This person shouldn't have died. This person shouldn't have been born. This person shouldn't be the way that they are. That's God's business, being up on the universe's business. Then

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there's our own business, and when you start really doing this work, you'll realize that probably 50% of the time, you'll notice you're all up in someone else's business, trying to run their life and fix their life and control their life, and we have a hard enough time controlling our own lives and being between our own ears and trying to figure out our own brains. One of the questions you can ask yourself based on Katie's work is, "Whose business am I in?" Remember that the only space where you really have any control is in your own business, and that's where you're going to feel the most empowered is if you stay in your own business.

The next idea is most of our stress comes from mentally living out of our own business. Not only do we have most of our power within our own business, but being in other people's business is what causes us stress because we don't have any control there. The next concept is a thought is harmless unless we believe it, so we have thousands and thousands of thoughts per day and thousands of input per day from the world and from other people, and the brain has to decide which ones of those are important and which ones of those to believe, and Katie often says, "A thought's going to appear. It's going to come up and just be there." It's harmless, you don't need to judge it or beat it down or try and hide it or avoid it unless you believe it, and believing a belief is a choice, and it's a conscious choice that you can make, so when you notice a belief like, "I'm not worthy. I'm not good enough. I suck at this or I shouldn't be doing this or who the heck do I think I am.", whatever, any of those thoughts that you come up with, you can decide whether you're going to believe them or not.

The same is true with thoughts that other people give to us, thoughts that people, things that they say about us and to us and the judgments that we make. They are totally harmless unless we believe them. Knowing that you have a choice to believe whatever you want to believe, and of all the thoughts that go through your mind, you can decide if you want to keep those thoughts as something that you're going to continue to practice and continue to believe.

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I had a client yesterday who said to me, "I base my self-worth on how productive I am." I asked her, "Why? Why do you do that?" She was confused by the question because she didn't see that as an option. She thought that that's just what I do. I just base my self-worth on being productive. That's how I was raised and that's just who I am. When I asked her why she believed that, she was able to see that, "Wait a minute, that is a choice. I don't have to believe that if I don't want to. In fact, believing that is causing me all sorts of trouble in my life. Maybe that's something I can consider not believing."

Now, I will say that having worked with many, many people on belief systems is when you have a belief that you have practiced for a long time, that you believe in a really deep way, it's not simply a matter of saying, "Oh, I don't want to believe that anymore." You first have to recognize that it's just a thought you're believing. That's really the biggest piece is because some of our thoughts are so ingrained in us that we don't even know that they're optional. We don't even know that the thought that we're having is something that we're choosing to have, whether it's consciously or unconsciously. The first step is really recognizing, "Wait a minute, that's just a thought. That's not reality. That's just something I'm choosing to think."

Then and only then can we decide whether we want to believe it or not. Many times, you'll see with clients is they want to hang on to these deep-seated beliefs because they're part of their identity, and to change a belief system that you've been practicing for so many years is requiring you to prove yourself wrong. It's requiring you to prove maybe your parents wrong, society wrong, lots of people wrong, and that's challenging for us, especially if the brain has become very adept at thinking a thought and believing it. You may not even realize that that's what it is, and when you do, to change it is life-altering, but that's how we change our lives. That's how we fix the things that we don't like in our lives. We find and locate the thoughts and beliefs that we've been thinking for so many years, and we educate ourselves to know that those are just thoughts. They're not true.

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They're not, as Katie would say, "Is it true?", they're not true and they're optional.

The truth is, what makes something true is whether you believe it or not, and so if you believe something, you will manifest that and make it true. There's some things that we believe that feel amazing. Why would we change them? The belief serves us, but there's also things that if you're not aware of that you're believing that are causing you pain, that you may want to change and you may want to wiggle around. That's one thing that The Work I think does beautifully is it takes those thoughts and shows you that you can wiggle them. Any belief that you find that you're believing in that's causing you pain is a thought that you consider changing.

I will say of all the things that Byron Katie taught me, what she taught me that really resonated the deepest with me was the nothing outside of us causes us any problem. It's always our thoughts. That was really the first part of my model. Circumstances are the things outside of us and that doesn't cause us any problem. It's our thoughts that create our feelings, that drive our actions that create our results. Katie is really the one that taught me that, and that's where my entire model comes from, the model that I use in all of my coaching practice and in all of my self-coaching with myself on a daily basis and I will be eternally grateful to her for teaching me those concepts because they have changed the lives of thousands of my students, and most importantly, to me, changed my life.

I highly recommend that you check out Byron Katie's books. You explore her work and you remember the lessons that I've repeated here, most importantly is that a thought is harmless unless we believe it, and all of our problems come from our thoughts.

I hope you guys have an amazing week. I hope you've enjoyed hearing about one of my favorite teachers in the world, Byron Katie. I hope you'll check her out, and until next time. Have a wonderful, wonderful week. Talk to you later. Bye.

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