

## Ep #19: Thought Management



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**With Your Host**

**Brooke Castillo**

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## **Ep #19: Thought Management**

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.

Hi, everyone. Thank you so much for being here today. I'm so excited. Today is going to be an amazing podcast because we're going to talk about thought management. I get a lot of comments and emails from you guys about managing thinking, and I actually work really closely with a lot of my students on how to manage their thoughts.

If you've listened to this podcast from the beginning, you have been introduced to the concept that I created called 'The Self Coaching 101 Model'. In that model, we talk about how our thoughts create our feelings. Our feelings drive our actions and our actions create our results.

Now, a lot of us don't realize that many of our thoughts are not serving us. We think that it's the circumstances of our lives that are creating our experience in the world, and really, what it is, it's our thinking about our lives that's creating our experience in the world. We really want to start focusing more on what exactly are we thinking and why, and are we thinking that deliberately. Are we really making the choice of what we want to think in our lives?

I want to talk about this a little bit because I think it's really important to review and to understand that there are things in the world that happen that we have no control over. Okay? Other people, our past, things that have happened to us ... we have no control over those things, but we do have control over how we think about those things and what we make those things mean.

A lot of times, people will say, "But I don't feel like I have control over my thinking." The reason why you don't feel like you have control over your thinking initially is because you aren't aware of what you're thinking. The first step has to be becoming more aware of how you're thinking about your life. Okay?

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I'm not talking about just becoming more mindful of your life. I'm talking about becoming more mindful of your mind, and really thinking about what is going on in your mind and really thinking about why you think what you think, and if you want to continue to think the way that you're thinking. I mean, these are like deep questions, but once you start really watching your own mind to eavesdropping on it, you realize that you aren't your brain. You're the person watching your brain.

A lot of times, your brain has been programmed inadvertently without consciousness and not deliberately, and you haven't been telling your mind what to do, so your mind is so busy telling you what to do. You're obeying it because it's your mind, and so our work is all about first of all becoming aware of what you're thinking and understanding your patterns. When you can start recognizing, "The reason I act to this way is because of what I'm feeling and thinking. The reason I feel this way is because of what I'm thinking," that can really change everything for you because that awareness in and of itself can help with the process of change.

Now, most people start to become aware of their thinking. I just had someone make a comment on 'The Life Coach School' on one of the podcast post saying, "Okay. Great. I'm aware of what I'm thinking, but what I'm realizing is that I'm only thinking about how I'm not worth anything, and I'm thinking about how I'm no good and I'm not useful."

It's really powerful to know that you're thinking that, but you don't want to stop there. It's like once you become aware of all your negative thinking, you don't want to go, "Okay. Now, I'm a more mindful person." I remember doing this work myself and I started feeling like, "Okay. I'm feeling my feelings. I'm aware of my thinking, but all I'm aware of is all my crappy thoughts and all my crappy feelings. Now what?" That was the missing piece always for me. It was like, "What do I do now with all of this?"

The answer is, that once you become aware of your thinking patterns and your feeling patterns and how you're reacting to them, the first step really becomes catching yourself before you react. When you recognize that something is just a thought feeling combination and not something you have to react to, that's when you can really start changing those behavioral patterns.

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The next step is really to start deciding what you want to think on purpose. If you don't tell your brain what to focus on or what to think about, it will go to the old patterns. The brain likes to do what it's really good at. What it's really good at is stuff that it's done a lot of. Unfortunately, for many of us, that's a lot of very negative anxiety-producing, frustration-producing thinking.

Okay. Step one, become aware of what you're thinking. Notice how that's causing you to feel and react, and notice what results that is creating in your life. Now, I taught this concept to one of my students and she asked this really fantastic question. What she said was, "Okay. You've told us that if we think a certain way, we're going to get negative results. Shouldn't we resist thinking that way?" Then she said, "You've also told us not to resist our feelings and to feel them, so I feel like this is kind of contradictory."

It's a really good question but it's not accurate and it's not what I'm teaching. What I'm teaching is to allow everything. Allow your thoughts. Allow your feelings. Right? You decide whether you're going to react to them or not. Once you allow them, that's when you can increase your awareness of them. When you resist something, you block it out of your consciousness. It does not mean you stop thinking it. It certainly doesn't mean you'd stop feeling it and you most likely will be reacting to it because it's unconscious.

That's why so many of us feel so out of control all the time because we feel like we don't know why we do what we do. "I don't want to eat that much food. I don't want to yell at my kids. I don't want to yell at my husband. I don't want to watch all of this TV," or "I don't want to be surfing the internet for hours and hours, but I just can't seem to control it." The reason why we're unable to control our reactions in our life is because we're unaware of the thoughts and feelings driving them. Once we become aware, it becomes much easier to notice the thought and the feeling before the reaction happens and to make a deliberate choice there. Ultimately, the choice can happen at the thought level, when you start directing your mind and telling it what to think.

Okay. One of the confusing things here is, my students will say to me, "Okay. Once I know that I'm having a lot of negative thinking, you tell me that I can direct my mind to become more positive. What I want to do is forget about all that negative thinking and just focus on the positive

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thinking.” It can’t be done that way, and it doesn’t mean to be done that way. Here’s why.

If you are willing to feel any emotion, and this is something I’ve been talking a lot about on this podcast, right? If there’s any emotion, bring it on. If that is your attitude, you’re not going to be so freaked out by the negative thoughts when they appear in your brain. They will appear because that’s what you’ve trained your brain to do by living your life, and you’re not supposed to live your whole life with positive emotion. There are instances in your life where you’re going to want to choose negative emotion. That’s part of the human experience, right?

If you feel sad about something, that’s a choice a lot of the times. You want to feel sad about something. If you feel upset about something, if you feel frustrated ... sometimes, those are the ways that you want to feel. Allowing yourself to feel the way you want to feel is a huge piece of it.

The other piece of it is just noticing. When you feel negative emotion that you don’t have to resist, avoid or react to it, you can just simply feel it. What is the big deal? Feel some resistance. Feel some anxiety. Feel some frustration. If you are willing to feel those emotions, you will stop reacting to them. If you stop reacting to them, you will stop perpetuating them. Okay?

When you allow yourself to feel the negative emotion, then you can access the thought that’s causing it. Now, most people make the mistake at this point and they start really wanting to get rid of it, slash it, get rid of such negative thinking. “I can’t believe I’m thinking that I have such low self-esteem. I can’t believe that I’m thinking I’m such a terrible person.” When you resist that you can’t understand it, and I like to understand and allow everything because then, I can own it and release it.

If you notice that you have a lot of thoughts about yourself that are “I’m no good”, “I’m never going to amount to anything”, “I’m never going to be able to lose weight”, “I’m not as talented as those people”, “I’m not as beautiful as those people”, “I’m not as thin as those people” ... whatever it is that comes up for you, greet that thought with compassion. Right? Notice that that’s what you’re thinking.

It’s still a choice, but be curious why are you making that choice. Why are you choosing to think that, and really acknowledge that it is something you’re choosing to think, and be compassionate with yourself about it. Just

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that in and of itself makes it so much easier to release it, because as long as you're pushing it away from you, it's really hard to hold it in the palm of your hand.

I like to think about these thoughts that I have, especially the negative ones as sentences that I can just put in the palm of my hand and have a look at them, and just see what's going on there with them. At that point, then I can decide, "Is this something I want to continue to think or not?", and then, you can start focusing on what you do want to think.

Now, this is not pretending to think positive emotion. This is not saying, "I wish I believed that I was beautiful, so I'm just going to go around saying 'I'm beautiful. I'm beautiful. I'm beautiful. I'm beautiful. I'm beautiful'." Here's what you have to remember about all replacement thoughts and all focused thinking. You can't convince yourself of it. It has to be believable and it has to feel good.

One of the things that is really important is to move up the scale of thinking. If you are thinking of yourself as "I'm no good", don't try to go to, "I'm the best person in the whole wide world. Rainbows and daisies and sparkles." Right? Don't try and do that.

Go from, "I am no good. I'm not worth anything to. I am a human being." Right? Can you see how it's a more neutral thought? It takes away some of the negative connotation and it shifts you into a different feeling without trying to pretend anything.

A lot of my clients with their bodywork, I'll tell them to go from, "I have a fat body" to just "I have a body," and just go to the place where you recognize that you have a body. That, that neutral statement for yourself can be much better than, "I have an ugly fat body." "I have a body." That's a thought that you can focus your brain onto. "I have a body. I have a body. I have a body." Notice when the negative thought comes up, and you can direct it to "I have a body. I have a body."

Also, it's important before you start trying to 'Change your thinking' is notice when you think "I have a fat body", how do you feel, and then what do you do? Ironically, most of us eat when we think that way. That's just a good pattern to understand and be compassionate and non-judgmental about. When you think, "I have no self-worth", "I'm not worth anything", how do you feel when you think that way, and then what do you do? Right?

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Then, can you just switch, “I was created by something bigger than myself. I am here. I am matter.” A lot of people can’t get to the place where they believe that they do matter, but they can get to the place where they know they have matter. They exist. Just making that shift from a negative to a neutral can be huge, and you direct your thought.

This is not, “Oh my God. There’s always a negative thoughts. I’m going to push, push, push, push, push, push against, so I can only thinking positive happy thoughts.” That’s not it. We notice the negative thoughts. We’re not afraid of them because all they can do is cause negative emotion, and there’s no emotion that we’re not willing to feel, so no big deal, right?

“I’ll feel whatever negative emotion. My boss yells at me. I have a thought he shouldn’t yell at me. I feel frustrated. I’m willing to feel all of that. I’m willing to notice it, but I don’t have to. I can notice that that’s also a choice. Next time he yells at me, I can choose to think something different, but I may not. If I don’t, it’s okay because there is no emotion that I’m not willing to feel.”

The difference when you’re willing to feel an emotion with the difference of what happens with that willingness is you don’t have to react to it. It’s the resisting of emotion that causes us to react, avoid, right? When we react to ourselves or avoid ourselves, that’s when we go into these compulsive behaviors, and that’s when we start acting in ways that we don’t want to act.

The problem for most of us is we believe we are our thoughts. We believe that what we think is true about ourselves, and we think that what we think is who we are. If we’re thinking a bunch of negative thoughts about ourselves, then we are going to believe that we are negative people, right? The truth is, those are just thoughts. That’s not who we really are. Those are just thoughts that we have decided to think unconsciously, and we can decide to think something different.

Managing your mind and deciding what you wanted to think about is the secret to a happy life, period. If you are constantly thinking positive, wonderful things that you truly believe about yourself, you are going to feel much happier than if you’re thinking thoughts that are negative about other

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people or yourself. Notice, whenever you have a thought, how does that thought feel? Notice that. Do I want to keep thinking that?

Now, if you try to approach this process with resistance and with anger, you're going to get into trouble, because then you're going to start adding thoughts on top of negative thoughts, and then you're going to beat yourself up for having the negative thoughts, and then you're going to try and push away the negative thoughts, and then you're going to pretend like you don't have the negative thoughts, right? What you need to do is step back and say, "That's a thought. That's interesting. That's fascinating. Why would I choose to think that I don't have any self-worth?"

Now, I'm not suggesting that you go back into your past and find some deep, dark reason. I'm just asking that you ask yourself that now. "Why would I choose to think that now? If I'm conscious of that thought and I notice that it's there, is that a thought I want to keep thinking? Why or why not? When I notice it, can I greet it with compassion and notice what's it's causing me to feel without resistance, and then from there, having that awareness and that understanding, can I stop reacting to whatever that feeling is because I'm willing to feel any emotion. Then, from there, the ultimate step is, can I change what my brain is focusing on?"

Two of the most important tools we use at the school involve asking questions and having goals. Those are the two best ways I know of how to do direct your brain. There's this idea that I got from Deepak Chopra that is really fascinating to me. What he suggests is that our imagination can be used for either anxiety or creativity. Right? We're either worrying about something in creating anxiety for ourselves or we're creating something. I love that concept.

If you direct your mind in a way that's thinking about creation, that's thinking about a goal you want to create or a future you want to have, you're using your imagination. You're putting your brain to work to do what you wanted to do. I mean really, how cool would it be to think about your brain as an employee, as a tool, as something that's been given to you to utilize? We've just neglected it. We haven't really told it what to do, so it's just trying to get good at whatever it keeps repeating instead of being told what to repeat.



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This is how I want to manage you. This is what I want you to think. This is what I want you to do. Your brain is an amazing tool. One of the best ways is to have a really exciting goal that you think about every day. You look at the goal every day, you tell your brain, “That’s what I want you to focus on.” Any of you guys who have read Napoleon Hill’s ‘Think and Grow Rich’, he talks about this in detail. He talks about how the brain needs to be thinking about what it wants and repeat and repeat and repeat and repeat, and then that’s what it will go about the business of doing.

The second thing you can do is to ask yourself amazingly good questions. If you ask yourself an awesome question, “How can I feel great today? How can I help the world today? How can I contribute today? What can I do to have on today? What can I think today that will create a lot of the positive emotion?” ... When you ask your brain questions, it can’t help but find an answer. That is what the brain is trained to do. It loves to answer questions.

If you ask it a really crappy question, it’s going to give you a lot of negative thinking. “Why am I so tired? Why am I so stupid? Why don’t I have any self-worth?” If you ask yourself those questions, it will give you answers. It will give you thoughts to think. If you ask it positive questions, it will give you thoughts to think that are positive, right? “Why am I so lucky? Why did this world treat me with such amazing bounty?” ... You can come up with all of these answers.

“What do I have to be thankful for? What do I love right now? What makes me so happy right now?” ... Those are questions that are going to get your brain focused, right? It’s going to tell your brain what to do, and it’s going to come up with a lot more positive thinking for you.

Now, once you’ve gotten some thoughts that you really do believe in, then, you need to practice some. I suggest you put them on stickies, put them on three by five cards, write them on your binders, write them in your computers ... Remind yourself what you want the brain to be thinking. You need to feed it what you want it to do. It’s just like a computer.

It doesn’t really care if it thinks negative thoughts or positive thoughts. It’s just a thinker. It just does what it’s told. If it’s been told a lot of negative things its whole life, that’s what it knows how to do really well. If it’s been told a lot of positive things its whole life, that’s what it knows how to do. The

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awesome part about it, you guys is that you can decide to change that. If you want to think different thoughts, you're the one that can program it.

Step one, figure out what you're thinking. Become aware of it. Step two; be willing to allow any feeling. Don't be afraid to feel any feeling. The worst thing that can happen is you have a vibration in your body. That's all a feeling is. Remind yourself, if you were telling an alien what a feeling was and they're like, "What's the big deal?" it'll be very hard for you to explain what the big deal is. It's a vibration in your body. You're willing to feel anything. You won't be afraid of your thinking and you'll be willing to really look at it.

Then, the next step is to stop reacting to those feelings by being aware of them. Then, from that point, you can decide to start changing how you feel by changing how you think. That is how the progression goes. I want to really encourage you to do a thought download, to really look at what you're thinking and notice how it's causing you to feel. That's one of the things I teach in how to solve any problem.

One of the products that I told you guys about in my last podcast is just write down everything you're thinking and notice how it causes you to feel, and take the power back. When you recognize that you're the one making you feel a certain way, it's really powerful to know that. If you're willing to allow it instead of resist it, and you're willing to look at it with curiosity instead of beating yourself up, that's where your power is going to come in where you're going to be able to change what you're thinking. I'm not talking about pretending like you're happy. I'm talking about genuinely creating the emotion you want to feel most of the time.

Tell me in the comments. You can go to 'Thelifecoachschool.com/19', and let's talk about what are you currently thinking, what do you want to start thinking, and maybe, what is that in between thought that's going to get you there. How are you going to bridge from negative thought to positive thought, and is there a feeling that you don't think you're willing to feel and why not? Let's explore that some more too.

Anyway, I gave you guys a lot. I know that some of you have told me that you have to listen to these twice because I packed so much information in there. I think this is definitely one of those, one of those podcasts that you could listen to twice to really understand the power of

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your mind and how important it is to manage your thoughts, to manage your mind, and to create what you want your mind to do and ultimately deliver to you in your life.

I hope you guys have an amazing week. I'll talk to you next week. Bye for now.

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