

Ep #163: Boundaries 2.0



Full Episode Transcript

With Your Host
Brooke Castillo

Welcome to the Life Coach School Podcast, where it's all about real clients, real problems and real coaching. Now, your host, Master Coach Instructor, Brooke Castillo.

What is going on, my friends? How are you? I am amazing. I am recording this on a Sunday afternoon. I usually don't work on Sunday but we were out of town this weekend. My husband and I went to meet with my coach for a sit down private session. It wasn't private. There were actually some other people there. It was kind of like a mastermind. I love going to see my coach because he always tells me that I'm crazy, the things that I want to do, and I always argue with him and then end up doing exactly what he tells me to do but it's really fun because I took Chris with me this time, so Chris was able to meet Frank. It's really fun when you go see Frank.

He has two Rolls-Royces that are ridiculous. They're like \$450,000 cars. I mean they're just so over the top and Chris got to drive one. We drove to lunch and it was super fun. He got to hang out with Frank and his Mercedes Jeep looking thing too, so they were loving all of that stuff. It was great and then, we talked a lot about business and about where my business is going and some of the growing challenges we have as a business and how dedicated we really are to our customers and to creating value. I just love it. I love kind of getting outside of my business and looking at it. That's truly what I feel like I do for you all. I feel like I help you come out of your life so you can look at it with me, like we look at your life together and that's what my coach does for me.

Now, I don't know if you guys can hear this but in the background, there is some chomping. I gave my dogs a bone and they like have to be right at my feet chomping on it. Anyway, I just had like the most wonderful, amazing time and it took a couple days. We just put our house on the market, so this weekend, we were having the house be shown and so we couldn't be in here. You know how that is. It's just nice to have the house all to myself and just hang out with you guys, you guys right here.

Today, we're going to talk about boundaries. We're just about to get going in May in Self Coaching Scholars on relationships. The work that I've created for this month in relationships has been really

exciting for me because I feel like so much of the work that I'm doing has really come together in my relationship with myself and that's what I've spent so much time working on. Now, I'm really seeing how it benefits my relationships with everyone in my life. Chris and I sat down and did a behind-the-scenes, a really frank, honest, real behind-the-scenes video and we're giving it to all the Self Coaching Scholars this time. Some people have already received it and have just been telling me how much they appreciate the fact that our relationship is so real.

I think a lot of times when people like me are teaching this sort of material, it's easy to get the impression that we do it all perfectly all of the time and that is really far from the truth. Aim to really practice what I preach and I really do practice it but that does not mean at all that I show up perfectly and create perfectly and anywhere near perfect in my relationships. We shared a lot about some of the struggles that Chris and I have in parenting and being business partners in such a vibrant business without people working for us and then also in our relationship and how important that is for us to maintain. I think the other piece too is like Chris and I are married and we have an intimate relationship but we're also like best friends too. We have so many different layers to our relationship and we try to navigate those.

I think we do a pretty dang good job if I do say so and I think partly, it's because I coach myself all the time and Chris doesn't need to coach himself ever because I say this all the time, like he is the best person I know. He is always coming from a place of love, always giving people the benefit of the doubt, truly just has the biggest heart. There's not like a pretentious bone in his body and there's not a mean bone in his body. He would never do anything mean. He's always looking for the kindest way to be with anyone. I feel so blessed.

In Self-Coaching 101, I dedicated the book to him and I said every girl should be so lucky. I truly feel like just being with Chris is such an amazing treat to be able to share my life with him and ponder what it would be like to be such a great person as he is. I mean, I think we're both great people. We're just great in different ways. One of the things that Chris is, is just like genuinely nice and kind all of the time

and never wants anyone to point it out. He just is delighted to be himself and very kind.

This month, we're going to talk about boundaries 2.0. We're going to talk about love 2.0. We're going to talk about how to be a good mate and then we're going to talk about difficult conversations. Now, in the podcast, I'm going through this material. I'm giving you a lot of the material but we're really going deep in scholars on this. If you're a scholar, like, buckle up, game is on. I really want to take you guys deep, deep, deep into your relationships and set you free from so many of the things you guys are struggling with unnecessarily.

If you are listener of the podcast, you know that I have already done a podcast on boundaries. Those of you who are in scholars, if you go to the back of your podcast book, you will see that I have a list of every single podcast I've ever recorded and the title of it and the link of where you can locate it. That's in the back on page 35, you can see that. I'm looking at that right now to tell you that episode 12 is the first episode that I did on boundaries. If you haven't heard that episode, I recommend that if you need help with boundaries, that you go and listen to that podcast and I will review, of course, in this podcast but I'm taking it to that next level, boundaries 2.0.

One of the things that I'll say before I even get started is that most people use boundaries improperly. Most people think that boundaries are something that they're not. That's how I'm going to start this podcast because a lot of people will come to me and say, "I need to set a boundary and here's how I'm going to do it." I'll say, "You really don't need to set a boundary." Most of what we think needs a boundary is our own lack of self-care that doesn't really require a boundary. Let's start.

The first thing that most people are very confused about when it comes to boundaries is they think that saying no is a boundary and that they need to start saying no to people in order to set a boundary. What I want to be clear about is saying no and then following it up with your own action is what makes it a boundary. Saying no and threatening someone or telling them how they should behave is not a boundary. Just to review, a boundary is only required when there has been a boundary violation. The way that I describe it is that there is

someone coming into your personal property space like literally coming into your house without permission, coming into your emotional space, your physical space without permission.

A boundary is you stating what you will do if the person continues that behavior. It is not you telling that person how to behave. Saying no is not setting a boundary but I do want to say that most of you don't know how to say no. Let's just start with that. Most of you are really afraid to say no and when you say no, you usually want to offer a lie as an explanation in an effort to control how the other person thinks of you. Now, if you are a person who never says no because you're afraid of saying no and you're afraid of what someone else would think about you and you say yes when you want to say no and you lie to them instead of saying no, you can set yourself up for boundary violations. By not telling the truth and not having self-respect, you basically create a situation where boundary violations are very easy.

I'll give you an example of this. I tell the story when my mom wanted to come to soccer games. I tell this story all the time how she wanted to come. Instead of me saying "no," like, "don't come to the soccer game," I would just say, "fine," and then I would seethe. Then, she just kept coming and there were no boundaries at all and she just kept coming to every event that we ever had without ever like letting us know. It ended up being the situation where she was always, always, always coming over and being there when sometimes it wasn't appropriate for her to be there but because I didn't know and I didn't ... I shouldn't say I didn't know how to say no, let's tell the truth, I did know how to say no. We all know how to say no. I just didn't want to because I was afraid of what she might think of me.

Saying no is something you have to get good at doing so you can get good at saying yes to the things that you really want to do. Remember, you don't have to do anything. You always have the option of saying no. When you say no, you are choosing to say no and when you say yes, you are choosing to say yes. You do not ever have to say yes when you mean no. When you don't say no to something, you are choosing to do that thing that you haven't said no to. Make sure you're being really honest with yourself there.

I told myself so many lies and that certainly was not my mom's fault. She was doing nothing wrong in that situation. I wasn't telling her the truth about how I felt about something. I thought it's not okay if your mom wants to come watch your kids play soccer and they have a game like every day and she wants to come and be with your family every single day and spend time every single day, you can't say no to that, is what I was telling myself in my head, like, you should be appreciative of the time that your mom wants to spend with you and your kids.

Because I felt that guilt, I didn't tell her the truth and I didn't say no. That set me up for a lot of boundary violations that I then ended up having to come back and take care of. That is the truth for most boundary violations. Most of us don't set proper boundaries by saying the truth to people. Then, we start getting "violated" by that and that's when we have to kind of back up and really set from boundaries.

The second thing that people think are boundaries are standing up for yourself. I'll have students that will come to me and say, "Okay, I'm going to start standing up for myself. I'm going to start setting some boundaries." I really want to be clear that standing up for yourself is not setting a boundary. Standing up for yourself is not even really necessary in the way you mean it most often. Standing up for yourself is usually code for offering resistance or defense. It usually comes from a place of exasperation or anger. That's when you know that you're coming from a place of exasperation or anger. You're taking an action. Think about the model. You're taking an action from a negative emotion. You're probably going to end up yelling or saying something inappropriate or being like, "Listen. I'm so sick and tired of you doing blah, blah, blah, blah, blah, blah. I'm going to stand up for myself."

Some days, people are like, "Woah. What the heck just happened?" It's like if you haven't ever told someone the truth and then all of a sudden you're like, "I'm so sick of you doing this," then the person may not even know that you're sick of doing that, right? If you remember two things, you can always say no and you don't have to offer an explanation ever and adults get to behave as they want to, always. Then, you don't have to get defensive or stick up for yourself.

You can simply let people be who they are and you can be who you are and say no.

Now, if you're willing to say no, you won't need to stand up for yourself. You'll just simply say no. I would never use that terminology, "I have to stand up for myself," because I'm always just telling the truth. No, I don't want to do that. No, I'm not going to do that. I don't have to like be like, "Hey, stop asking me to do stuff. I'm going to stand up for myself now." You can ask me. You can as many times as you want. It's totally fine. I'm just going to say no and I don't have to come from a place of anger or exasperation.

Now, the other piece of this that's really important is you have to let people be wrong about you. We spend a lot of time saying yes when we mean no in a way to manipulate how people think about us. I have a client who keeps giving everyone money in her family. She makes a lot of money so she keeps giving everyone money because she doesn't want to feel guilty that she has money and they don't and she wants to help take care of them. What I explained to her is I said, "Listen. The reason you're giving them money is because you're trying to manipulate the way that they think about you. You're telling yourself that it's coming from this really charitable wonderful place but that's not how you're feeling."

That's the test, you guys. It's like how are you feeling when you're giving the money? How are you feeling when you're saying yes? If it's coming from a negative place, you're probably not telling the truth. That takes us right into people-pleasing, okay? Remember that I call people-pleasers liars. What I mean by that is you tell people what they want to hear and you do what people want you to do in order to get them to like you. This is not kindness. This is manipulation. All of you really sweet people that come to me that are seething with resentment and seething with anger because you don't tell the truth. So many of us people-pleasers end up eating our rage. We are so mad at ourselves for constantly saying yes and constantly people-pleasing when we really want to say no.

Then, we end up, like the person that was supposed to be helping, we end up being so angry at them. They're like, "Will you make 500 cupcakes for the bake sale?" You're like, "Sure. That sounds

amazing. I would love to do that. I'm not busy at all." Then, you're making those cupcakes and you're hating that person and you're doing it and... You're coming from this really kind of place when you've talked to them but then you end up seething with anger. That matters. The energy you put into whatever it is you were doing matters so much.

Really, think about if someone asked you like if someone asked me to bake 500 cupcakes, I promise you, my answer would be no and I would not offer an explanation. I would just be like, "No, I'm not going to do that and is there another way I can help, like, what are my options?" If I really wanted to help, what are my other options for helping? Many times for me, there's an option that I'm thrilled to do. I'll sign up and be willing to do that. I don't do things that I don't want to do. I feel like I'm a very generous, helpful person but it always comes from an authentic place. That's really, really important because it makes my life so much better. It makes my relationships so much more authentic.

Here is my rule of thumb. Do kind things for other people only when you want to, only when they are the truth. Make sure you like your reason for doing it and that the reason isn't so they will like you, isn't so they will think a certain way about you. Sometimes I say no to people and they think I'm not a giving person. They think I'm not very generous. They think I'm selfish and I'm okay with people being wrong about me. I know that that's not true about me. I know that I'm a kind, giving but also authentic person and I tell the truth. Say no when you don't want to do something. Say no from a full heart. Tell the truth. Give people that honor. Tell them the truth.

I told my friend Laurie no once and she almost fell over. Now, she knows she can trust me. She knows that a yes is a true yes. When people "walk all over you," it's because you're lying on the ground in their way. Do not do that to yourself. Do not blame other people for walking all over you. You are laying in the ground in their way. Get out of their way if you don't want to help them. A boundary is only appropriate when you need to protect yourself from violations. Boundaries are limited to physical and emotional lines. Boundaries are very similar to your house property. Unless the person comes in to your yard or house, there is no violation.

If you have let them in consistently without them knocking and then they come in, it is still a boundary violation. They still come in to your property without asking but you've made it so it's okay for so long that that is when you have to set an appropriate boundary. Many of my students want to claim boundary violations when they are the ones looking into their own neighbor's windows. It goes both ways. Your neighbor can tell you what color to paint your house and what bushes to plant and what wallpaper to use. This is not a boundary violation but if he comes into your house and starts painting and planting, now we have a violation. Let's be really clear about that.

People telling you how to live your life, people criticizing you, people telling you that you're doing it wrong or that you should do it a different way is not necessarily a boundary violation. Now, if you don't want to be around someone criticizing you or telling you stuff like that, you can say to them, "Hey, if you keep doing that, I'm going to leave." That would be an appropriate boundary but for me, I just let other people have their opinions. I let them be wrong about me. If it gets to the point where I feel like emotionally it's upsetting, there's like the constant me having to do that work every minute I'm with them, then I'll set a boundary, okay?

There's a huge difference. Remember, adults can say and do what they want. We don't control them until they literally cross a physical or emotional boundary. Then, we don't even control them. We're controlling ourselves. We are removing ourselves from that situation. Physical boundaries are easy to identify. We have physical bodies but even so, some of our boundaries need to be communicated. Some of us don't allow others to touch us in any way or only in certain ways, etc. Often, this will need to be clarified.

For example, I have a student who loves people to touch her. She loves people to pet her. I could pet her and hug her and probably sit on her lap and give her a cuddle and she would not consider that a boundary violation at all so she wouldn't need to set a boundary even though I'm physically touching her. Now, I have other clients who don't want to be touched or hugged or if I put my hand on their leg or on them, that may be something they would consider a boundary violation. In that situation, it's appropriate, "Hey, if you put your hand

on me, I'm just going to move. I'm just going to move away." I'm picturing my student who loves to be pet.

If I was like petting someone, they'll be like, "Hey, if you continue to pet me, I'm just going to move away so you can't reach me." That would be really appropriate or you wouldn't even need to say that. You could just get up and move or you could just take their hand and take it off of your body. That would be appropriate in that situation. Most physical boundaries don't have to be communicated. Most of us agree on physical hitting or appropriate touching, et cetera but sometimes it will need to be clarified.

The way that we clarify is like this. If you blank, then I will blank. Notice, it's not you have to stop doing that, it's if you do it, because they can continue to do it if they so choose, and that includes petting you, touching you, whatever, you just talk about what you'll do. I'm going to call the police. I'm going to leave the room. I'm going to get in my car, whatever it is you will do to set that boundary. Notice, we can't tell them that they can't do it. We can tell them that but we don't have control over it.

Emotional boundaries are usually a lot more subjective than physical boundaries. Some people have boundaries around swearing, using God's name in vain or even loud arguing. Others don't have boundaries or any problem with these things. I don't have any problem with most things. It takes a lot to offend me. I don't mind swearing. I don't mind any kind of like derogatory stuff. I just, that's just how I roll. I don't think there's anything wrong with that. My boundaries are a little bit more around my time and around my space. I think those are really clear to people who know me but in terms of boundaries around like emotional communication, like I feel very open to people telling me the truth all of the time.

When you have an emotional boundary around something, you might communicate it or you may just take the appropriate action without communicating. For example, if a group starts swearing, you might just leave. I had someone say to me because religious, their religious practice does not allow for swearing and they don't like to be around someone that's swearing ... You all met me, you know I'm going to swear and when I swear, they just leave. That's totally fine. They are

protecting their own sense of their boundary. She's not telling me I can't swear.

Now, she could ask me. She could say, "Hey, I'm going to be in this presentation with you all day. Could you please not swear?" I could say, "I'll try. Chances are low." Now, she can get mad at me if I swear or not because she's trying to control me and she'll say, "But I set a boundary with you." That's not a boundary. A boundary isn't about how I will behave. She could say, "She's not respecting my boundary." It's not my job to respect your boundary. It is your job to respect your boundary. If you're not comfortable being around swearing and you know that I swear a lot, then you protect your boundary by leaving. That's an appropriate boundary.

I would personally leave if a group of people started doing drugs or anything sexually inappropriate. Certain conversations or gossip would also cause me to leave. I had a story of a friend, oh my God, you guys, it's so awful. She was dating this guy and she went to meet his parents and I guess that they like lived in like a nude colony and she knew that going in. It wasn't like that was the big shock but what happened was they were all like sitting around, they weren't nude but the people in the colony were nude but then they all started touching each other inappropriately or I guess they thought was appropriate in that situation. She was like, "I'm out." Some of us may not even go to a nudist colony because we may feel, in terms of our boundaries, that that isn't something we would want to do.

Can you imagine like you're sitting around and everyone just ... You're not in a nudist colony, everyone just starts taking their clothes off, everyone starts just shooting heroin or something. I'm like out. That's how we protect. We don't say, "Hey, you guys have to stop doing that. I'm here." They are able to keep doing drugs. We just leave. That's appropriate boundaries. You can ask people to stop but if they don't, your boundary is about what you do, not what they do. If you make a boundary request of someone and don't follow through, you've actually only made an idle threat and that diminishes your own self-respect and theirs for you.

I'm going to repeat that. If you make a boundary request and you don't follow through, you've actually only made an idle threat that

diminishes your own self-respect and theirs for you. If I say, “Hey, if you guys don’t stop doing drugs, then I’m going to leave.” Then, they keep doing drugs and I don’t leave, I’ve just made an idle threat. If everyone starts taking off their clothes or let’s say everyone keeps swearing or whatever, I’ve basically set a boundary but I haven’t taken care of following through on that boundary for myself. That is my responsibility.

Now, that is the most common reason people do not set boundaries, because they do not want to follow through on the consequence is what we call it. If you blank, then I will. Here’s why it’s so difficult for most of us. Remember what I said at the beginning of the podcast? Most of us end up in boundary violation situations because we keep letting our neighbor come in our front door without asking. Then, we start resenting it, we start getting mad so then we have to go to the neighbor and be like, “Hey, you have to knock before you come over. You have to call before you come over.”

The whole reason I hadn’t told my neighbor that in the beginning, the whole reason I hadn’t told my neighbor that it was inappropriate to just walk in to my house is because I was afraid of what they would think. Now, I’ve really created this situation where I have to be like, “Woah, I know that you’ve been walking in my front door without knocking for the past two years. Now, you have to stop.” Now, I’m really afraid of what that person might think of me. That’s why most people don’t follow through on boundaries.

I would say to the neighbor, “Hey, I need you to knock before you come over.” The neighbor comes over, he’s in the habit of just coming in to the house, he comes in and I don’t do anything. I don’t say, “Hey, I’m going to lock the door and then lock it,” or I say, “I’m going to ask you to leave,” and if I don’t ask them to leave, then my boundary has no respect for it. I don’t respect it, I don’t have respect for my own boundaries and they certainly won’t have any respect for me either.

Here’s some other boundary violation examples. Flirting, someone flirting with you or someone that you’re with flirting with someone else. If I’m with someone and they’re flirting, then I can say, “Hey, if you continue to flirt, I’m going to leave.” That’s an appropriate

boundary, or I can just leave. I don't even have to express the boundary but I can. "If you keep..., then I will..." is appropriate then I would leave instead of "stop flirting, it's making me mad. You have to stop flirting." Remember, adults get to be who they are.

Saying sexually inappropriate things, commenting inappropriately, somebody commenting in a sexual way or commenting something about your life or about you or about the way you look that's inappropriate that you would express a boundary around. A lot of times, when you set a boundary immediately like, "Please don't comment on what I'm saying or I'm going to leave," or whatever, then it's just clean. Most people respect their boundaries especially from the beginning.

Revealing secrets, talking about others, yelling, criticizing, calling excessively on the phone, texting excessively...A lot of times, you don't even have to tell the person to stop. You just stop replying to them and they stop doing that. Showing up unannounced, inviting yourself to events or someone inviting themselves to your events, interrupting constantly, borrowing or taking things without asking. I've had people that say about interrupting like constantly, you could think about like your conversation has a boundary around it. You speaking has a boundary around it and someone constantly interrupting you, you may just stop talking or what I've seen, because I interrupt a lot, I think it's a profession problem, people just keep talking. So I'll interrupt and ask another question right in the middle of them speaking and they'll just finish their thought.

It's just I think the most beautiful way to handle that, like just continue to finish what you're saying and then answer the next question that I have now drilled you with. I noticed that that makes me respect their boundaries. I stopped interrupting them because I know that they're not going to change their train of thought to finish what they're saying.

Lying, having an affair, etc...some are subjective and negotiable depending on who is involved. Different people have different boundaries. Sometimes, they need to be communicated and sometimes they don't. One of the things that I really want you guys to think about with boundaries 2.0 is that saying no is not a boundary but not saying no can have you ending up with a lot of boundary

violations. You don't need to stand up for yourself when you're constantly telling the truth and being honest with people in respecting your own space and your own time by telling the truth about it.

People-pleasing is what gets most of my clients into trouble. That for sure was what I was doing with my mom. It's not a kind thing. People-pleasing is not a kind thing. People-pleasing is manipulation and you'll end up being resentful and angry and it's your own fault. The reason I can speak so clearly about that is because that was for sure me. Now I have very appropriate, very clear communication and very few boundary violations that I have to set boundaries for.

My friends, if you're in scholars, make sure you do these questions, make sure you ask me for clarification in Ask Brooke if you're not sure if something is appropriate for a boundary. I will say nine times out of 10, when somebody asks me, "Is this a boundary violation? Do I need to set a boundary?" nine times out of 10, my answer is no. Nine times out of 10, there is no boundary violation, it's just you aren't telling the person the truth from the beginning or you're trying to control their behavior. A boundary is never about trying to control someone else's behavior. It's about you managing yourself and your own actions.

Okay, my friends, I hope you have a wonderful, gorgeous day. Sunday afternoon is now turning into Sunday evening. It has been so fun hanging out with you all and I will talk to you next week. Take care. Bye-bye.

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