

Ep #209: Minimum Baseline



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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.

Hello there, my friends. How are you today? I'm amazing. Really, I'm amazing today. And I know that I said I was amazing last week too, but here's why: I'm recording two podcasts on the same day. So it really is true. I'm amazing today and I was amazing last week when you listened to me recording this on the same day.

So today we're going to talk about a concept called minimum baseline, and what's interesting about this concept is I came up with it over 10 years ago when I wrote my book, *If I'm So Smart, Why Can't I Lose Weight*. Now, I want to tell you something about this book we put on Amazon like, 10 years ago and we have not replaced it.

I have rewritten all of the chapter one material to keep up with my decade of increased knowledge, and we have that book inside of Scholars. The new version of that book inside of Scholars. The old version of that book is being sold on Amazon by third-party sellers, but it is not my latest work at all.

But there is a chapter in the book that is called Increase Your Minimum Baseline, and I want to talk about this concept with you because you can utilize it for anything in your life, and it is a mental tool that I introduced with exercise, but you can introduce it with anything in your life. And I've actually applied it to some of the work that I have done in my overdrinking courses and in my overeating courses, which are both in Scholars.

Self-coaching Scholars is my membership program that you can join by going to thelifecoachschool.com/join - just in case you didn't know about that. Alright, I know that some of you are new to the podcast so I just want to make sure that you know that you can coach with me if you would like.

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But let's talk about what a minimum baseline is. A minimum baseline is basically the least amount of anything that you are willing to do. So let's give the example of the minimum baseline for how many days you'll go without taking a shower. The minimum baseline for what you have to be wearing to leave the house and go to a public place. The minimum baseline for food, the minimum baseline for how long you'll go without seeing your family. Those sorts of things.

We all have these built-in minimums where we're like, "Alright listen, it's been two days since I've taken a shower, that's unacceptable to me." "It has been three days since I have worked out, that is unacceptable for me." So we all have our minimum - how late will you go to work? How many days will you go without taking a yoga class? Those sorts of things. That's what we refer to as our minimum baseline.

Now, when I have a client that doesn't have a minimum baseline for something that they want to start doing, we create a minimum baseline. So for example, if I have a client that is drinking every night, we create a minimum for them where they basically say, "At a minimum, I'm going to take, you know, one day off of drinking, or one day where I don't drink more than two drinks."

For a client that hasn't ever exercised, we create a minimum for them that is ridiculously easy so they can start incorporating that minimum into their life. So with the overdrinking, at a minimum there's one day a week that I don't drink. They can start thinking of themselves as a non-drinker on that one day. And as someone who doesn't exercise, they can start thinking about themselves as an exerciser on that day that they exercise, even if it's just for five minutes.

So when I first introduced this concept, I was working with one-on-one clients who were wanting to get in shape and who were wanting to create some muscle, wanting to lose some weight. As most of you know, I don't approach weight loss or exercise from the A line, which means from the action line, without really understanding what's going on in the mind first.

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And so I created this tool to help my clients start thinking about themselves in a different way. And we call it the minimum baseline and what I would suggest that they do is just exercise for five minutes a day, and it didn't have to be anything strenuous, they would just have to - most of them would just get dressed for a workout, we called it put your shoes on, get dressed for the workout, and then maybe just go for a five minute walk.

For some of my clients, they would simply drive to the gym and get on the treadmill for five minutes minimum. And they were committed to this minimum. Now, the reason why a minimum baseline is so important is because it's just as easy not to do it as it is to do it because it's easy to talk yourself out of it. "It's not going to make a difference, it doesn't matter, I won't lose any weight."

So all of a sudden you're doing this minimum baseline just for the sake of honoring your commitment to yourself, just for the sake of doing what you said you were going to do, which switches the emphasis from doing it because of what it will do for us, meaning what will this exercise provide for me, how much weight loss will it provide for me, where are the results from this exercise, to I'm doing this exercise for me instead of exercise is needing to do something for me.

This changes everything. This creates internally controlled and motivated environment versus an externally controlled and motivated environment. And that is the mental shift that we need to make in order to be committed to exercise.

Now, exercise, what's so important about it, or doing anything that doesn't feel good in the beginning, like stopping overdrinking or working on our businesses or cleaning out the garage is we want to learn how to overcome our own discomfort, honor our own word to ourselves, and follow through regardless of getting a pat on the head.

And this is why so many of us struggle with our own discipline and our own follow through and our own integrity is because we have been conditioned to work for gold stars. We have been conditioned to show up in order to get

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a gold star or a A+ or a paycheck. We have not been conditioned to show up simply because we want to be consistent in achieving something over the long term, even if there is no short-term reward.

That is why most of our dreams lay in our heap of unanswered requests from our soul because we do not know how to honor our own plans if we're not getting rewarded in the immediate. And the minimum baseline is a tool that will train you and teach you how to do that.

So here's what I recommend you do. I recommend that you make your minimum baseline, especially if it's non-existent right now, that you make it ridiculously easy. So if you are someone that doesn't exercise, my recommendation is that you commit to exercising three times a week for five minutes. That is it. Your brain will tell you it's not enough, it'll tell you, you need to do more, it'll tell you it's stupid, it'll tell you, you should not even bother, don't do anything. And that's what you will do.

Now, first and foremost, I want to tell you, 15 minutes of exercise is better than no exercise, but that's not why we're doing it. Because if you do it for that reason than you're going to be wondering why you're not getting the results that you are counting on exercise to provide to you.

And what I want you to do is think about it: the reason I'm doing this exercise of having a minimum baseline is to honor my word to myself, to learn how to follow through, to learn how to overcome my brain's chatter. That is why I'm doing this minimum baseline.

Now, I've had many clients that have started at three times a week at five minutes that have gone to five days a week at five minutes, who have then gone to seven days a week at five minutes. Now, that's their minimum. Many times, that five will turn into 10, will turn into 20, will turn into 30. That's fine. But it doesn't have to, ever. You're only committed to the five.

Now, you can increase your minimum baseline as you increase your ability to honor your commitment to yourself. So if you tell yourself, "I'm going to go to the gym three times a week for an hour," and you never go to the

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gym, your minimum baseline is too high. You need to lower it. Minimum baseline needs to become five minutes and you need to go to the gym for five minutes three days a week before you can start increasing it.

Once you've shown yourself that you can go three times a week for five minutes, then you can increase it to 10 minutes or 20 minutes or 30 minutes. That's fine. But do not let your brain talk you out of that minimum baseline.

You can also apply this to working. You can say, "I'm going to work a minimum of one hour per day on my business." You commit to that hour, you commit to the time, you commit to the exact amount of time. So what's the time you're going to work out, and what's the exact amount of time it's going to take you to complete your minimum baseline, and you honor that commitment every single time just because you said you would. Just because there's nothing more important than your word to you.

And you don't have to tell people about this because they'll be like, "Oh, that's silly." Just be like, "Look, I have an appointment with someone very important. It's only going to take five minutes. I can meet with you afterward." "I have an appointment with the CEO of my company" - which happens to be me - "at eight o'clock this morning, and I am going to honor that commitment, that appointment is one hour."

Now, what you want to do is accumulate these appointments with yourself. You want to build up your integrity, your honored commitments. And then you can get better at it, then you can add on to it. But there is that minimum.

Now, here's the trick. If you have a commitment of working every single day for an hour a day and you're not working at all, you have to change that commitment. Now, what will happen is you'll say, "I don't want to. I want to be someone that works an hour a day." Well, you're not working any hours a day right now.

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So I want you to just think about yourself as someone that works. So whether it's five minutes or 15 minutes or an hour, you're still working. If you're a writer, you're still writing, even if it's five minutes a day. If you're running, maybe you only run for one minute a day, you are a runner.

I'm telling you, this seems silly, it seems like it won't work, it will blow your mind. I created this tool 10, 12 years ago. I've been using it on myself and with my clients ever since.

You want to not worry about your brain making fun of you. You want to not worry about anybody else making fun of you because it's such a little amount of time, and you want to seriously congratulate yourself and honor yourself when you honor a commitment to yourself.

So many of you struggle with this in some areas. Many of you would never leave the house without brushing your teeth, ever. Some of you would never touch drugs or alcohol, ever. Period. That's just done. It's like, you don't even need a minimum baseline. That is your minimum baseline; it's non-negotiable.

But then there are other areas in your life where you have a hard time doing the things that you have committed to do, and that's when a minimum baseline can come into play and be very effective and helpful for you doing that.

So I'm just going to review what you need to do. You need to pick what that minimum is, and you need to make sure that you're not doing it for the results you think it will create. You're doing it simply to honor the commitment to yourself. So the more specific you can be, the better.

"I am going to go to the gym three times a week for 10 minutes. I am going to be dressed for the gym, I'm going to get on the treadmill, I'm going to walk on it for 10 minutes and then I'm going to leave and that will be a win. And I won't let my brain talk me out of it and I won't listen to the chatter."

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And if you do that - I want you guys to think about that. Let's say you're someone that doesn't go to the gym and let's say you decide to go to the gym three days a week for 10 minutes. At the end of the year, if that's all you do, if all you do is go to the gym three days a week for 10 minutes, at the end of the year you'll be a different person.

Will you have lost a bunch of weight because you were on the treadmill? Probably not. But you will have completely transformed your relationship with yourself. And from there, you can make new commitments and trust in yourself that you will follow through with them.

So as small as it needs to be - now, right now you probably are wanting to make it too big, but you'll know it's too big if you can't do it for a week. Then you need to bring it down, you maybe need to bring it down to five minutes, to three minutes, to two minutes, to one minute. And it may seem silly and it may seem weird to only do something for one minute, but if you do something for one minute every week for an entire year, you will be a different person. So create that minimum baseline.

For those of you who are in Scholars, you can go to the overeating section and read about the minimum baseline in the book, *If I'm So Smart, Why Can't I Lose Weight*, the revised edition. Read about the minimum baseline and you might also want to read the chapter about getting your shoes on because that's like - one of the examples that I used in the book is I used to wake up at 5 am in the morning to go workout, and my brain would always tell me not to do it.

"It's not worth it, you don't need to, you're already thin, it's too early." And I would let my brain chatter that whole time, and I would let it do its thing until I put my shoes on. Because once I got my shoes on at 5 am in the morning, I was most likely going to go and meet my minimum baseline of working out three days a week.

And that's what I want to recommend to you. What is the first step of that commitment? Is it getting your shoes on? Is it getting your workout clothes on? Is it sitting down at your desk with a cup of coffee? Whatever it is,

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make sure you do that first step, and be willing to honor that minimum baseline to yourself.

Have a beautiful week, my friends. I'll talk to you next week. Bye-bye.

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