

Ep #212: Simple Solutions



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With Your Host

Brooke Castillo

[The Life Coach School Podcast](#) with 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 friends, how's everyone doing today? I'm doing great. I got my pink dress on and I have been slaying it today. I've had meeting after meeting after meeting after class after meeting and I still have many more to go after I record this podcast for you today. But I'm really excited about this podcast called Simple Solutions because I have had about 10 years where I have really been able to work on my own, right?

So I've been able to kind of live in kind of this bubble of just relying on myself to solve most of my own problems and, you know, create a business for myself. And I haven't had to really work with people in a super collaborative way and I certainly haven't had to manage people.

So one of the things that I've discovered through working with clients and working with other employees and working with my team is that not everybody thinks about problems the way that I do. And that the way I think about problems is very effective and makes my life better and actually makes my life move a lot faster than most people.

And so, I've been noticing this for over the past several months and I decided that I wanted to do a podcast on it because it's actually a pretty simple philosophy that will help you tremendously as it applies to solving problems in your life and finding simple solutions to what could be very complex problems.

So I'm going to kind of give you a format. I'm going to give you the philosophy and then I'm going to give you a format that will really help you when you're approaching any problem. The first thing that I want to kind of - an overview about problems is that most people spend the majority of their time thinking about their problem and talking about their problem, and talking about the effect of their problem.

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So when I'm talking to clients, that's mainly what we spend most of the time talking about, and even with employees, we spend a lot of time talking about the problem, what the problem is, how the problem is causing more problems, the effect of the problem.

So I want you to be aware of this because as I say it right now, you may think, "Oh, that's not me. I'm very solution focused. I don't focus on problems." But my guess is that you're wrong about that about yourself because our brains are programmed to look for, find, and evaluate problems. So we're very good at evaluating problems and finding more problems within problems.

So if you think about anything in your life that you deem as a problem, I want you to evaluate how much you have talked about the problem within the past, let's say, month. You're like, "Oh, not that much. Not that much. I'm definitely not negative about the problem," and that's not what I'm talking about. I'm not talking about having a bad attitude about it.

I'm talking about the actual discussion of the problem. When a problem appears, how much time do you spend discussing it? So one of the things that we want to shift to and we want to train our brain to do is to focus on solutions.

Now, there's a process to doing this and we're not just going to focus on solutions, we're going to focus on simple solutions. And what the brain wants to do is take a problem and make it even more complex than it already is, which makes it harder to solve. And simple solutions, the process is actually very simple, of course, as you can expect.

So step one is to define the current problem. Now, this is different than discussing it and discussing the effect of it and discussing all the things about it. I want you to define the problem in one sentence.

We're going to simplify the actual problem that you're currently dealing with. And typically, problems are acute issues that are going on in our life. So my son used marijuana yesterday, or I gained five pounds on the scale, or I'm

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hungover this morning, or I don't have enough money in my checking account.

So we're going to define the problem as it is today, and that's important to do in one sentence. Now, we're going to talk - number two is we're going to have you define the cause of the problem. Now, these are two very different things. Number one is you're defining the problem. And number two is you're defining the cause of the problem.

So for example, I gained four pounds would be the problem that I'm dealing with today, the cause of the problem would be that I overate the past week. So whatever your problem is, you want to define it as it is in one sentence, and then you're going to talk about the cause.

Do not think or even attempt to solve or find a solution for problems that you don't understand the cause of. And I'm going to tell you why. Step one, define the current problem, step two, define the cause of it. So you ask yourself, "Why am I having this problem? What caused this problem?" Those will be two very different things.

Now, the reason why it's so important to differentiate between the problem and the cause of the problem is because you don't want to just fix problems, you want to solve problems. We fix current acute situations and we solve causes. So for example, if I go to the doctor and I tell the doctor that my arm hurts, he may give me some medication. Some pain medication.

But if he doesn't ask me why my arm hurts, we won't ever solve the cause of the pain. So I go in there and I say my arm hurts, he gives me some pain medication, then I go back, I say my arm still hurts, he gives me some pain medication. But if I go in there and I say, "Hey, my arm hurts", and he says, "Why? Why do you think your arm hurts?" And I say, "Oh, it's because I broke my arm," the cause of my problem, the cause of my pain is my broken arm, then we solve for the broken arm and then the pain goes away.

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When you solve the cause of the problem, then the problem goes away. So it's the difference between fixing a problem, which would be the pain medication, and solving the problem, which would be treating the cause or treating the break, the arm break.

So step number one was we define the problem, step number two was we define the cause of it. Step number three is how do we fix the problem? So we're in a lot of pain, how do we fix this immediate issue if we need to fix it? And that is usually what is ever the most urgent need, the pain in the arm, the four pounds gain, the hangover, how do we fix the hangover right now?

Now, how you fix the hangover is not how you solve the problem of getting the hangover, the overdrinking. You see the difference? Okay. So number three is you ask yourself how do you fix the problem, and then number four is how do you solve the problem in the easiest, simplest way possible.

Now, these seem like very basic questions, and I'm telling you, they're game changers. You are welcome, my friends. This is how my brain for some reason figured out how to tackle life and problems, and this has made it so much easier for me to move through the planet and I know that it will make it easier for you too.

Number one, define the current problem. Number two, define the cause of it. Number three, ask yourself how to fix the problem, and then number four, how do I solve the problem in the easiest and simplest way possible.

Now, the answer to number three is usually pretty self-explanatory. It's usually an acute issue that needs immediate attention. And most of us are very good at fixing problems, but not solving them. So we spend a lot of time and energy fixing the same problem over and over and over again because we aren't solving for the cause.

And I'll give you an example of this with overeating. So a lot of my clients understand that they have a problem with overeating, but they never ask themselves why they have their problem overeating. They just knew that they had a problem and they tried to fix the problem of overeating by

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restricting their food and not having a lot of food and writing a food plan and going on diets.

But when you ask yourself why am I overeating, what is causing me to overeat, then you can get into the true cause of the issue, which is the over-desire, which is caused by the excess dopamine in the hormones in the body. And when you solve for the over-desire, then the overeating problem goes away. When you solve for the broken arm, then the pain of that goes away.

So that's why we always want to be solving problems instead of fixing them. Solve for the cause of them. So what is the easiest way to solve a problem? Which is to say, what is the easiest and simplest way to solve the cause of the current problem because that is the ultimate issue.

I have a couple approaches to this that you can apply to your own life, depending on what the circumstance is. And when you approach something with brand new fresh eyes, you're able to simplify in a much easier way. A lot of times when I'm coaching people and I'm trying to help them solve their problems, the causes of their problems, they are so buried in their own belief systems and what they've always done that they can't even see that there's usually a very simple solution for most problems.

So you ask yourself, if I was starting brand new at this, what would be the solution? So for example, if I wake up with a hangover, that is my problem. I ask myself to define the problem. I don't feel well because I drank too much last night. That's number one.

Number two, to find the cause of it. Drinking too much. Overdrinking. The way that I fix the problem right now is I drink lots of liquids and I stay in bed until my hangover's over. But how do I solve the problem permanently?

I think about it from a very clear perspective. If I was approaching this problem brand new, to understand what is the ultimate cause, I would decide not to drink. Period. It's a very simple solution. If I don't drink, I don't

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have hangovers. If I don't have hangovers, then I don't have to stay in bed and make myself feel better.

It's a very simple solution to the problem. And it may seem obvious, which all simple solutions are. Make a decision not to drink. Simple as can be. No chance of any hangover, period. Done.

So when we are approaching our solutions to problems, what is the most obvious and simple solution? Now, that was a pretty obvious one, let's talk about we had an issue in our organization when we were doing our certification programs for our coaches. We had lots of people who wanted to come through our certification program, to become certified as coaches, and we had some processes in place that wouldn't accommodate the number of people and the demand that we had for it.

So we were trying to fix the problem by putting Band-Aids on everything, and when we stepped back and said, "Wait a minute, what is the cause of this problem? And how do we solve for it in the simplest way possible?" We stepped back and said, "Okay, if we were starting this program brand new, what would we do?" And what we came up with was so obvious, it was just such a completely different approach than to what we'd always done, that the problem was solved immediately.

The other thing that we had was we were trying to - we have some coaches within our organization that we pay and what was happening is they weren't getting their invoices in on time and you know, it was getting complicated and people were getting paid late, people weren't invoicing us and then they would invoice us three months later and it was - we had this issue. So we thought we'd fix the problem by telling everybody, "Hey, this is an issue. Don't do this anymore."

Well, that fixed it in the moment, but it didn't fix it long term. And so we stepped back and we said, "What's the easiest solution to do this?" And we just said, "You invoice us within 24 hours or you don't get paid." Immediately. Fascinating. Immediately, the problem was solved permanently. Because we stepped back from it, we said, this is a problem,

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and we were - you would not have believed some of the complex fixes we were coming up with in order to make sure everyone got paid on time.

But when we stepped back from it and we just said, "Hey, invoice us within 24 hours or you don't get paid," it was such an easy solution that didn't require any extra time from anybody and put all the responsibility on the people that were getting paid, who were mostly motivated to get paid. Problem solved.

And we have done this over and over and over within my organization, with my clients, with my friends, and in my personal life. So I really want you to understand that when you start over - if I was going to do this again, if I was starting this from the very beginning, what would I do differently? Look at it from completely fresh eyes. Ask yourself, "What would make it so this wasn't even a problem? How do we solve this completely?"

Now, some of the answers that you come up with will be completely ridiculous and silly and they won't work. How do I make my arm not hurt? Well, cut off your arm. Right? How do I not break my arm? Don't ever go outside. Like, some of these things are not going to be solutions that you choose, but when you start thinking about problems in new ways, you start thinking about solutions in new ways, you're able to find very simple solutions for clearly defined problems.

Okay, I hope that helps you guys. I hope you're able to apply it. I'm going to go through the steps one more time, just to make sure you have it. Step one, define the current problem. Step two, define the cause of the problem. Why did it happen? Step three, ask yourself how to fix the immediate problem, and then step four, how do you solve the problem in the easiest way possible. How do you solve for the cause of the problem? What is the simplest solution?

Most often times, the simplest solution is usually the best solution and the most elegant solution. If the only solution you can find to a problem is complex, you probably haven't thought about it in the right way, and I want

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to encourage you to start thinking about simple solutions in easily clearly defined problems.

Have a beautiful week everybody. Talk to you soon. Bye.

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