

## Ep #213: Goal Shame



### Full Episode Transcript

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.

What's up my friends? Hi - my dogs just went crazy when I did that. They're my friends too. See, I got you all and I got my friends, my dogs, Worry and Rocket.

Okay, today we're going to talk about some goal shame. You guys heard about this term? I haven't, so I made it up. Goal shame. I have a lot of my students and clients that deal with goal shame, and I think that part of the reason why is because I'm always asking them to set big goals, huge goals, and a lot of times the people around them and their own voices have a lot to say about it.

And so I was trying to think about this. I was trying to think about what the word shame means, and shame is really - like, there's something wrong with me. Like, not just that I've done something wrong but that there's something flawed in me, wrong about me, I'm bad in some way. And I think a lot of us experience this with goals because the way that we set our goals is asking us to become bigger than we currently are.

And I think a lot of times we're expecting ourselves to believe in something that we're not quite there yet. And we and other people want to remind us of that regularly. And I'll tell you that I have had a lot of experience with this personally, so I want to share three components of it. I'm going to do it briefly but I want you guys to think about this as a concept because I've actually started to wonder how many people don't set goals and don't set super big impossible goals because of goal shame.

And so the way that I'm going to define it is it's feeling like there's something wrong with you because you have such a big goal, and feeling like you're doing something wrong because you've set this goal for yourself that there's something wrong with you.

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And one of the things that I want to offer and distinguish between is that there's the shame that we attribute to ourselves, and then there's the shame that we attribute to other people. And I want to offer that shame is only always internal, but it's triggered sometimes by external.

So here's how you know if you have goal shame. If you have set a big goal for yourself and when you tell people about it you find yourself apologizing about it, justifying about it or making excuses about it, diminishing it. The other way to know if you have goal shame is you don't share your goal with other people because you're ashamed of the goal and of yourself and your ability to achieve it.

And I want to say that I think goal shame is one of those things that will prevent us from reaching through ourselves into the next version of ourselves. I wrote a piece for my Friday Coach Like this morning, and one of the things that just like, I don't know, touched me in a real deep way beyond what a lot of other quotes have, is a quote by Jay Z, and he said, "The limit is the sky."

And it's the way that he said it versus the sky's the limit. The limit is the sky that profoundly touched me in a way where I'm like - and especially from someone like Jay Z. I'm like, wow. How much sooner do I limit myself than the sky? How often do I limit myself before I get to the sky? Always. Often.

So if you find yourself saying, "Oh, I'd like to make six figures as a life coach, but you know, honestly, not for a while, not for this time, or I don't mean that I'll make it all and keep it all or I'll spend it all, or it's not that I care about money, it's not really about the money," like, if you feel yourself kind of talking in that way, you probably have some unidentified goal shame.

And I think that goal shame, in the beginning, is pretty normal especially if your goal is super big, and I think that's it's something we can expect. Now, here's what I want to encourage you to do. I want to encourage you to bring it up instead of extinguish it because I think that adjusting your goal so you feel less shame about it is the opposite of what is required to create things

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that will make your mind explode because you were able to do it. You want to blow your own mind, set some goals where the limit is the sky.

And be willing to experience and deal with any kind of shame that comes with it. I think that a lot of times when we have shame, it's just a natural knee-jerk reaction from our primitive brain telling us to not risk failure and not risk death. And when we believe there's something wrong with us, we go in the corner and hide, which is apparently protective, but not protective, right?

So here's what I want to offer is in the beginning it's normal and that you are going to experience some internal thoughts that will cause shame, which is who do you think you are, you can't make that much money, you can't create that, you can't help that many people, that voice inside your head that wants to tell you that there's something wrong with you will automatically be triggered as soon as you set a big goal.

Now, this is not just for people who deal with shame. This is not just with people - those people that deal with shame, as opposed to us, right? This is not people who struggle with shame. This is all the humans. Any time we set those big goals for ourselves.

I think we have this like, imagery that other people set big goals and feel great about them. Like, we're like, "Yes, I'm going to make six figures, I'm going to go become a life coach," or, "I'm going to help a thousand people and they just feel great and awesome about it." No, I think like 99% of us immediately ask ourselves who the hell we think we are to be able to do something great in the world.

Our first question to ourselves isn't like, how lucky we are and how amazing we are and how can we do it. It's more like, "Yeah, nice try buddy, you aren't capable of doing anything great in your life." That is the voice that most of us have that comes up.

So there's that internal shame that we want to bring up as soon as we set a goal, and the way that we deal with it when it comes up is we just notice it.

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We're just aware of it, we just go, "Oh, that's normal, that's part of the process." And that's it. We just notice it coming up and we allow it to be there as part of the process. We don't try and diminish our goal so we feel it less, and we don't need to be doing a lot of thought work on it. We can just let it be there.

The other piece in the beginning when you first set your goal will be external triggered shame, which will be kind of the thought errors that you will have based on what other people will say. And a lot of people will say stuff meaning well like, "Oh, why would you put yourself in that position?" Or, "Don't you think you're aiming a little bit high?" Or, "Do you really want to work that hard? Are you sure you want to do that? You have a family." Right?

Or they'll say, "Oh, I'm just not interested in being that ambitious." Or, "I'm just not interested in making money," or whatever it is that will trigger like, "Oh, there's something wrong with me because I have a money goal." Or, "There's something wrong with me because I have an aspiration that's so much bigger than my own life."

And again, I want you to allow for and encourage yourself to be present with that shame and to not run away from it, not try to apologize or justify or excuse. One of the things that I see pretty regularly with entrepreneurs who have really big money goals is justifying the money goal by explaining away how that money will be spent or explaining away about how that money will be donated or given away or anything like that.

And I really want to encourage you to not do that. I want to encourage you to stand behind your goal without an explanation, excuse, or apology, and to know that you can just want something because you want it. And it doesn't have to be noble and it doesn't have to be pure, and it doesn't have to be socially acceptable. You can just want some money and you can just want to buy some stuff, and you can just want to build an empire because you just want to.

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And you do not have to explain or justify yourself to anyone and I think that is the most amazing opportunity that we have at this point in our evolution as a species, especially in this country, that we can do something just because we want to, and we don't have to ask anyone permission and we don't have to explain ourselves to anyone.

We can just do what it is that our heart is wanting and desiring. And I want to encourage you to do that without feeling like you have to justify your desire to anyone or explain away your desire to anyone.

A lot of times when - it's usually like family members that they're like, "Well, I'm not sure that what you're doing is something that I agree with." I'm always like, I'm cool with that. Right? It's fine with me. You don't have to be cool - you don't have to agree with it.

Other people's opinions are so fascinating, but it may trigger something inside of you, and that's normal. I want you to know that that's normal. It is not a sign that you shouldn't go after your goal, it's not a sign that you're doing something wrong. It's a sign that you're probably onto something, and the process of growing through that initial triggered shame is the work of creating an extraordinary life.

The second part of it - so that was kind of the first part of it, which is it's normal at the beginning to feel shame from your own mind and also from the comments and opinions of others as you share your goal. Now, here's one thing that's interesting. A lot of advice is don't share your goals with other people because other people won't necessarily support you and other people won't necessarily encourage you. In fact, they could do the opposite.

I hear that but I also think it helps me perpetuate my belief in myself to hear people doubt because I know that's my personality. When you tell me that I can't do something or something's possible - something's not possible, then I immediately want to do it.

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One of the things - I was just talking with my executive team about this. It's so fun that I have an executive team now. I was talking to my executive team about this and we talk a lot about when we get to 100 million dollars in our corporation, what things are we going to have to do differently, what things are going to be the same, who are we going to need to add, those sorts of things.

And we've been talking about this for the past year pretty regularly about, well, at a 100 million this, that or the other thing. Now, when I first had the goal of making 100 million dollars, I kind of had to choke it out a little bit. My brain was like, "Yeah, who the hell do you think you are?" Other people were like, "That's funny." Like literally, they're like, "Yeah, that's a big one. That's a big goal," in a way that was kind of like, I want to be a unicorn and turn into a butterfly and then go to the moon, right?

It's like, "Oh yeah, haha, that's nice." But now that's we've been talking about it so often, it's part of like, our conversation and our vernacular in our organization. It has become real to us. We talk about it in a way where we have gotten comfortable with the idea. I talk to my accountant about the tax implications, we talked about our employees and who we're going to need to hire and the infrastructure and everything that we're going to need in order to support this business that we're growing with that level of revenue.

And so while sometimes I feel like the advice to not talk about your goals is well intended, I also think it keeps the shame hidden instead of giving it the light of day, which of course then makes it real. I don't have a lot of shame around that goal anymore because I've talked about it as a reality so often that it just seems like the normal thing that will happen next.

There is shame sometimes with some people who misinterpret my intention with the 100 million, thinking that all I care about is money, and it's interesting because some people who think that about me, it doesn't matter that they think that about me because I feel like they don't understand me.

But there's other people who I really like, want their approval and I want them to believe in what I'm doing, and if they think that the 100 million is

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just about the money, I feel like I want to explain and apologize and excuse and I find myself like, really resisting doing that because there's a big piece of the money for me that's about kind of, demonstrating what is possible. Not just as a woman, not just as a life coach, not just as an online entrepreneur, but also just as a human in the world that all of these limitations that are around us, all of these self-imposed restrictions are nothing.

They are nothing unless we give them authority over us. We can just blow right through them if we want. So it's important to me to stick to wanting what I want just because I want it and not trying to justify it. So notice that in yourself. If you're trying to justify your goals, like, please approve of me and my goals, it's for the better good of the world.

And for me, I do feel like any time we ask ourselves to grow and we're helping people and adding value to the world, of course, it's better for the world, but I think that when you add the money piece in and you don't justify it, it adds so much momentum to the fire with I don't have to explain myself to anyone. I know who I am.

So the second piece of this is it's normal in the middle of a goal and in the middle of achieving it to also experience some shame, and here's what I want to tell you about that is as you are achieving your goal, you will have a tremendous amount of failure.

Ever since I set this goal of 100 million dollars and all of the things that I need to do in order to create that business, I have made so many face plants and flops and mistakes on the way to that goal that I often end up thinking there's something wrong with me and feeling a lot of shame about that, and I often feel like my face plants are deserves and that I'll never make it there.

And one of the examples of that would be when I'm communicating to contractors or people who are working within our organization, I tend to be super direct and I don't like, mince my words, I'm just pretty simple and direct and I just basically say this is it and this is how it's going to be done.

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And I've been getting a lot of feedback like, it's too direct and it's too demanding of other people and the interpretation of that is that like, I'm a bully, that I'm just like, telling people what to do with no regard to what's going on with them.

And that is so painful to get that feedback for me because I do not want to come across that way, I do not want to be thought of as someone that's really difficult to work with or someone that isn't kind. And then, on the other hand, I also feel like I need to be succinct and directive and have high expectations in order to get where I want to go, and I think that there's a balance of those two things.

And so there's so much struggle in becoming the person who can be super effective and direct and super kind and understanding all at the same time, and I keep working at it and I keep failing terribly, and then I'll succeed and then I'll fail terribly and - by the way, this is kind of a side note. One of the things that I've really learned, I've talked to a lot of my mentors about this, and one of the things that has really been helpful for me is to understand that when you're sending texts and Slacks and messages, they seem like a one way communication, especially when they're really directive.

And then if anything you want done, you can put in the form of a question. Changes everything. And I'll tell you it has made such a big difference for me because I still feel like I'm able to communicate exactly what I want to communicate, but by turning it in to a question and opening up an invitation for a response, it's received in a way that is so much more collaborative and so much better for me.

So that's just kind of a side note I want to offer to you as one of my great learnings from one of my many failings. But it's easy for me to get in a spin of I don't have what it takes, I'm not going to be able to work with other people, I've worked on my own for so long, I'm so much better as a coach and helping people from a coaching perspective than I am being a collaborator and a manager of employees.

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And if I'm not careful, I could spin out in a negative thought spiral there, and one of the things that I've been doing, a lot of my own self-coaching on myself has been about really recognizing that I want to believe that I am a very good collaborator and I'm really good at getting the right people in the right jobs to do the right things to pursue this vision and that my expectations being high and me being demanding is a beautiful thing. And as long as I can keep those things producing a high level of positive results, it's not something I need to feel shame about.

And I can't even tell you guys like, what a release that was for me, and it's not the same as being directive and inconsiderate and justifying the behavior because I am changing the way I act, I am changing how I show up to people in my communication and being much more collaborative, but also hanging on to the part of that that has been so effective for me.

So I think it is normal to experience shame on the way to our goals and it's important to be careful what you attribute meaning to as you fail. You can make it mean that you're not capable and you can make it mean that you're not good enough and you can make it mean that you are dreaming too big and when you have a huge fail that looks like it's going to prevent you from making four dollars, let alone 100 million, it's very easy to think that you don't have what it takes.

And I want to offer that allow for that to happen, but do not succumb to it. Do not allow any thoughts about there being something wrong with you prevent you from becoming who you are. Those thoughts are normal, they're part of the process, but do not attach to them and misunderstand that you are them.

You want to be able to stay outside of yourself and recognize that those thoughts are your brain thinking and not you. There's a huge difference. So the way that you manage that is by being careful how you assign meaning to the steps, to the failures, to the actions that you're taking to achieve your dreams.

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And finally, I want to offer that often there's goal shame in the achievement of a goal. And I see it both internally and externally in myself and also in my clients. And let me tell you first about what it looks like internally when you've achieved a goal and you experience shame.

I think that when you've had a believe about yourself that you're not worthy, that you're not capable, that you can't do something, and then you do it, it's easy to have shame about why did I doubt myself all these years, what more could I have done. That's one level of shame.

The other one is to feel shame about the achievement as if you are undeserving and that you should be given the freedoms or the money or the weight or the luxury that is being bestowed upon you because you've achieved your dream. I think that's very, very common for people to experience.

And what I want to offer about that is again that you expect that to happen and that you know that that's part of the process and that you decide ahead of time not to allow those thought errors to prevent you from enjoying and being proud of yourself for your accomplishment.

And I also think that there's goal shame in achievement that is triggered by other people. People say to me a lot like, "Must be nice having this that or the other. It must be nice to be able to work from home. Must be nice to be able to work with your husband. Must be nice to be able to travel. Must be nice to be able to help people for a living."

And I'm always like, "Hell yeah it's nice." It's so nice. So great, and I will not feel guilty about it. I will not feel guilty about who I am or about the privilege that I've been given, and the opportunity I have. I will not ever feel shame or guilt about it and that is a commitment that you have to make.

And what I have done in my own life - because I feel like for everything I've been given I've also been given plenty of challenges and plenty of things that have helped me grow, and I think everybody's life is exactly what it's

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meant to be for our highest good, and I don't judge anyone's life as lesser or more because of their experience of it.

But here's what's true is that when you achieve something you can give yourself the credit that you're due and own it without anyone's permission, and you do not have to water it down by saying, "Oh, well I did have this opportunity and I did have this, and this person did give me this big break," or whatever it is.

You can just say, "I set a goal for myself and I achieved it," and you can own it with zero shame. Zero. And when other people have ideas about what you do and don't deserve or what your accomplishment means or doesn't mean, you can hold space for that for other people to have those opinions and you don't have to take any of that on.

The other thing that some of you might struggle with as you kind of blow through all these limitations is this idea that like, something's wrong with me and something bad is going to happen. And I have been going through this so much lately. Like, everything in my life is so ridiculously amazing that my brain is like, "Yeah, someone's going to get hurt. Someone's probably going to get kidnapped. Something terrible is going to happen."

And I feel that 50-50 kind of energy and I want to be like, it's totally okay if the world presents that way, but it isn't right now. And right now I will not have shame for being in full abundance. I will not have shame for enjoying all of the fruits of my labor and being proud of what I've accomplished and being able to be on the call with someone and coach them from such a high level of experience and practice that I truly know that I'm in the flow at the highest level and will not feel shame about that. I just won't.

And that has to be a decision and a commitment. And if I allow for shame, I will witness it from outside of myself as much as possible without identifying with it and reacting to it. One of the things that I want you to keep an eye out for as you go after your beautiful dreams is self-sabotage because of shame.

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We think there's something wrong with us and therefore we try to prove it true without even realizing it. So we build something amazing but it doesn't allow for the self-loathing that we've had, and so we sabotage our success so we can get back to the part where we identify as a failure.

And you have to be aware of it because it's a real thing. Cognitive dissonance will happen to all of us who are growing and achieving wonderful things. Our brains believe that we're capable of what we're doing today. In order to allow for the belief that we're capable of what we want to do tomorrow, we have to open up to cognitive dissonance.

And the way to solve for it is by changing the way we think, not by changing the way we act, by self-sabotage. So I just want you to be aware that that is one of those things we do to compensate for the shame we might feel about becoming more of who we are.

One last example comes from a client of mine who lost a lot of weight, and she was having a very hard time reconciling her new very thin body, effortlessly thin body, with years of believing that she would be overweight forever and believing that she would gain it all back and believing that it was impossible for her to be a size six.

And she can't quite reconcile it yet, and she has so much shame around the idea that she gets to live in this right sized body for her because she feels like she's selling out somehow. She's selling out against the woman that she was who loved herself regardless of how much she weighed.

And so I think it's important to know that that happens to a lot of us as we make more money, as we have more accomplishment in our life that we can struggle with that success, and there is shame that may come with that. Know that it's coming and it's all going to be fine. It's all going to be great when you know what to expect and you allow for it as part of the brain trying to reconcile success and growth.

Alright, my friends, I hope you have a beautiful week, I hope you have no goal shame, I hope you set super big goals and achieve them with the

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beautiful light heart that adds more value to the world. Have a great week everyone, I'll talk to you next week. Bye-bye.

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