

Ep #215: Questions and Answers



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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.

Well hi, my friends. I'm happy to be here with you today. I'm going to do something super fun today. I'm going to do a Q and A. I haven't done it in a long time, and it's kind of funny because my assistant told me, "Hey, you have so many questions that have been posted to the podcast and I want to make sure that you know that so you can go through and answer them."

And so, I went and looked to see how many and there are like, hundreds of questions that you guys have posted to me and want answers to. So I'm not going to do a hundred of them but I'm going to do a significant number of your responses to my podcast and questions that you have, so hopefully, I pick the ones that most of you have about certain things.

You know, I teach a lot of concepts that are difficult for some people to negotiate. The idea that our thoughts create our feelings and the idea that we can find strength and compassion without being hateful and vengeful. Like, some of these things are so counterintuitive to the way that we're taught that I understand that there's a struggle with some of them.

And I love these questions. Some of these questions are so good because they address your struggle to kind of accept what I'm teaching and so I love to address any kind of objection around my teaching just so you can consider it. I don't want anyone to feel like I am imposing my teaching on anybody. I'm simply saying, hey, this totally worked for me and changed my life. It might work for you too, why don't you consider it.

And if you want deeper help with that, obviously join Self-Coaching Scholars and let me coach you and we'll go deeper. But for the sake of this podcast, I am going to simply answer your questions and maybe coach you and offer you some suggestion based on what you asked me.

So I'm going to start with Sue, and she says, "Hey there. As far as not having any expectations in relationships and just love your partner, I'm

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finding this challenging to say the least. With holidays coming, Thanksgiving, I will be spending time with my family. My boyfriend refuses to go because he wants to stay home and do his own thing and watch football. There's no animosity between my boyfriend and my family. He knows I want him to go, but I also know he'll probably be miserable and that will put a dampener on my time. When everyone is there with a significant other, I'm not, which makes me sad. I feel like we're not a team and I have to make an excuse for him choosing football over my family. What can I do?"

This is such a great question because we do have expectations that we really want our partners to fulfill. And we want them to do things even if they don't want to do them for our own sake. And that's just important to know and Sue, it's important for you to acknowledge that your desire for him to go and your expectation for him to go, there's nothing wrong with that. Where it becomes a problem is when you change the way you feel or change the way you show up based on how he decides to show up.

So here's what I mean by that. You can say to him, "I would love for you to come and spend time with my family." And when he says no, you can use that as an excuse for you not to fully show up with your family, for you not to fully show up with him because he's not meeting your expectation.

So the expectation is valid and the asking is valid. But when he chooses something different, that's where it becomes tricky to be able to still stay within your own space as who you want to be and not let that define how you act towards him or towards your family.

It comes down to asking yourself this question. If the circumstance is he's not going to come, then you get to decide how you want to feel about that. And if you want to feel upset and if you want to feel discouraged about that, that's valid, but you need to own that you're causing your own discouragement, not him.

Your expectation of how he should behave is what's causing that. Not his decision not to come. And it's really important that you recognize that and

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make that distinction because if you don't, then you will blame him for how you feel. Whenever you blame someone else for how you're feeling, you give them the power, you take it away from yourself, you make them a villain, you're the victim, and then you try to manipulate and change his behavior so you can feel better, which of course is the long way around.

So I want you to imagine a scenario where he gets to do exactly what he wants to do and you are happy with how you show up and how you live your life and how you act towards him. This is something that a lot of people have a hard time with because they feel like if you love someone, you should do things for them that you don't want to do.

And I think this is where we get into a lot of trouble with relationships because I think in a lot of relationships, people are doing things they don't want to do in order to please the other person. So what it looks like is I'm doing stuff to please you, and that is at my own "expense," you're doing things to please me at your own expense, so we're unhappy because we're doing things that we don't want to do and then we're blaming each other when we don't feel the way that we want to feel.

And it builds a lot of resentment and a lot of frustration, and we end up feeling like the other person is causing us to deny our own emotional life and what we want to do at our own expense to please them. And unfortunately, a lot of relationship advice is about, hey, meeting your partner's need and showing up for your partner and in the relationship is really about in some ways denying what you want to give to your partner.

And I'm suggesting that it doesn't have to be that way, that it could be the exact opposite of that, and in fact, you take two people that take care of their own needs and two people that tell the truth and honor their own desires, that that's a really good time.

Now, I want to just finish this question by saying this. There are many times when you choose to do something that you normally wouldn't do but you do it because your partner wants you to do it. That is not the same as doing

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something you don't want to do with resentment. That's doing something for your partner that feels good to you because it is for your partner.

And there's nothing wrong with that, it's a beautiful thing. It's when we start expecting our partner to show up that way that we create a lot of tension in our relationships. So here's the question that I have for you. Do you want to only feel love for your partner no matter what he does? No matter what his choices are.

And if the answer is yes, I want to let you know that that is available to you but you have to let go of the expectation that his behavior determines how you feel, and it will be the most freeing thing that you do to be able to let go of trying to make someone behave in a way so you can feel a certain way. What causes your feelings is your thinking and it's much easier to change your thinking than it is to change another person. I promise you that.

Alright, next question, Julie. "Hi, thank you so much, I love your podcast. If you have time, I have a question. I have an adult daughter who lives a life very contrary to what my husband and I believe. She has a boyfriend who's obsessed with guns, skulls, old war memorabilia, enter in Nazi and Third Reich conversations. He is very affectionate with my youngest and they both give me the creeps so bad. Every time I start to let her back into my life she asks if her and her boyfriend can take my youngest out to do things like to the shooting range and whatever. I don't want her to go anywhere near them, even if they said they're going to the grocery store. When she asks me and I say no, the cycle of separation starts all over again. I have told her that it's not an option for my youngest to hang out with them unless we are with them, but she keeps asking and I don't know how to handle this super awkward weirdness. Please help."

So, Julie, I think that you do know how to handle it, right? I think you are handling it. So here's what I want to offer as a help in this situation. You do not want your youngest to spend time with them. Valid, perfect, don't do it, put your foot down. If your daughter withdraws from you because of the way that you act, that is her prerogative, and of course, she can do that.

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Now, what you want to make sure you do is manage your thinking around it. Be really aware of how your judgment of them makes you feel inside. Now, I'm not saying you should change that judgment. I just want you to recognize how you feel. That feeling may be something you want to feel. You may want to feel awkward and weirdness and worry when it comes to the way that they're talking and the way that they're being. And you just need to acknowledge that you don't want that to change.

What I want you to recognize though is that you're the one causing it by the way that you're thinking about it. A lot of times people misunderstand me when I teach this is that you're responsible for how you feel and therefore you should change. That's not what I'm saying here. I just want you to know that your thoughts about your daughter and her boyfriend and what are causing you to feel like you have the creeps, and maybe you want to have the creeps. Maybe that feels like a choice that you're making on purpose to be protective of you and of your youngest.

And I want to tell you that just know that you're doing that on purpose and that you stand by it. You hear what I'm saying? And then what you can also do in that situation is to just look at the facts and look at your thoughts about the facts and just make sure you really like your reasons and that they reconcile for you.

So a lot of times when I make decisions that other people don't like, I sit down and - because it's tempting, right? When someone doesn't like the decision that you're making and they're withdrawing from you or doing any other kind of reaction to your decision, it's tempting to change your mind just to appease other people. And to be like, in your example, to feel closer to your daughter.

And so whenever I'm in a situation like that, I like to sit down and be like, okay, what are the facts and what am I thinking about them, and do I stand by that? Is this a conscious decision that I am making or am I just being reactive about something that's going on?

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So look at the shooting range situation. What are the facts about them taking your youngest to the shooting range? What are your thoughts about that? And do you want to have the thoughts that you're having? My guess is you're going to say yes and that you're going to stand by those thoughts and stand by that decision. But going through that process will be really confirming for you and it will really help you stand by that decision.

Now, you may have some judgment in here about your daughter and about her boyfriend that you don't stand by that you don't want to keep thinking and feeling, but that may not change the decision about how you're acting. So - and there may not be either. But you just want to make sure that you're really clear about what's going on inside your mind and that those thoughts are all very conscious.

The other thing I want to offer is that the way that you describe this is I don't know how to handle this super awkward weirdness. I think you're attributing super awkward weirdness to them as if they're causing it, and so what I want you to recognize is that you're the one causing the super awkward weirdness feeling inside of you because of the way that you're thinking about them. And you may be able to think about them in a way that's still very protective and boundaries and clear that doesn't create that feeling of creepy awkward weirdness inside of you.

I think a lot of times when we feel that we think, "Oh, these people are creepy and they're causing me to feel this way," versus really saying, "Oh, this is what I'm thinking and that's why I'm feeling this way." So let me ask you this, Julie. What do you want to feel when you're around them?

Now, they're not going to change. I don't mean I wish I could feel happy because they would change the way they are. Leave them the way they are. They're still into, you know, guns and skull and war memorabilia and all of those things. How do you want to feel when you're around them? And it may be protective, but not afraid. You may decide that you want to be strong and committed to your values and just make sure you're directing it. It can be just a little subtle shift that you make in terms of being able to

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release yourself from feeling that creepy awkward weirdness that you're creating around it.

Alright, Britney. "Thank you, Brooke, you're seriously the most inspiring person in my life right now and I pretty much have been for the past few years. My question for you. I have journals. Lots of journals that I've filled with everything about my life. I'm 27 and I've been writing for 10 years every day about a lot of different things. Goals, dreams, relationships, daily reflection and also good and bad times. Do I throw all these away? Yes, they're my past and not my life anymore. I feel sad that they're awesome memories I would have never remembered if I wouldn't have written them down so long ago and then re-read it. Do you think it's really okay to let all of this go? I think the further back ones are okay to let go but this past year I've been in a relationship that is a forever keeper. I feel at this point I really don't think it's best to let those memories from the past year with him go yet. I understand we're not meant to remember, relive everything. I also ask myself what would I want to use time on thinking about the fun and the bad and the past when I want to create better memories for my future. Also, what do you think about shoeboxes full of pictures? I thought about going through all of those, what defines a picture, obviously the clarity of who are the people in it. Any tips on going through this stuff is so appreciated."

Oh good, I love this question actually. I have a lot of journals as well. I started keeping a journal when I was like, seven. It's so weird. Someone gave me a journal when I was really young and I have so many cool things written in there that I every once in a while go back and check out.

So it's completely up to you. I have done both. I have kept some journals and I have thrown some journals away, and I don't think it matters in the least which choice you make. I think if you want to go back and look at journals that's fun if you throw them away and never look at them again, I think that's totally fine too.

So I don't want you to make this a big heavy decision like if you throw a journal away it's any big deal because it's not, and I don't want you to think keeping them is super important because you want to go back and read

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through them. So make the decision lightly is my suggestion, and then just support yourself in whatever you decide to do.

And what I did with my pictures, by the way, is I sent them to a company who scanned them all in for me so I have a copy of them. There was something really difficult about throwing away pictures in the beginning for me of people that I love. I was like - it was like I was throwing the person away, especially if they had passed already. But once I got everything scanned it I got over it very quickly and I actually threw all those pictures away because they're now on the computer and I can just print them out whenever I want.

Again, don't make these decisions dramatic big deals, just take them really lightly and you have to decide like, I want to be more minimalist so I want to have less things in my life. So what I did is I have one trunk. It's like a footlocker trunk that I keep all my memorabilia in that I want to keep, and if ever it gets too full, I get rid of some of it and keep the rest. So that might be a good guideline for some of you all as well.

Charice. "I'm just discovering your podcast and it's an amazing gift. Thank you for sharing your life-changing insights. I found this particular episode to be particularly powerful. One question I have is this, and I'm a parent of two young children, ages two and four, and sometimes I struggle with how to parent them in a way that will both teach them to behave like civilized human beings by not throwing, biting, hitting, et cetera, but also managing my own mind in response to seeing these behaviors that I don't like. I found your advice about managing my own mind and throwing away the manual on my husband to be tremendously helpful because it's not useful for me to try and control my husband or teach him how to behave. Having a hard time applying it to my children because I do need to teach them how to behave and I don't want to just tolerate things like throwing, biting, and hitting. But I certainly would like to react more calmly when these things occur. The thought underlying my anger when these things happen is my child should not do these things. But this thought seems like it should be

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true. What am I missing here? If you're able to address this, I would appreciate it."

Totally. Here's the thing. Your thought that they shouldn't be biting, hitting, and throwing is a lie. How do we know it's a lie? Because they're biting, hitting, and throwing. When we're raising children, we do have manuals that we need to teach them of how to behave. It's very different than other adults who can behave however the heck they want.

So when we're teaching our children, we need to remember that they're not already adults and that they don't know these things yet and so when we think that they shouldn't do those things, that's when we get angry because we're fighting with reality. And we can't control the reality that we want to create.

So in that sense, I want to encourage you to plan on them biting, hitting, and throwing, and plan on that being your opportunity as a mother to teach them with the approach that you most want to. And I know this may sound crazy, but what I have found super useful is to literally practice ahead of time how you want to react when they hit each other. Like, plan on them hitting each other, be like, of course, they're hitting each other, of course, they're biting each other. They're two and four. That's what two and your year-olds do.

By the way, my kids are 16 and 17, and they still do this crazy stuff. So I don't want you to get too excited that they're going to grow out of it. They don't bite each other so much but everything else is still pretty much there. But here's the thing. It's like, if you plan on it and you know that it's part of the deal and it's part of your job and it's part of your assignment as a mom, then it doesn't become so tension-filled.

It's like, oh, this is the part where you guys bite each other. This is the part where you hit each other, and this is the part where I show up and respond to it in a way that I've decided ahead of time. So when your kids do bite each other, how do you want to handle it? Do not try and decide in that moment because that's a very challenging time to be deciding because

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usually there's one kid screaming his head off and one kid looking at you trying to figure out what you're going to do to them. And you're feeling, you know, mama bear protective of both of them but also furious because they've done something that you didn't want them to do.

So when you can play it out in your mind ahead of time and like, slow the whole thing down because you're not in that moment, you will be so amazed at how you can practice how you want to respond to things and how in that moment you'll be ready. You'll be able to respond in that way.

And you just change your thought from they shouldn't bite and they shouldn't hit to this is the time when they do bite and they do hit and they learn how not to. And the way that we learn - isn't this crazy, this is a really interesting thought for you to consider. The way that we learn to not bite and hit is by biting and hitting and being disciplined.

Isn't that wild? Let's say your kids never bit each other ever, and they never learned not to bite. They might bite other adults as adults. Like, my mom never told me not to bite. Wouldn't that be awesome? Going around biting each other when we get mad. That would be great. But just know the way that I teach them not to bite and hit is by disciplining them when they bite and hit. This is part of the learning process and it's supposed to happen exactly the way that it is.

Julie. "Hi Brooke, I've been loving your podcast and this episode really rocked my world. I've been practicing having no expectations from my mate other than for him to be there for me and to love and it's going great. I do have questions though. How does this apply when it comes to taking care of our home? Should I clean up after him because I'm the one who cares about having a clean house? We both work full time."

Julie, here's my suggestion on this. You can ask your husband or your mate ahead of time to clean up after themselves, you can ask them in the moment to clean up after themselves, you can ask them why they don't try to understand how you can help them do it, but at the end of the day, if they don't, don't use it a reason to be upset.

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There's no upside. Getting upset does not cause any upside in that situation. So you either don't get upset that their stuff is all over the house, or you clean it up and have a clean house. And I will tell you that this one thing right here can save more pain and suffering than any other thing I think in any other relationship. Because the thought is if they cared, they would clean up after themselves. And that's a lie because every person I've talked to that doesn't clean up after themselves does care about that person tremendously. They're just not cleaning up after themselves.

So I found it just easier to clean up after someone if I've asked them multiple times and they don't, and if I want the place to be clean, I just clean it up. It's just so much less stressful for me. You have to make that decision for yourself whether it's more important for you to clean it up or to leave it there, but your work is to feel good either way.

Your work is to feel good with other people being who they are. And that is the work of our lives, is to let other humans be exactly who they are. Doesn't mean we don't make requests, we just don't count on them following through on them or use their lack of following through on them as a reason to get upset.

Francisco. "Overeating and overweight isn't felt as an issue to many people, to some cultures, I would say. Many people compliment you when you gain weight or when you finish a big portion or stuff like that. They also declare they state their hobby is to find new restaurants, to cook more, and more things to try many kinds of Chardonnays and Proseccos at the same night, and they try to make you feel like an alien because you stop at the first sips. The problem is when these people are from your family and you have to join their parties. I have no problem to politely reject their offers for more food or wine, but this could be considered rude. Is this a time when I worry about others emotions? On the other hand, it makes you appear like the fool of the party, or is it just annoying to listen to them, drink one more, drink one more? In this case, where do we need to apply the boundary teachers? I love your teachings, I love your podcast and I listen to episodes again and again."

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Francisco, thank you so much. I think this actually is very common. I think there are people that are food pushers. And I always tell this story of when you're at a party and someone's like, "Why aren't you eating the cupcakes? Why aren't you having dessert?" And I think the more appropriate question is why are you eating that? Why are you having dessert, right? Which would not be an appropriate question. Like, we would never say to someone, "Oh my gosh, why are you eating that right now?" But it is appropriate to say why aren't you having cake.

Don't we think we have it backwards? Isn't that like, wait, what? It's crazy, right? So I think in that situation, you get to decide what you want to do for you, and you get to let other people feel how they will about you not doing it. And if they perceive it as rude or they perceive it as, you know, you not being fun, then that's either something you choose to be willing to let them experience based on their own thoughts, or you change your behavior in a way to try to manipulate what they're thinking.

And what I have found is that when I try and do stuff so other people will think about me a certain way, I always lose. Because what happens is even if they think positively about me, they don't even know me because I'm not even showing up as my true authentic self because I'm doing what I think they want me to do.

And I'm a really good people pleaser, I'm really good at showing up and doing what other people want me to do. But I always feel empty and upset inside when I do that because nobody really knows the real me. They're like, "I like you so much, you do everything I want you to do," is very different than someone liking me because I'm just doing what I want to do and being true to myself.

So what I have found is that the people that are meant to like me will like me because of who I am and not because of my people pleasing. And so that's a huge decision to make for yourself is do you want to be you, which is just having a couple sips and letting people have opinions about that, or would you rather show up as who they want you to be? I think that answer

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is pretty easy when you think about it that way. That was a great question, thank you.

Anisa. "Brooke, I want to thank you for this podcast. Incredibly helpful, I'm going back and listening to every episode. I'm taking a course to become a life coach and I have a few questions. In my course, they suggest that we never ask a client why because it might make them feel judged or defensive. Your thoughts?"

Yeah, no. We ask our clients all the time. And we ask them why so they can access awareness about why they do the things that they do, and I think why is one of the most important questions that we can ask our clients.

If a client feels judged in a session, it is because they have work to do, and that is really important work to do on themselves. We don't ask why because we're judging. One of the things that I teach at my school is to hold the space from a place of non-judgment. So when we're asking why, it's simply for them to discover the reason behind the action that they're taking. And if they feel judged, it's because they're judging themselves about that action. And so I would disagree with your school's suggestion that we don't ask why.

"It's been suggested that we do not give our clients advice in any situation. I know that in many situations it's not appropriate, however in some situations, would it not be appropriate to give client advice?"

So there's a way to give advice that is - it's really important to distinguish. So in coaching, we don't ever give advice in the sense of telling a client what they should do, ever, for any reason, and here's why. You have no idea what a client should or shouldn't do. Ever.

What we can do is share our experience and what something worked for us as a form of advice. Like, hey, I tried this and this is what worked for me, if we're trying to like, give them some direction in a certain area or advice to maybe read a book or advice to check something out, we totally do that

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sort of thing in our school. We just never give advice on what someone should do with their life because we could never possibly know what they should do.

"Lastly, we've been told not to share personal stories with our clients. My thought is that sharing personal stories related to their situation might be a way to show them."

Yeah, I share all my personal stories, obviously, with all of my clients, and they find them incredibly useful. So yeah, I'm not sure what school that you're going to, but I teach differently, and it doesn't mean your school's not great. It has a very different approach than I have. Sounds like you disagree with their approach too, Anisa, so I just want to point that out to you that you're bringing up three examples of things where they're telling you not to do things and that you want to do them. So just make sure you're in alignment with what your school is teaching you.

Samantha. "Hi, I'd like to commit to getting more in control of my mindless eating and boredom eating. I'm in a 10-year cycle of not being able to get a handle on it. I go through ups and downs with my eating and my emotions, but the majority of this past 10 years has been me feeling constantly like I'm walking on eggshells waiting to fail."

So here's what I want to say, Samantha, in terms of this approach. And I have a whole program on overeating and there's a lot of podcasts that I've talked about here. And I think that it's important for you to understand why you're overeating and really get a handle on that. And the best way to do that is to stop overeating.

Now, people say to me all the time, "Stop overeating is so hard," and I want to tell you that stop overeating is not hard. Not picking up food is not hard. It's what you feel that's hard if you don't. So if you don't eat something, you may feel deprived, you may feel anxious, you may feel angry, you may feel frustrated.

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That's the hard part. Not eating is the easy part. And so I want to invite you to allow the myriad of emotions that will come up when you start overeating and learn how to manage those emotions as the path to not overeating. When you focus on the food and you focus on what you're eating and what you're not eating and all of that, you get looped into thought errors that don't serve you. The hard part about not overeating is the emotion that you're left with that the food is trying to solve. That's the work that you need to do.

Ashley. "I absolutely love the podcast, I'm always bringing it up in conversation because everyone needs this info. After listening to this episode, it got me wondering what your 25 wants are right now. Also, when listing 25 wants, is this a time to list things we want and already have, or just 25 things that we want and are reaching for?"

Great question. So your 25 wants are things that you want that you have and things that you want that you don't have. And the reason why I recommend that you do that is so you can start learning how to want from an abundance.

So for example, I want my kids to be healthy and my kids are healthy. But I still actively want it. See what I'm saying? I want to have a loving relationship with my husband, and I do have a loving relationship, so I want from abundance. I want to have a very successful business and I do.

I want to have a body that feels right-sized to me. I want to not desire alcohol, and I don't. So all those things that I'm wanting, I want from abundance. And the things that I don't yet have that I want, I still feel abundance instead of scarcity when I want them. So I want to build a 100 million dollar business and I know that I will. I believe that I will, and so when I think about that want I feel that abundance inside of me.

So that's the important thing for you to think about when you go through your 25 wants. I've shared a few of mine there with you, I have many more. But wanting what you have is so fun and wanting what you don't yet have is

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really fun but only when you believe that you will someday have them. So that is the practice for that.

Alright, my friends, I have quite a few more questions but I'm at the 30-minute mark, so here's what I'm going to do. I'm going to continue to answer these questions but I will save them for a future episode so you will be able to listen to more of my answers to your questions. If you have a question, you can go ahead and put it in the comments section on the site at thelifecoachschool.com, and hopefully, I will get to your question in one of my upcoming question and answer podcasts.

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

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