

## Ep #230: Lessons Learned from Jim Collins



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**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, my friends. What's going down? It's such an amazing day today, of course, because it's always an amazing day. But here's what's cool about today; it's like summer hot rain. You probably don't have that if you don't live in Texas, but we have a hot summer day with lots of clouds and rain. It's my favorite. I love summer rain and it just doesn't mess around here. Like, that rain comes down like it means it, so that's what we're having today.

We're talking about Jim Collins, one of my favorite, favorite authors. My favorite book that he wrote is *Good to Great* and it just kind of gives you all a perspective on me, that I have always been obsessed with self-help but I've also always been obsessed with business. And I think self-help helps with business so much.

And one of the things I love about Jim Collins and his book, *Good to Great*, is he talks about business and talks about what makes businesses good and great and he applies it to us personally as well. So I really appreciate the way he writes. I really appreciate the way he reads his audiobook too. I love all the research that goes into the conclusions that he makes and I love the connections he makes to our personal lives.

So I want to just start by talking about how he starts the book, and what the title is based on is the line "good is the enemy of great." And he says, "We don't have great lives often because it's so easy to settle for a good life."

What? It's so good. He says the same things about business, right. He says, "We have so many good businesses and so few great businesses because it's so easy to settle for a good business." And I think that this is one of those challenges that I've had in my own life and that I've received from a lot of people and had a lot of discussions is, why go for great? Why not just be happy with good?

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Why do you have to always be pursuing greatness? And I think it's a really valid question, but I also think it's because you need to ask the why. Pursuing greatness because you think you'll prove something to someone else or because you think that there's more happiness there or because you're never satisfied, I think, is a really valid reason not to constantly be pursuing greatness; so I do think it's a valid question.

But the reason why I pursue greatness and always greater than what I have is because I want to be an example of what is possible. I want to bow my own mind. I want to push the limits of what has been possible before me.

I think that that is how we evolve as a species. I think our intrinsic desire for greatness is what creates all great things and I think that intrinsic desire is often muffled by our negative mind that doesn't even mean to be negative.

I think our mind being negative is really an outdated way of trying to protect us when we don't need protection. I love to admire the people that came before me and the ingenuity that came before me and the greatness that came before me, and most of us do. We like to study the great people because, I think, there's a part of us that recognizes that deep desire for greatness and we appreciate it in such an amazing way.

And I've always appreciated greatness in business and entrepreneurship and I've always appreciated it in self-help authors. That's kind of been my focus in terms of goodness to greatness. Now, you may say to me, but what about the B-plus? That's good and we should just settle for good. And here's how I want to address that; B-minus work is better than nothing.

That's where I use the B-minus metaphor, right. B-minus work is better than perfection. B-minus work puts it out there in the world, but then we have to pursue beyond that, not because we're not satisfied with the B-minus, but just because we want to see if we're capable of something more.

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And so don't misunderstand that teaching to mean that we should get a B-minus and never try for anything better. In fact, I think we should do the B-minus and then work for whatever's beyond the A-plus; not for a sense of approval or perfection, but just to see where we can take things.

I love the idea that good is the enemy of great because when we are satisfied with good and when good is good enough, we won't pursue greatness, and I think greatness is where the good, good, good stuff is; the great stuff is.

The next lesson that he teaches is, get the right people on the bus in the right seats. And I have found this to be super-powerful in my business as I'm building a team. I've found this to be super-powerful when I consider my community. I find this super-powerful when I consider my customers. And he's very, kind of, dogmatic about this that it's first who and then what.

And when I'm teaching business to my students and my new coaches, I think that one of the most difficult things for them to decide is who they're going to work with and then decide what they're going to provide those people. And so I have used this analogy, the bus analogy, a lot, especially with my coaches and my community, that we don't want any passengers on the bus. We want everyone to be in the right seat doing their part to contribute.

I like to picture my bus with no bottom, like everybody's running to keep the bus going, and we don't want anyone that's just sitting on the bus that isn't contributing. And I think that's an important thing to consider in your business, in your communities, but also really in your relationships, in your life; to really think about who do you have on the bus.

As it applies to my employees, I always like to think about, is everybody in the right seats? There have been people that I have brought into my organization that have been in the wrong seat that when I moved them to the right seat were a huge contributor and when they were in the wrong seat were a huge liability. And I think that's important for any of us who own

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corporations or employ people is to make sure that we have the right people in the right positions to be able to excel at their strengths.

And my expectations are super-high of my employees, and so it's really important for me to consider where are their strengths and where can they be most utilized so they can be performing at the highest capacity. And I think this also applies to our personal life, you know, allowing people into our lives and acknowledging what seat, what priority, what place they will hold in our life is important.

So a lot of times, we have friends in our lives that maybe are our best friends and maybe as we grow, we decide that they're no longer our best friends or no longer in the best friend seat, but we don't want to kick them off the bus, we just need to put them in the right seat. So I love his work on that. I think that it's right on point.

The next thing that he talks about is confronting the brutal facts. And this is something that we talk a lot about in coaching and in our business is what are the facts and being willing to state what the facts are clearly, even if they're, quote en quote, brutal; bringing them out into the open and discussing them out into the open is what makes all change possible and what makes all solutions possible.

I think that, a lot of times, being in denial in a business and even in our lives is a really sure way to never make any progress, to never look at what is actually true, what is actually factual, in our lives is one of those things that prevents us from evolving.

Jim Collins has an idea that he calls the Hedgehog Concept, and I really took this to heart and incorporated it into my life and really into my career. And he talks about knowing one big thing. Instead of trying to be all things, instead of trying to be fast and quick, what is the one big thing that you know how to do? What can you be the best in the world at?

I remember him asking me this, and this was really early on in my life coaching career and it really affected me in terms of the direction that my

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business would go. Instead of trying to be all things to all people, what could I genuinely be the best in the world at? And I have committed to being the best coach in the world, literally, like the best woman coach that coaches people on their mind.

I feel very confident that if you compared me to any other coach, I could stand in line as one of the best in the world. And I think it's so funny, this idea that loving ourselves and believing in ourselves is very boastful and arrogant and I can see how maybe believing that you're the best in the world at something can be interpreted that way.

But I think what's important in the way that he teaches this is, what will you pursue being the best in the world at with no apology and not because, "Oh I'm so much better than you," at all. But, I think the opposite of self-love is not humility. The opposite of self-love is self-loathing and I've lived in that place for so long that I think that you can love yourself and have humility and pursue being the best in the world at something.

And I think that there are a lot of people that are the best in the world. Some of the best people in the world have an amazing sense of humbleness to them, even though they know that they are the best in the world and they pursued being the best in the world at something. And so if I could, I would give everyone permission to be able to pursue that in the same way because I think it is so exciting and fun and makes life so interesting.

As part of that same concept, when you ask yourself what you can be the best in the world at, even more importantly, ask yourself, what can't you be the best in the world at, and be willing to let those things go. And I think that is truly something that has guided a lot of our decisions at *the Life Coach School* in our pursuit of creating the best possible coach training in the world and thinking about it in that way and not trying to compete with other coach schools in terms of being the lowest price or creating the most coaches or being the fastest growing.

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We don't want to be the best in the world at those things. We want to be the best at training coaches. We want to provide the best coach training program we possibly can.

I love this quote that he gives and I feel it in my bones. I'll read it to you, "When what you can be the best in the world at and what drives your economic engine come together, not only does your work move towards greatness, so does your life."

So the other piece of that is being deeply passionate. In another quote, he talks about that as well. So it's basically these three things; what you are deeply passionate about, what you can be the best in the world at, and what drives your economic engine.

When those all come together to be the same thing, that is when you have a life that really works and moves you towards greatness as well as your life, because he says, "It's difficult to have a meaningful life without meaningful work and it's difficult to have meaningful work if it doesn't contribute to a meaningful life." And I really do believe that that is true.

Whether your work is paid or not, the work that we do, what we show up and how we make our contribution, having that be meaningful is so important. And of course, we are the ones that provide meaning to ourselves and to our work and to do that deliberately, I think, is very important.

I feel like it is the privilege of my human experience to have worked hard enough to create a life that is all three things, that is something that I'm passionate about, that is something that drives an economic engine for me and my students – them being life coaches as well – and also something that we can pursue being the best in the world at. It has all come together for me and I think that it can come together for anyone who wants to pursue that level of greatness. It's not without sacrifice, of course, and it's not without effort, but it's absolutely worth it.

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The next quote that he has that I love, he says, “A culture of discipline is not a principle of business; it’s a principle of greatness.” And I really believe that that is true. I think that having a culture of discipline, meaning the people around us being disciplined, believing in discipline, creates an energy that is in the pursuit of excellence, in the pursuit of greatness, is such an honor to experience as part of your work life, as part of a group of people making a contribution together.

It’s hard to be around people when you are trying to create a culture of discipline who don’t have a culture of discipline who are like, “Oh that doesn’t matter, who cares about that? Let’s not bother with that. let’s just take a break.” That kind of energy, I think it’s really hard to create greatness from that type of energy.

And so when you’re around people that are all willing to be disciplined in the way that we plan our day and the way that we show up to work and the way that we stay focused on greatness, I think, is – I don’t know, it’s like an honor. It’s like how I want to live.

A lot of times, people think discipline is a negative word and it’s something that creates resistance and sucks all the joy out of life, and I actually have found the opposite to be true. I have found that the things that require discipline produce the results that help me experience the most joy, the discipline of not drinking, the discipline of eating a healthy diet on protocol, the discipline of getting up and going to work every day. Even doing the work that I don’t necessarily want to do produces the results that make me feel like we are pursuing greatness and that I do feel very proud of myself and my team for working so hard and being so disciplined.

The last quote I want to share with you is where he says, “Managing problems makes you good. Building opportunities makes you great.” And this was a quote that I hadn’t remembered reading and when I was researching and creating this podcast, it came up. And it really hit me that this is something to consider and something to pursue in my personal life, but also in my business life because I think that a lot of times, we want to

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use our best energy to create solutions to problems and to manage problems well instead of just creating new opportunities.

I'll give you an example of this; when we first started, at the beginning of last year, our customer service department, we had a lot of issues in the beginning. And one of the ways that I started trying to deal with some of those issues and some of those problems is I said, "Hey, you know, if a customer is unhappy and it's because of something we did, we're going to start sending them things in the mail and we're going to start accommodating them."

And I always believe in creating super-fans, so if a customer is not happy, I really do believe in going above and beyond the call of duty to making sure that they are happy. So we started brainstorming ideas on how to delight them when they've been disappointed. And one of the things that I realized is by spending a lot of time managing and fixing the problem from within the problem is that I didn't step out of that to think about, like, what is the new opportunity that we have to pursue here where there are no problems? Like, really looking at what is the cause of the problem and how do we change that completely?

And I see this happening within so many organizations where they end up having problems in a department and so they end up hiring people to go into that department to help with all the problems. And so I think there's a bureaucracy that happens in a lot of companies where you have lots of extra people that are masking and making it so that having problems is okay because there's enough response to be able to respond to the problem so they don't become much bigger.

But by having a super-lean team, we can't accommodate too many problems, so we have to seek opportunities and be preventative with problems. So instead of, "Hey, how are we going to have better support so we can manage all these problems?" We like to step back and say, "How do we make it so there's never any problems? How do we make it so the tech is flawless and the communication is clear and the follow through is on

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point so we don't have as many questions, we don't have as many people complaining and therefore we don't need to add more people?"

And this has been a huge benefit to our business because we've been able to stay very lean by managing our systems and managing how we deliver everything that has prevented us from having to throw people at problems. And so if you are someone that owns a business or is pursuing owning a business, that is a really important thing to remember.

If you need to hire someone because you have problems you can't handle, I think that's the wrong time to hire someone. And in fact, my recruiting guy told me this. He said, "You want to hire people before you need them. You want to anticipate opportunities and ideas and have people in place to pursue those versus hiring people to accommodate things that are going wrong."

And so how can we look at our lives that way too? How many of us are spending our time accommodating for things that we're tolerating instead of just eliminating or pursuing different opportunities that will make it so we don't have to accommodate or deal or solve those problems because we've treated them at the cause?

So anyway, I want to highly recommend that you guys check out Jim Collins and his books, especially his book Good to Great. I think the most profound thing is good is the enemy of great and the pursuit of greatness, I think, is a worthy pursuit, and so does Jim Collins.

And even though the book was written a long time ago and even though some of the companies that he discusses in it have changed, I still think all of the ideas within that book are very pertinent and important today. So I highly recommend that you pick up a copy of Good to Great. Alright, my friends, I'll talk to you next week, bye-bye.

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