

Ep #236: Compound Effect



Full Episode Transcript

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.

Well hello there, my friends. How are you today? Are you driving? Everybody, if you're driving, look in that rearview mirror. Look at it. Give yourself a little wink. So fun, just a little, "Hey, 'sup?"

Okay, here's what I want to talk about today. We're going to talk about the compound effect. And the way that I want to talk about it is, here we are, right in the middle of my life. It's a Wednesday at two. Now, I don't have another meeting until 3:30 and I'm about two podcasts ahead in terms of recording them.

So in this moment, I could do whatever I want. I'm recording episode 236. It's kind of a random episode on a random day in a random hour of my day. And yet, here I am, recording the podcast on the compound effect. And it makes perfect sense that I would use recording this podcast as an example.

So, when I first started the podcast and I was recording these every day consistently, I didn't have many people listening. If I would have skipped a podcast, nobody really would have noticed. Most people weren't listening. Nobody was used to being consistent. I hadn't created a compound effect yet.

But I promise you that if I didn't record this podcast and it didn't get published, now we would have some problems. Every once in a while, we have a glitch in the system where the podcast doesn't get published exactly on time, and y'all go crazy; let's just be honest. Y'all lose your minds when I do that.

And it makes me laugh because I've created this effect. I've created this expectation and this effect. And I didn't create it by coming out and being grand and being loud and yelling and making a big grandstand. The way

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that I created this effect was by showing up every single week and recording a podcast. And I've done that for the past four years now.

And because of that consistency and because of making that choice every single week, randomly – like, I think about the time when I recorded episode 14, the time I recorded episode 32, or 41, or 112. Not significant, not big choices, not big decisions. It would have been just as easy for me not to record those as it would have been to record them.

But because I showed up every week and because I recorded those podcasts every week, I now have a consistent body of work, I have a consistent listenership audience that has pretty high expectations of me to deliver a podcast that's well prepared and thoughtful on time. That is my privilege, that is my honor now.

But I have earned that honor, I have earned that audience, through the compound effect. And what the compound effect is, is a lot of little decisions that add up to a big pile of success. And I want to teach you about the compound effect because it is how we do everything and it is sprinkled throughout all of my work and all of the tools that I teach you.

Most of us are waiting for the big win. We're waiting for the lottery. We're waiting for the book deal. We're waiting to get discovered. We're waiting for the agent to discover us and then to have this big huge win. And, fortunately, that is not how it works.

Fortunately, the way that we create an effect in our life is by showing up on a Wednesday at two o'clock and getting to work, and trading the instant reward for the compound reward; trading the instant effect for the compound effect. Because, here's the deal, I'm not going to get any applause for recording this today.

Nobody's going to thank me. No one's going to tell me what a good job I did. No one's going to even know. I'm going to turn off this recording and the only person who will know is Pavel, if he happens to look at his computer today, that I've recorded an episode.

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I'm not going to tell anyone, I'm just going to show up and do it. But, because I do that every week, and that adds up and adds up and adds up, now, I have one of the top-rated podcasts on iTunes. Now, I have so much content that changes so many people's lives because of all these Wednesdays, because of all these Tuesdays where I've just sat in my chair – I usually don't work on Tuesdays, but every once in a while I have to, to make up for something.

I sit in my chair, I pull out my notes that I've prepared and I go to work. And I want you guys to remember that the big wins are made up of the little wins. And the big quits are made up of the little quits. The little decisions that we make every day will eventually add up to an effect; to a compound effect.

If you have a bite of a cookie every day, that will add up. If you skip the bite of the cookie every day, that will add up. Will you notice it on the scale the next day? No. Will you notice it on the scale that week? Probably not. But the compound effect of skipping the bite of the cookie every single day for a year will be significant.

Now, here's where that becomes a problem. You may not realize why you're getting the effect that you're getting if you don't pay attention to the compound effect, if you don't pay attention to how doing something begets you doing something which ultimately creates that result.

These little insignificant daily choices aren't necessarily enjoyed in the moment. I won't have a deep sense of satisfaction after I record this, although I will be pretty satisfied, but I won't have a deep sense of it. What will happen is someone will write me an email and I'll receive it next week.

And they'll say, "I've been listening to your podcast for a year and my life is unrecognizable and it's totally different." Now, that person won't write me that letter because I recorded this podcast, but that person will write me that letter because I've recorded all of the podcasts. I've shown up and done it.

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I've done the thing that was just as easy not to do, that didn't seem significant in the moment. The bite of the cookie doesn't seem significant. The recording of the podcast when I'm already a couple ahead doesn't seem significant. The connecting with my kids every day when they were toddlers instead of working did not seem significant, my friends. It was hard, but I do think there has been a compound effect being at home with my kids, working with them here, I think, has made an impact, has made an effect especially on me.

So I want you to think about this with your house, if you don't clean your house ever. Eventually, you will have the compound effect of it. If you clean it just a little bit, you will have the compound effect of that. So why do we make all of our insignificant choices insignificant? Because we're so hungry for that immediate award.

But when we understand that all the insignificants are what add up to the significant, then we can start looking at our lives very differently. Your days are what pile up your successes. So I want you to look at your day. I want you to evaluate all the choices you've made today. And if you make those same choices every day, what will be the result?

For me, I'm recording a podcast today and I'm going to probably do it every week for the next five years. And I, at that point, will have such a significant body of work. I will have the compound effect of something way bigger than I could have wrapped my mind around doing in one decision. It's just many decisions.

Deciding to do a podcast is one decision, and then it's 100 decisions after that. It's a decision to do it every day, even when no one's listening. It's a decision to show up, even if you could just do a replay, you could just do a season, you could just take a break. There's so many options.

No one would be mad if I told you guys, "Hey, I'm going to take a three-month break." You'd be like, "Oh, no..." but you wouldn't be mad. Maybe you would be mad, who knows; I have some pretty rabid listeners.

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But the truth is, I could make all of those choices, and yet because I have made the insignificant significant choice of showing up every week, I now have a huge very loyal audience and a very successful business and I've helped a tremendous amount of people.

The other area where I really see the compound effect is in my body of knowledge. I was just talking to one of my friends about this today and I think it's important. She's like, "You have to say this on the podcast..." so I'm going to say it.

So many of you watch the news and you listen to the news in your phone feeds. It comes up. And I used to have it – for some reason, I got a new phone and it was always showing me notifications of big things happening in the world, and I said, "Oh, that's probably not a bad idea. It's probably good for me to understand the big things, like if there's a hurricane coming my way or if someone important gets shot, I should probably be in touch with those things."

And so for a while, I had that on my phone. And the amount of time that it took me to read it and then process it and then think about it seemed very insignificant. And those notifications would come up, I would say, three times a day; very insignificant, but compared to looking at my phone all the time.

And what I noticed was that my brain was spending a lot of time thinking about those things. And what's important to know is that the news is all about telling us the outlying things that happen, the things that are not normal, the things that are very rare that are happening in the world.

They don't say, "Hey, Joey got up and had cereal this morning and then went to school." They're not talking about that. "Hey, another boy made it home safe from school again. Hundreds of people flew on an airline today with no problem." We don't hear that on the news. We'd be bored by that, right?

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We want to hear when a plane crashes and when kids get kidnapped and all of the things that are kind of on the outlying scary part of life that aren't as common. So when you're filling your brain with all of these negative things, which most news is, on the regular just in little drops, it adds up and has a compound effect. And I started to notice that effect in my life.

I started to feel it. And as soon as I turned those off, I felt very differently. So when people come to me and they're like, "Oh my gosh, did you read the news?" No. "Oh my gosh, did you hear what happened?" No. "Oh my gosh, don't you feel like you should know these things?" No, I don't.

I don't see that having a daily drip of negativity into my brain serves me in any way. And in fact, what I want to do with my brain every day is feed it with positivity and wonderfulness and ideas and tools and studies and approaches. And the compound effect of me having done that every single day of my life is profound.

My body of knowledge, as it applies to what is going on in my industry, is vast. I understand stuff on such a deep level; not because I sit around and study for weeks at a time but just because every day, I fill my brain. And not only do I fill my brain with that content, but then I think about that content. That is what I've trained my brain to do.

There's been a couple of times where Chris, my husband, has handed me his phone to show me something on Facebook and then I have started to slide that picture and see the next thing in Facebook and the next thing in Facebook and the next thing in Facebook. And before I know it, I've spent hours using my brain to see what's happening on Facebook.

And the compound effect of that every day has been significant for some of you. Most of you don't understand how often you're talking about other people and politicians and governments that you just don't like and constantly putting that in your brain, feeding your brain with sensationalized interpretations of what's happening on Twitter.

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And I just want you to be aware of the compound effect of that and make sure you're doing that consciously. "Oh, I'm not on Facebook that much, it's not that significant." Anything you do every day is significant; anything; the compound effect of brushing your teeth every day, the compound effect of showering every day, the compound effect of cleaning your home, all of it, eating healthy food.

So when you look at your day and how you spend your day and what you put into your mind and what you think about and the choices that you make may seem insignificant. But I want you to take a snapshot of your day today and I want you to look at everything that you've done and I want you to times it by 365, if that is something that you do every day.

"Oh, I just check Twitter for five minutes or I just see what's going on on Facebook for five minutes. I just slide through Instagram. I just read this one person's blog." Times it by 365. How much time is it? How much energy of your brain is it, and just notice the compound effect on it.

And the other thing I want you to notice is if you wrote one page a day every day, you'd have a 365-page book. People always say, "I don't have time to write a book." But do you have time to write one page of a book every day? And if the answer is yes, then you have a book. That book's probably a little bit long, right? Most people don't want a 365-page book.

The other thing that I do a lot of that makes me good at my craft is I coach myself. I coach myself every day. People say, "How are you so fast? How are you so masterful at coaching?" I do it every day; just a little bit every day.

It's easier not to do it, but I choose to do it. And I can always tell my instructors, my students, my clients that have coached themselves – they all tell me – some of them tell me, "Oh, I've been coaching myself." And I can tell that they haven't because the skill is so sharp when you do something every day.

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I had a friend one time, she wanted to learn how to do a headstand in yoga. And she's like, "I'm just going to try and do a headstand every day for a year. That's all I'm going to do, just try." And I thought that was so amazing. Like, what an amazing thing to be willing to do every day when you don't know how to do it.

And of course, by the end, she was able to do it. And I think about this too. Right now, I found a great yoga class. And for many years, I did a lot of yoga and I did it every day. A girlfriend and I decided one year that we were going to do yoga every day for the year.

And it was such an amazing year for me because I went and did yoga and my body changed and my experience changed and I was able to do all this crazy one-handed handstand craziness. We went to these yoga classes that were like packed with people and we could just flow together and I was so at one with my body and I was able to do vinyasa in really hot heat for like 90 minutes and never even have one thought about it being difficult.

And then my yoga teachers left my yoga studio and went to another yoga studio and then the other yoga studio just wasn't as easy for me. So I've kind of unconsciously stopped doing as much yoga. And then I came to Texas and I tried to find a yoga studio, and for some reason, two different yoga studios I went to, my body, for some reason hormonally, was not responding to the heat very well. And so I got nauseous both times.

So I decided consciously to just not do yoga for a while. And at the beginning of this year, I decided, "Okay, I'm going to do yoga." I'm going to do 52 session of yoga this year. That would be one a week. And I just couldn't find a yoga studio. And then just a month ago, I realized, hey, I made this commitment publicly to my team that this would be my goal, that I would do 52 yoga sessions, so I'm going to get to it.

So I found this great yoga studio and I went to the yoga studio and I started doing it and I'm totally out of yoga shape. The compound effect of not doing yoga for over a year, and I mean regularly – I've done it here and there, but regularly – is profound. I'm stiff.

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I can't do the things that I used to be able to do in yoga. But here's what I know; if I do yoga 52 times before the end of the year, I will have the compound effect of that. I don't have it now. And here's what matters about that for me so much is I was in yoga yesterday and there's a position in yoga that's called up-dog.

It's basically where you push – if you do it properly – you push your legs and your body and you arch your back up off of the mat. And I have what I would call a beautiful up-dog, except right now I can't do it beautifully because I'm not as strong as I used to be. And so I don't do up-dog, I do what I call cobra. I do a version of my up-dog.

And the instructor's always calling for up-dog and there's a part of me that feels like I want to let them know, "No, I know how to do yoga, I've done it before, I know how to do up-dog." It's like I want to prove that I have the ability to do something, but the truth of it is, because of the compound effect right now in my life, because of the decisions that I've made every day, I don't have that compound effect.

Now, here's what I thought – and this is so crazy to think about. I thought about where I was at the end of that year of doing yoga every day and how amazing it was to be able to do all those amazing things with my body and to just really enjoy my yoga class at that deepest level. And I started thinking, "What if I had done yoga every day since then, where would I be in terms of my practice today?"

And it wouldn't have had to be every day. What if it was every week? What if I had just continued, no matter what, to show up for yoga once a week. I would have maintained that ability. And now, because I made the choice not to do that, not to maintain it, now I'm at the effect of that compound, which is stiff and not as strong and not as limber and not as in-shape to do yoga.

It's fascinating, right? It's not because of the big decision, it's just because it was easier for me not to not to do it – but not that big of a deal to do it, I just didn't bother. And now, I look back, I'm like, if I were to do that again, I

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want to be sure that I say to myself, “Just keep going. Find a yoga class. Do it.”

Right, because now, I’m very committed to getting my 52 yogas in and I can’t wait until I’ve gotten my 52 classes in because then I know I’ll be back to my up-dog and my handstands and my headstands and I’m very limber so I’ll be able to fold myself in half. And that’s just the compound effect of showing up and doing a little bit every single day.

And that’s true with my weight, it’s true with my health, it’s true with my relationships. Going on date night once a week with my husband, having family dinners with my family, even though it doesn’t seem like a big deal for us all to sit down at the table and stare at each other, it adds up. It matters. Those conversations matter and we do them on the constant, consistently. And eventually, you have – all these choices have added up to something.

So think about, what are the things that you’re doing that you’re now enjoying the compound effect of? Maybe it’s not smoking, maybe it’s taking a walk every day, which I’ve done every day; literally every day. And I get to enjoy the health benefits of that.

What is it that you do every day that you’re enjoying the compound effect of positively or negatively? Maybe you’re waking up late. Maybe you’re not recording your podcast. Maybe you’re not writing that book you want to write. Maybe you’re not taking the walk because it doesn’t matter today.

But can you do something today that doesn’t matter today but will have a compound effect in the future? I think that’s one of the secrets to success, my friends. I think understanding that when you take a small decision and times it by time, you create what you want to create in your life, positive and negative. And when you look at your day as if it doesn’t matter what I choose today, you miss out on the opportunity for that compound effect.

Most of the time, we hear about this with money. We hear about saving money and the compound effect of money and how if you save a little bit

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every day, it starts to add up. But here's the best part of the compound effect; it isn't linear in the sense that if I record something today and then I record something tomorrow and then I record something the next day or if I take a walk or if I work out or if I do yoga, that I will get incremental increases evenly throughout all of those days.

What happens is, after a certain amount of time, there is a tipping point. There is a point where all of the effect is compounded so intensely that the result is way beyond the cumulative effect of all those days. So, for example, if you look at the number of hours that I've put into the podcast, it's a lot of hours. It's a lot of choices.

But my effect that I get from having done that in my business is priceless. There is no linear amount. It's not like, "Oh, 236 episodes, that equals this certain amount of money." It's compounded so many times on top of so many times that the effect is priceless; the same with my health.

I mean, think about with our cleanliness, with our health; the effect of it is beyond what we could even expect. And it's the same with alcohol, for example. I was just looking back at some videos. I was trying to find some old videos of myself from before I quit drinking.

And I was looking at them and I was like, what the heck. I look so different. My skin looks different. My eyes look different. Everything looks different. And I looked at all the videos, like even after I'd been not drinking for a year, you couldn't really tell. But now, the compound effect on my face of not drinking is unbelievable.

It seems like such a subtle little difference. And, of course, I wouldn't have quit drinking just because of the effect that it would have on my face four years from then. But it's significant, it adds up; all those little things.

So when you look at your day, I want you to think about what are you creating with all your little decisions? What is the compound effect for you? What does a normal day look like for you? What is the compound effect of those actions?

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Now, awareness is the first step, so you have to start tracking. You have to start looking. Remember that the little things are what compound into the big things. The hardest part for me is always having patience for the long game. And the only way I can have patience for the long game is to love the process. I can't hold out with willpower for the result; I have to learn how to love the process.

So I would have never stopped drinking just for the effect of not drinking. I had to enjoy the process of not drinking. Instant gratification is what I'm stealing our dreams. We give more of our life to instant gratification than to anything else. And the problem is, our brains are designed for it, for that reward system, to constantly be seeking it.

But when we can delay our gratification, we get to enjoy the compound effect, which is always working. It's always going to create a routine in our life. And if you want to become more, if you want to create a different result, you have to rinse and repeat over and over the small decisions in order to reap the big results.

I remember, I used to think there was such a bummer in routines. I just can't imagine having to do the same thing every single day. It just seemed so boring. And especially in the beginning, to have to get that flywheel moving, like me right now, I'm about seven yoga classes in. The stiffness and how sore I feel and how challenging it is and not being able to really make it through a whole class without going into child's pose and feeling like I can't get into the full effect of my pose because I'm not quite limber enough to do it.

What I know is true is that the longer I stick with it, the less I will have that. And if I constantly stick to it and never give up again I'll never have to go through this process again. So we have to remember that every single effect in our life is caused first by a thought. Every model we live by is a choice we get to make every single day. The choices and the models that we choose will compound and become our lives.

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The way that we change our lives by changing our days; changing every choice we make. Every day, I decide not to drink. I decide not to overeat. I decide not to buffer. I decide to learn and do a date night with my husband and time with my family and masterminds with my business colleagues.

And once the momentum goes and once I've done step after step after step after step, all of a sudden, the results start to take off. The momentum increases. But it takes so long to get to the top of the mountain to be able to go down it that it feels like it's never going to happen and it's so easy to give up.

So once you start creating that result for yourself, once you have created the result, then the result itself becomes its own producer. It starts producing its results without any more work on your part. So I go to yoga and I'm able to produce health and I'm able to produce getting more limber and being in those poses with very little effort because of the compound effect of the consistency.

That initial work where I wasn't seeing any results, where I wasn't seeing any change, where I wasn't feeling any better, in fact I was feeling worse and feeling sore, doing all of that is what takes me to the end where all of a sudden, one day, I just pop up and do a handstand. So if you take your work and then you add it to your result, then you have that increased strength and then all you need is time.

Do it again and again and again and again and then you will get the compound effect of time on purpose. When you invest money then your money starts making money with no further investment on your part. And then it starts compounding on top of it, so then the money that you've made starts making money.

And then that money that that's made starts making money, then that's when you get the tipping point and that's when your life explodes. There are no instant successes. When you look back on the people that have sustained success in their life, they have built it on a pile of day to day choices.

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So I want to speak especially to those of you who are just starting out and you feel like you're not making any progress. You feel like you're not getting the results. You're working so hard and there's no applause and nobody cares that you recorded that podcast or wrote that blog post. You have to care enough for everybody. Because I cared enough for all of us four years ago, so now, I can have this podcast.

You have to care enough to do it every single day. Commit to 365 days of doing it and notice the effect that you can create in your life. Success is built daily in the small insignificant choices that you make. That is what creates the compound effect.

I want to recommend a book on it that I think is very good. It goes into quite a bit of research, so there's some heavy stuff in there that you may not want to read, but I still think the book – it's called *The Compound Effect*. I really think that it has so much to offer as it applies to this concept.

And I think he also – his name is Darren Hardy. I think he also might have a TED Talk. He definitely has a YouTube video where he talks about the compound effect that I think is worth it for everyone to grab a hold of that book and check it out. Darren Hardy, *The Compound Effect* – so good.

And even if you don't read through that book, I basically have summarized it for you here. It's the little decisions that we make every single day that turn into the biggest successes. I am living proof of it and every other person that you see is super successful in their life, you can trace it back to the compound effect of what little choices they've been making throughout their life that have added up to one big success.

Have a beautiful week, everyone. I'll talk to you soon. Bye-bye

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