

Ep #254: Restriction Love



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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.

Well hello there, my friends. Are you super excited to talk about restriction love? Are you wondering what the heck that is? Well, my friends, I'm here to tell you. I like to introduce you to new concepts that I make up that will change your life forever. So yes, you are welcome.

So, I'm going to kind of give you the back story on this because it's super important. There is this idea that I've learned from many of my teachers and from many binging experts. And the idea goes like this; that if you restrict something, like food or something in your life, that you will end up overdoing it later.

And this is taught as if this were a fact, as if for every single restriction, there's an equal and opposite overdo. And I used to believe this and then I stopped believing it when I proved it wrong in my own life. And I'll tell you how I proved it wrong in my own life.

I used to restrict food for myself and hate myself and restrict from a place of, "You're not good enough, your body's not good enough, you're too fat, you're too ugly, you can't eat food because you don't deserve it and because you'll never lose weight and you'll never be acceptable if you eat food."

And when I restricted that way, I would always end up overeating and binging and hating myself on the other side of the coin. And as I have gone through the years and I have learned how to take better care of myself and I've learned how to be more disciplined and I've learned how to eat only what's on my protocol, what I've recognized is that I can restrict as much as I want and I don't end up having that experience where I binge on the other end of it or I overdo it on the other end of it.

And this isn't just for food. I'm just using food as an example here. And the question is, how do we explain this? How do we explain this phenomenon?

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And oftentimes, you'll hear people talking about how, when they stopped restricting themselves, they stopped bingeing, and therefore they have made the causation the restricting, right? So when you stop restricting, you stop bingeing, so therefore the answer is to never restrict yourself again.

And it's an easy thing to conclude, but personally, I don't think it's accurate. I think it's more accurate to identify the reason why the restricting caused the bingeing is because of all of the self-loathing on both sides of those actions. It wasn't the actual action of restricting; it was the feeling and the thought causing the restricting that ended up with the negative result of over-bingeing.

So, I want to teach you what I believe true about restricting and I want to teach you about restricting love. Restriction love is this idea that we restrict things in our lives all the time out of love. And when we restrict ourselves out of love, we don't end up punishing ourselves on the other end.

The reason why restricting yourself from hate doesn't work long-term is because it requires a tremendous amount of willpower. The visual I want you to have for this is holding a huge beach ball under water. I did not come up with this illustration, this visual, but it is the most powerful one I've ever used to be able to describe this phenomenon.

It is this idea that you are pushing and holding and using willpower and restricting and you run out of muscle and then that ball pops up into the air, much higher than it would have if you just had left it floating on the water. So, that is what it's like to restrict from a place of willpower and hate and force.

It's impossible to do long-term and it always has a negative net consequence on the other end. So I never recommend taking any kind of action from hate. And that includes restricting anything in your life. So, sometimes, people try to use restriction with their calendar or with watching TV or with seeing certain people in their life.

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I remember, this used to happen to me a lot when I was younger. I would be dating a boy and then I would tell myself I'm not going to talk to him, I'm not going to see him, I'm not going to talk to him, I'm not going to see him, I'm not going to talk to him, I'm not going to see him. And, of course, on the other end of that was always, "Hi, I can't wait to see you..." like this desperate attack of him.

And it was because it was coming from this place of such negative energy, coming from this place of hating him and hating myself and hating the whole experience. And what I realize is that when you restrict yourself from certain things but you allow your emotions to be there, there is no negative effect.

So think about, instead of using the word restriction, I want you to think about the word limit. So, when I looked up the word restriction in the dictionary, it said, "A limit or control on what someone is allowed to do."

So, if you think about restriction as a limit, think about all of the limits that are good in your life, all the limits that produce positive results, all of the inaction or restriction that gets you exactly what you want. It's the difference between love restriction, meaning you restrict something because you love yourself, versus hate restriction, meaning that you restrict something because you hate yourself.

So, we all have restrictions in our lives. We all have limits in our lives. It's just a matter of degree. So I want you to think about the things in your life that you restrict because you love yourself. I'll give you some examples.

Many of us restrict how fast we drive. We don't do it from a place of hating ourselves or thinking that we're not good drivers or thinking that we're not capable or being mad at the speed limit sign. We restrict ourselves, even though we might want to drive faster, because we want to take care of ourselves.

Some of us restrict the amount of time we spend watching TV. We restrict the amount of time we spend sleeping. Many of us would like to sleep all

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day. I'm not saying I would – but I would – all day. But we wake ourselves up and get up and restrict the amount of time we sleep because we want to be able to get more done in our day.

We restrict the amount of time – many of us restrict the amount of time that we work because we don't want to be working all the time, even though some of us want to work all the time. We restrict the amount of time we work so we can spend more time with our family.

We restrict the amount of money that we spend. We limit the amount of money that we spend so we will have more cash. We restrict the amount of food we eat, some of us.

Now, people will say to me, "Well, I don't restrict food anymore. I eat whatever I want all the time whenever I want." And I always question that because there is a degree of, "Okay, I'm not going to eat any more." Even people that are bingeing all of the time have restriction of how much they're willing to binge. There comes a point where it just hurts your stomach too much, and then you restrict it.

It's not like a complete un-restriction on our lives. It's not like we're eating all day every day never breathing. There is a restriction. The question is just, where is it? And when I used to binge, I binged and hated myself until the point where I didn't hate myself enough to kill myself; I didn't hate myself enough to rupture my stomach. There was still some amount of self-care in there. The restriction line was just much further down the road.

People restrict the amount of recreation they do, the amount of drugs they take, the amount of aspirin they're willing take, even if they have a headache. They restrict the friends they spend time with and how much time they spend. There's many restrictions that we have in our lives, many limits that we have in our lives because we love ourselves and we want to take care of ourselves.

Those are not bad things. Restrictions aren't bad. Restrictions are great when it comes from love, when it's a love restriction. Think about a little kid,

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how you restrict so many things from that little kid. Imagine if you just let kids do whatever the heck they want, like in a grocery store, in the knife drawer.

Like, we restrict them and limit them because we love them, and that's what we can do for ourselves too. So, this idea of the restriction backlash, the restriction that we partake in that is filled with resistance and willpower and self-loathing and force always has that backlash because we can't sustain it and we always seem to go to the complete other end.

So if you think about this from a food perspective, if you go an entire day without eating and you're hungry and you tell yourself it's because you're worthless and you can't eat and you're never going to eat and you need to lose all this weight before you're worthy of eating, there's so much resistance. There's so much pain. There's so much fight that your survival mechanism becomes involved.

It starts trying to overcome your own punitiveness. I love that about the human experience. And even though it seems to take action on the other end, which perpetuates the self-loathing with the binging, so it's just a perpetual cycle, I like that most of us can't restrict ourselves to death, that our survival mechanism kicks in.

Now, if you perpetuate this process, it can become a disease. It can come to the point where you restrict yourself to death. But you can't do that from a place of love. So an example of this would be if you are getting a colonoscopy or you're getting some blood work done and you have to restrict the amount of food you're eating or the type of food you're eating in order to get this blood test done.

Most of us do that from a place of self-care, from a place of love, and so we don't end up binging, we don't end up overdoing it on the other side of that because we are doing it from a place of love and care. And when you do stuff from a place of love and care and allowing, there isn't the need for resistance. There isn't the need to hold the ball under the water. You allow your experience to be what it is.

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So, the way that that feels differently would be if I am fasting because I have a colonoscopy or I'm fasting because I'm getting blood work done, I comfort myself when I'm, hungry. I'm like, "It's okay, it's just a blood test. You'll be able to eat in a few hours. This is worth it. We need to find out what's going on with you." This is a healthy thing and so it's much easier to do. When we restrict from a place of, "You're not worthy, you need to lose weight, you're hateful and awful and unacceptable..." it's a very different experience.

I really want to encourage you to embrace the idea of restriction from a loving place. We'll call it love restriction. I want you to restrict the amount of hours you work. I want you to restrict the amount of hours that you play. I want you to use restriction in a way that supports you in your ultimate results that you want in your life.

Restriction is neutral. It is an action. It is not driven by willpower when there's love involved. And I think that that's the most important lesson that I can teach you here, that if we use the example of intermittent fasting, you can fast from a place of love. You can restrict your work hours, your time that you spend with people who are unkind to you, time that you spend with a man that's abusive to you, being able to use your discipline and use your restriction from that place.

Now, let's talk about when we restrict from a place of love, it doesn't mean that it's going to feel great and exciting and wonderful. It doesn't mean that it's going to be easy, because what you will need to do is allow the feelings to come up, allow the urges, allow the desire, the over-desire, the pain, whatever it is. Allow it to come up and love yourself through it.

That's what makes it sustainable. That's what prevents the backlash. When you try and hold those feelings away and hold them down and keep them from surfacing, you end up with an inability to resist hard enough, and that's why you end up going completely on the other end.

The way that I hear people describing this is, screw it, I'm going to do this anyway." It's like, "I can't possibly restrict myself now. It's just way too

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challenging and I don't matter enough and I don't care enough. It's Saturday, or it's Tuesday, or it's a party, or I'm on vacation. There is always an excuse and always a reason to dismiss your own feelings and to dismiss your own self.

And what I have found is that by restricting myself as a human from every single whim that my brain has, it has made me stronger and more disciplined. Not in a controlling way, but in an allowing way. We've all been around people who are trying to control themselves with willpower and resistance.

It's almost like the bomb is about to explode and if they take one bite of one thing off of their one thing, that they will lose their mind. That's very different than being around someone who simply chooses not to have something.

I think one of the areas where this is most profound and most misunderstood is with drinking and overdrinking. I was always taught, because I grew up with – my dad was an alcoholic and my brother was a drug addict – so I grew up going to Al-Anon meetings and AA meetings and coaching and rehabs, and I was always told that if you have one sip or one drink that it will lead to bingeing and that you can't allow yourself to have anything because you have no power, you are powerless.

And I watched this happen with so many people believing that they were powerless. I watched them become powerless and be powerless around drinks. And I have since watched many people become powerful and be able to have drink or be able to have one cupcake after restricting and not feel like they have to binge or they have to drink everything in the house.

And I think that it's easy to get locked into truths when you haven't questioned them. And what I want to offer is that when you understand the cause of problems, when you dive into the difference between a correlation between two things or a cause between two things, that level of education helps you get more agency, more authority, over your own life.

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And I think that is the work that we're all trying to do here. We're all trying to be able to put our finger on the future and say, "I want that." And we want to be able to create it in our lives. But when we believe that we're unable to discipline ourselves, we're unable to restrict anything, we're unable to direct ourselves away from actions that give us a result we don't want, we do end up feeling powerless over our lives.

I remember thinking with drinking that I just really wanted to not want it. I wanted to be able to go to dinner and just not want a glass of wine, and I couldn't imagine that that was possible. And what I realized is that all the years that I had spent pushing that desire away and restricting myself and repressing that created even more desire for the alcohol because I hated myself for wanting it.

And what I realized is that when I stopped hating myself for wanting it and I just witnessed myself wanting it and I allowed myself to want it, with still restricting drinking it, that's when the magic happened. You don't want to have to restrict the urges, the desire, the feelings. You don't want to have to hate yourself enough so you don't do it.

What you want to do is restrict the action but allow the emotion and love yourself enough. If I said to you, "Don't ever restrict anything because you'll end up binging on it..." then you may never restrict how much you drink or how many drugs you take or how often you do anything. And that's not going to give you the life that you want.

And if I also say you have to restrict it because you're useless and you're out of control and you don't matter, you're going to end up drinking against your own will, eating against your own will, because you will run out of willpower. But the answer is, the secret is, the truth is, you can restrict things in your life and the worst thing that will happen is an emotion.

And if you can allow that emotion from a place of self-love, you can literally have anything you want because what you will understand that your brain is just doing what your brain is designed to do. It's designed to want something. It's designed to over-want something.

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We're designed to seek pleasure. We are, unfortunately, designed to see things that are wrong, to look for things that are wrong, with ourselves and with things in the world. But when we understand this, we can stop beating ourselves up, we can stop putting ourselves down, and we can understand that the truth is that we can say no to ourselves. We can limit ourselves. We can tell our brain we are in charge from a place of love, from a place of understanding, from a place of curiosity, and have absolutely no negative effects.

We will have only positive effects because we will be driving ourselves from a place of love. We will be restricting our food, our drugs, our drinking from a place of love and not from a place of self-loathing. So I hope this clears up any confusion any of you have had over your fear of restricting food or restricting anything in your life. The restriction is not the problem. The love, or the lack of love, is the only problem that you need to solve.

Allow yourself to feel, from a place of love, what it's like not to satisfy every single over-desire and you will realize how much power you have in your own life. I hope you have the most beautiful week, everyone. I'll talk to you next week, bye-bye.

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