

Ep #269: Self Image



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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. So happy to be here with you all. My life is a dream. I can't even tell you all the amazing things that are happening in my life right now. It doesn't even feel real. All the good things. All the amazing things.

I know I'm looking for all those things, but I am finding them, and so right now, today is just one of those days. It's just such a great day and I'm happy. And that includes all the negative emotion too. All the negative things. I still make peace with all of that as well. So I hope you're having an amazing day. Like seriously, an amazing day. That is my wish for you.

Today we're going to talk about self-image. This concept will help you have many more amazing days if you learn this concept first. Self-image is really the way you see yourself, and when we say see, that really is how you interpret and think about yourself. It's not just the factual way you see yourself but obviously the opinion that you have of yourself.

We spend a lot of time trying to manage how other people see us. In fact, for most of us, this is a full-time job. Managing how other people see us. The way we dress, the way we drive our cars, the way we manage our households, the way we do anything can be really about other people without even realizing that that's what we're doing.

I have to say, this used to be me for the longest time. I didn't even realize that I was living my life trying to control how other people would think about me. I've told this story before but it's worth mentioning again that there was a time where I went into the grocery store. I was going to buy some flowers for my apartment, and I wanted to buy the ones that I most liked, and I didn't really know how to answer the question to myself of what were my favorite flowers because I'd always been thinking in terms of what other people would think.

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Well, what are the flowers that other people like? What are the flowers that are most impressive? What are the flowers that people will see and comment on? But these flowers were just for me. For me to see in my apartment. No one was going to see them. They were just going to be for me, so if I was just going to enjoy them, what flowers would I most want to see?

And I was stunned that I didn't know the answer. I did the same exercise with myself when I was thinking about what if I lived on an island by myself and what if I was the only one that saw my body? And I was the only one that touched my body and looked at my body or experienced my body, what would I most want on that island for my body, for my experience?

That'll blow your mind to do that kind of work, to really think about what bothers you and why, and what doesn't bother you that you think should bother you, and what feels the best in your body and for your body. Just a really magical way to access my own opinion.

And I think it's really fascinating to stop yourself and say what is your opinion based on about you? Is it based on what other people will think about you? Are you socialized so deeply like I was that it's all about other people's opinions and pleasing other people and being appropriate or being presentable or being liked by other people? And does that match with how you really think and feel about yourself?

Since I've done so much of the work on myself, the work that we do in Self-Coaching Scholars on my self-image and how I think about myself, I've gotten to the place where I'm pretty opinionated about who I am and my worthiness and my lovability, my acceptableness, and my unacceptableness in the world.

And my opinions are so strong they tend to drown out other people's opinions. Other people's opinions aren't really relevant to me. When it comes to what I wear, my husband's opinion is kind of relevant to me. He has some funny opinions about certain shoes and certain clothes that he just doesn't find attractive, and some of the times I wear them anyway

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because I find them attractive, but I do notice that I want to please him in terms of what I wear.

And it's very - 99.999% of the time he's like, you look gorgeous and I love everything you're wearing. And then every once in a while, I'll wear something and he's like, I don't know about that, it's not my favorite. And that kind of affects me in a way, and I don't think it's bad. I think it's good, and I allow it to affect me and it's okay.

But in terms of what other people think I should wear, whatever people think is appropriate, all the things, it doesn't affect me. And I have a lot of opinions about what people should wear. I'm very opinionated about some of the things. Like I laugh with my friend Susan Hyatt because I don't like really ripped up shorts or jeans. I just don't think they look great, and so I don't think anyone should ever wear them, which of course is none of my business.

People can wear whatever the hell they want, but I do offer my opinion if you ask me for it. So she's constantly sending me pictures of herself in ripped jeans and really short skirts and all the ripped pants. It's totally funny. She's like, "Oh, I thought I'd buy these for you."

Anyway, so that's my opinion, that's how I feel about myself, and these are my opinions about myself and what I like and my preferences and I stand by them, then you can release everybody else's opinions out into the world. And you also recognize that your opinion about anyone else is none of their business, and if they don't agree with your opinion, it doesn't matter at all.

So here's an exercise I want you to think about doing, and it's kind of a way to trick your brain into not rejecting the idea that you care what other people think about you. Because so many of us are so obsessed with what other people think about us that we don't even want to look at it.

So here's what I want you to do; I want you to think about what is your dream of how others see you? If you could really dictate what everyone's opinion of you would be, what would it be? And think about the following;

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think about the generalized other, which is that group of people that will see you in public.

They all thought, "Wow, she's gorgeous. Wow, she's amazing. She's smart." What is it that you would want that generalized other - she's well dressed, she's thin. That was mine for the longest time. It was really important to me that people when they thought about me thought about my thinness.

It sounds so ridiculous saying it out loud right now but that was super important to me. And what do you want your boss to think about you? What do you want your friend to think about? What do you want your mom to think about you? What do you want your kids to think about you?

Really go to the place where in the best-case scenario they would think that you are good and strong and wonderful and capable and talented and kind, generous. Just go for it. Best-case scenario, what do you want them to think about you? And really think about why you want them to think that about you.

Like, I wanted people to think I was thin because I thought that being thin was the answer to the universe. So if other people thought I was thin, then I would have the secret to the universe, which is so funny because when other people thought I was thin, I was like, you're dumb, I'm fat, what are you talking about?

So it's so interesting how even when they did think that, I didn't believe them anyway. So that's part of the exercise is to really understand what you want people to think about you. What do you want your mom to say to you and think about you and feel about you? Your dad, all the people. All the authority figures in your life.

What's your dream come true? And then write all of that down and pay close attention to it. And part two, I want you to imagine yourself fully accomplished in the things that you most want to do that you think would prove your worthiness.

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So for some of you that's making \$100,000 in your coaching business. For some of you it's having three million dollars in your 401K. For some of you it's selling your software company. For some of you it's getting a book contract for a million dollars. Whatever it is for you, what do you think would be, oh, if I achieved that, then I would be worthy? If I got into Harvard, if I finished the book and it became a best seller.

Just let yourself dream. If I found the right husband and had children. What is it you think will help you arrive at worthiness? What is it you think is an important accomplishment for you to prove to yourself or to others that you have lived a worthy life?

So exercise one is what do you want other people to think about you. Exercise two is what is the thing that you think you need to achieve to prove your worthiness and then how would you think about yourself if you had achieved it. How would you think about yourself if you had a best seller, a huge business, an exit deal, a gorgeous husband, beautiful accomplished children? Children who loved you to the moon and back, whatever it is.

How would you feel and think about you if you had accomplished those? Now, once you do these two exercises, you're going to have a long list of thoughts that you would love to think about yourself. It's the ideal self-image that you can have of you.

Now, when I do this exercise with students, they often feel really uncomfortable about it. They feel like it means they're narcissistic, and I always want to really clarify the difference between having a really healthy positive self-image of yourself and being narcissistic. It is a huge difference. Or bragging, or being full of yourself, which whenever someone tells me that I'm full of myself, I'm like, well, who else should I be full of?

Obviously, I should be full of myself. I am full of myself. That's who I am, and I don't ever apologize for being full of myself and I am full of myself and I love myself and I think I'm amazing, and that's without apology. But here's the difference; when you are a narcissist, you think high of yourself and low

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of other people. When you're bragging, you're saying I'm better than you. That is not what I'm suggesting, and that feels terrible, by the way.

But when you think I'm worthy, I'm 100% lovable, I'm amazing, and so are you, my worthiness doesn't come from being better than you. My worthiness comes from being fully me. My worthiness doesn't come from earning someone's positive opinion of me. My worthiness comes from being me.

Narcissism is loving yourself at the expense of others versus loving yourself to contribute to others. Here's what I've noticed is true in my life; the more I love myself, the more I can contribute. The more I honor myself and take care of myself, the more I have to give. The more I love myself genuinely, the more I love other people.

Because listen, if I can get over judging myself and I can get over all my self-loathing, you're much easier to love than I ever was for me. That makes it much more powerful for me to be in the world. My love for myself doesn't take away from other people. It adds love to the world.

Narcissism is about needing other people to love us and serve us and paying attention to us at their expense. That is not a high self-image. That's a poor self-image. That is, I love myself more than I love you and you need to love me more than you love you. That comes from a deep pit of not enoughness. That is the opposite of what I'm talking about here.

Narcissism is about self-importance. It's about feeling entitled to excessive admiration. It's about being and wanting to be recognized as superior. Having a positive self-image, a positive opinion of yourself is that you know you're important, but you also know everyone else is too. You know that you can admire yourself and that when you do, it'll make it easier to admire other people.

It means that you are amazing but you are not superior to anyone else, but also no one is superior to you. It's humans and humans and humans, and

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we're all amazing and we're all great, and there is no one human that's more worthy than another.

Narcissism is about exaggerating your achievements, belittling, looking down on others, or taking advantage of others. Having a positive, healthy self-image is bringing up the world when you bring up your opinion of yourself. It's not about putting others down. It's about stopping putting yourself down.

Narcissists always feel shame and humiliation when they don't feel perfect or better than. Positive self-image knows that you're not perfect and that you don't need to be. It's not the point. You are amazing because you're not perfect, because you're human. You don't feel slighted or contempt for others when you have a positive self-image. You feel amazing and wonderful for others.

What's amazing about a positive self-image is that in order for you to choose to think positive thoughts about yourself, you have to overcome your primitive, primal brain. The part of your brain that seeks negativity and seeks danger and seeks worry and doubt and frustration. You will have to stop listening to that and start talking to it with your prefrontal.

Someone posted in one of our groups about a triathlete and they were asking him - I mean, he's a super triathlete and they were asking him how he was able to do all the triathlons that he does and he said, "I talk to myself more than I listen to myself." I was like, oh my gosh, that is one of the most profound things I have ever heard anyone say.

I talk to myself, meaning I choose what to think with my prefrontal brain and tell it to my primitive brain, rather than listening to my primitive brain. Talk to yourself instead of listening to yourself. I mean, come on, it's just genius.

So what do you want to say to yourself? Go back to it. Everyone thought what you wanted them to think and you'd already achieved all the things you want to achieve. How would you want to think about yourself if you could think whatever you wanted? Because I have an update, you can.

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People are like, I don't want to think I'm so great, I don't like people that are always bragging and thinking they're so great. People that are always bragging about how great they are don't think they're great. They think that they have to prove to you that they're great so you'll think they're great. That's now what we're talking about.

When you think highly of yourself, you don't have to tell everyone all the time, unless you're me and you're trying to teach other people how to do it. But otherwise - when I go out into the regular world I'm not like, hey everyone, I'm great. I'm amazing. Have you noticed? I sure have.

But even if I did, people would think that is funny because it's not like I'm amazing and you're terrible, sorry for your luck. I'm like, isn't it amazing to be alive on the planet right now? Isn't it amazing to be who we are and have the opportunities that we have?

I was reading this book, Abundance, and it was talking about how this time in the world is the most amazing, safest, longevity time we've ever lived. I mean, you'd never know it if you listened to the news. But like, disease and how long we can live and the medical care that we can have, for most of us listening to this podcast is unsurpassed.

Do we still have work to do? Yes. Do we still have to make sure that everybody has that same opportunity? Absolutely. But in terms of what is available to us now, it's amazing. And being able to look at ourselves and see how amazing we are and how lucky we are and how wondrous it is, so fun to be alive for me and for you.

I don't know what you think about you, but I know that it feels a certain way. It either feels amazing and awesome or it feels terrible, and that's 100% on you. Your feelings, your responsibility. So I want to give you some options of what you can choose to think about yourself.

Now, the key is you want to choose thoughts that you can believe. Go into the thought dressing room and try on the thoughts and see which ones work. I'll give you a few. I am a human and humans are capable of amazing

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things. I have an invitation to greatness because I'm a human on the planet right now. I have big goals I'm capable of achieving. I'm strong, I'm 100% worthy and lovable by design, not by decision.

This is a huge one, you guys, if you've never heard me say this, hear it from me now. You don't get to decide that you are unworthy. Worthiness is not a decision. It just is. You just are worthy. Period. You can believe that you're not worthy but that doesn't make you any less worthy. It's like looking in your bank account and seeing 100 million dollars in there and deciding that you're broke. That doesn't make you broke. You are worthy and lovable by design, not by decision.

Here's one of my favorite; whatever created me knew what it was doing. So if you believe in God, you put God created me and he knew what he was doing. The universe created me and it knew what it was doing. I was created on purpose by design, by beautiful, amazing design.

I'm telling you guys, spend a few minutes just pondering the design that is you. Your brain, your eyeballs, the veins in your body, your toes, your fingernails, all of it. Your teeth. I'm telling you, it's freaking crazy how amazing it is.

If you were to present a human as a gift to someone and like, explain it like it was an Xbox but you were explaining a human, everything that is the human, you'd be like, and it does this, and it does that, and it takes care of itself, and it manages its own healing, you would just be going off on how amazing. And it talks and it grows itself. So fun to think about this thing that we have that is us, that is who we are.

Another thought I have is my brain means well, but often has thought errors about me. Really helps me stay in the place of my own worthiness. I get to believe whatever I want about me without permission. Opinions are optional. They're not based on some arbitrary rules of reality.

I get to believe that I'm beautiful, whether you think I am or not. I get to believe that. I get to believe if I want, that I'm cute, that I'm strong, that I'm

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tall. Some people don't think I'm tall. I think I'm tall, especially when I wear heels, which is most of the time.

I get to believe that I'm smart, I get to believe that I'm funny, even though my kids totally disagree, but I'm like, listen, I have proof that I'm funny. I say something and then I laugh. Funny. That's the only proof I need, my friends. I can be sitting alone - oh my gosh, you guys, I have been dying.

Do you guys have this experience where you remember something and then you laugh out loud by yourself in your car? Oh my god. So the other day, we have these crazy rainstorms here in Texas that we did not have when we were in California, and the thunder and the lightning is like, off the hook, and it's just like in the afternoon this thunderstorm will come in and then it'll leave.

And Chris and I were sitting at the kitchen table and we just finished eating dinner, we were sitting there and just talking, and the door was open to our backyard. We were about to have a rainstorm, but it's super warm outside still but we're about to have a rainstorm. And I'm not kidding you, lightning struck 0.3 miles away from us.

So it felt literally like it was in our backyard. And it was so loud and so bright all at once because it was so close there wasn't any delay between the thunder and the lightning and Chris jumped. He got so spooked because it was startling. He jumped out of his chair, I'm not exaggerating, like, five feet.

It was like he levitated off of his chair and I was so scared too, it was so shocking and scary and so funny all at the same time. It was like, my most favorite emotion I've ever had. It was like, watching Chris get scared is hysterical. That's why we scare people all the time because we want to laugh at them being afraid, and then him jumping in the air, oh my god, it was the best experience ever.

So, sorry, I had to have a little tangent there because I wanted to share my moment of my husband levitating in fear. It was awesome. Anyway, so I

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think of myself as funny and awesome and great friend and a great mother. I think all the great things about me. And I don't have to check in with my kids to see if they agree because their opinion is irrelevant as to what I choose to believe about myself.

And what I find is that when I believe positive things about myself, then I prove those things true, and when I think negative things about myself, I prove those things true too. I'm not sticking my head in the sand and not looking at reality. I'm not pretending that I'm any better than I am. But I want to say if that were the case, it's so much better than the alternative.

So if you're someone that worries about getting too full of themselves or too proud of themselves or too into themselves, just remember who your creator is and what they think about you. And just remember that the alternative sucks, and try it. Try having a high self-image of yourself just for a week. You don't even have to tell anyone. Just do it privately, secretly, and see how you show up differently.

See how you feel differently, see how your life is completely different. You get to believe whatever you most want anyone to believe about you. You don't have to accomplish anything, you don't have to change a circumstance, you don't have to lose weight, you don't have to stop doing anything. You don't have to put makeup on or a different outfit. You can just be exactly who you are and change how you think about you.

Try it out, my friends. Alright, I'll talk to you next week. Take care. Bye-bye.

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