

Ep #271: Models on Models



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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.

Whoa, just whoa, that's what I have for you all today. Here's the latest. Do you remember that building? Remember, that I've been building and that we bought the land and then we couldn't build on the land and then we bought the land again and now we have broken ground on the building. The building will be done by the end of the year.

The Life Coach School will be real in building form. It will be manifested as wood and glass; mostly glass. We are building the most beautiful building. I'm so excited. It has a lot of white, a lot of shiplap, and a lot of glass, and wide-plank hardwood floor. I cannot wait. I'm thrilled, thrilled, thrilled to share the whole experience and the journey.

We're going to do filming behind the scenes in Scholars so you guys can see it as it's being built. We did, like, a drone breaking ground video that we'll put in there, all the things. So you will not be left behind on the journey of the building of *The Life Coach School*, which is going to be such a treat. And then we'll have a grand opening. We will be having events there, small events, for Scholars and Certified Coaches. So I can't wait to invite you into our new building.

The reason why I wanted to give you an update on that is some of you guys have been asking, "What happened, did that go away?" The other thing that you guys have been asking about was me writing a book. And yessiree, I am writing a book. More details about that adventure coming up. It includes me buying a writer's retreat and inviting all you writers to come and write with me as I write my book because I love learning and writing with other people. So, stay tuned, writers. I'm buying us a writer's retreat on the water. I can't wait. Lots of good writing stuff inside and beautiful views and walking trails.

Alright, what are we going to talk about today? Today, we are going to talk about an advanced strategy with models. And there's a reason why I don't

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teach this in the beginning to my Certified Coaches or in Scholars or in the beginning of the podcast, because one of the most important things to me is to keep things simple so people will actually use them. And when things aren't simple, people don't use them. And so, one of the things that I love about the model is its elegant simplicity, and I want to make sure that all of my teaching always maintains that elegance and that simplicity.

I'm going to introduce you to a more advanced concept. If you're not familiar with the model, if you haven't benefitted from using the model, if you don't really have it down, this is not a good episode for you to listen to because it will be confusing and it will prevent you from getting that solid foundation.

So, if as you're going through this it feels super confusing and you're new, that's normal. Just come back to this maybe in a year or so, after you've had more experience practicing the model. But if you're someone that's been a coach with me or been in Scholars for a while and you've gotten some feedback on your models and you know that you're doing them right and you really are having some success in your R-line, your result-line because of all the work that you've been doing with the model, this is an important concept to understand.

And it's very meta. It's kind of like when we talk about thoughts and then we talk about our thoughts about our thoughts. That's where we're going today. We're going to talk about our thoughts about our thoughts and our feelings about our feelings and our actions about our actions. So it's going to be confusing for some of you. So just stay with me.

When we do models, the way that I've taught you to do a thought download and to pick one thought at a time to do a model on. Now, this is super useful because this is – if you just grab a couple of thoughts and change them, it knocks all the dominos of all the thoughts down most of the time and you don't have to go through every single thought you're having in every single moment and do models on every single thought, because then you wouldn't have time to do anything else. Although, I think some of you do try to do this as a way of buffering. So don't do that either.

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But the truth is, we don't just have one model at a time. We have 65,000 thoughts going on in our brain in a day. So when you have a thought about something, you're really having about 15 thoughts about something. So oftentimes, you'll think that one thought that you're having is driving an action.

So, for example, some of you will think, "Well if I just hate my body then I won't overeat." Or, "If I just stress out about this enough, that will drive me to take action." But really, what's happening is you have one model that's stressing you out and a different model that is driving you to take action. And those models can be confused if you're not writing them down and really looking and making sure your result is proving your T-line.

So, one of the things that I notice a lot with my students is that they have a lot of thoughts about their thoughts. They have a lot of thoughts about their models. They have a lot of models about their models. So this is what that looks like.

When you create a model and you look at it and you say, "Oh, there's my thought and there's the feeling that's created, there's the action that I'm taking, and there's that terrible result I'm getting." And then you start judging your model. You start having lots of negative thoughts about the model that you then discover. And then what you do is you immediately try to remove it from your life because you're like, "Eew, that's gross, that's negative, I don't want that. How do I change it immediately?"

The good news is, if you try and change that model immediately, it will come back with a vengeance. So the lesson will still ultimately be learned. And here is the lesson; we have to learn to be present with our brains. We have to learn to coexist with negative thoughts and negative emotions and negative actions and negative results in our lives because that's what we're going to be dealing with about half of the time.

So when we try to eliminate all of our negative models, meaning our negative thoughts, feelings, actions, and results, we get very frustrated because it's actually impossible. And then when we realize that we can't

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remove all the negative models from our life, then we try to change the world so there's nothing negative in it. We think, if we could just have all the negative things in the world eliminated, then we could be happy, as if the goal were to be happy all of the time.

So remember, if you want to be happy all of the time, you have to be happy about all the bad things. You have to be happy about all the unhappy things. You have to be happy when people die and when horrible things happen to them. You have to be happy if you're committed to being happy all the time.

So what most people realize is, "Wait, I don't want to be happy all the time if there's still negative things in the world, so let's remove all the negative things in the world." Which, my friends, from my perspective, is actually impossible because I don't know how to remove death, I don't know how to remove tired, exhausted, frustrated, angry.

And I don't want to because the image that I have is that we'd all be at a casino winning millions and millions of dollars every single time we pulled the lever. And I want you to imagine winning 100 million dollars on the lottery, at a casino. How fun would that be? Seriously, come on.

Would you be screaming? Everyone would run around. They'd have a big check. The casino people would be super stoked for you. All the things would be happening. I love to think about this, by the way. I used to spend time, like, getting myself into the state that I would be if I won the lottery, if I won at a casino.

Okay, so imagine that for yourself. And then imagine that every time you pulled the lever, you won every time. And not only you, but everyone around you won too. Everyone was winning 100 million dollars.

Now, there would be no contrast. You wouldn't even know how great that was because there would be no alternative to it. Everyone would just always win all the time. And yet, that's what we think life is supposed to be. We think the goal is to find happiness, "I just want to be happy."

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No, my friends, that is not true. You do not just want to be happy. You know what you want is you want to be present with what is. When good things happen, you want to feel good. When bad things happen, you want to feel bad. And then you realize that you are the one who decides what is good and what is bad. And that's when you get the world by the tail.

And a lot of people will say, "Well how can life be 50-50 if I'm embracing all the negative all of the time? There seems to be a lot more negative in my life." And what I always tell everyone is, once you stop feeling bad about feeling bad, half of your feeling bad goes away. It's when we're upset that we're upset. It's when we're unhappy that we're unhappy. It's when we're mad that we're mad, that we add unnecessary suffering to our lives.

So when we're doing this meta work, which means we are watching ourselves think about our own thoughts, we've taken it to the next level. So when I first have students come on, the first step is always just looking at our thoughts, watching our thoughts. Okay, but once we bring our thoughts into our awareness, we inadvertently start judging those thoughts. And what happens when we do that is, we end up sometimes feeling worse than when we started because now we're aware of our pain and we're mad about it. We're aware of our thoughts and we're upset about them.

We're judging them and we're ridiculing ourselves for the way that we think. So we've compounded our suffering in the beginning. Our awareness has made it worse. And so, when we do that to ourselves, then we spend a lot of time trying to change the thoughts that we are judging instead of stopping judging the thoughts that we have. We try to do it backwards.

Here's what it is; our model becomes our C, our circumstance, that we then start judging. We start thinking, "That's a terrible model to have, I'm not very good at models. My brain is broken. There's something wrong with me. I have too many negative thoughts, I need to clean this up. I should be better at this by now."

So one of the things that I want to introduce you to is the idea that feeling negative emotion is much more pleasant when you don't judge yourself for

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having it. feeling sad is less terrible when you don't feel sad about feeling sad. Feeling depressed isn't as terrible as being depressed about your own depression, being frustrated by your own frustration, being angry about your own anger. Can you see how we're compounding it?

We're compounding it by judging it. So what I'm trying to teach you how to do is to allow that emotion without judgment, to be present with it, to let it flow through you as if it was part of the human experience because it is. People say, "I don't want to feel deprived." Why not? "It feels really bad. I don't think I should have to feel that way. I think I should be happy all the time."

And I always say, "I think if we were supposed to be happy all the time, we'd be happy all the time." I think this is actually by design. I think this is part of the videogame we're in. I think it includes the negative emotion. It includes the contrast on purpose so we can experience life in the deepest most amazing way.

And when we embrace the models that we find with curiosity and fascination and interest, what's ironic is that they become less of a problem, and when they become less of a problem, then they're easier to change. But you're not really in a hurry to change them at that point because they're not such a problem.

So, step one is always just looking at the model and just being present with it for a minute, recognizing that it's a thought. And it's important, I think, in the very beginning of learning the model, to see the alternative model. So, you do an unintentional model and then an intentional model. And what that does, in the beginning of our work together, is it shows you the possibility of an alternative.

It is not intended for you to look at the unintentional model and to beat yourself up for it because you don't believe the intentional one. It's simply there for you to observe as a possibility and know where you are, know where you are in your life and why you're getting the result that you're getting.

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So here's how I've seen this manifest recently with some of my students. They'll come to me with a goal that they have and they'll say, "I believe in this goal with my whole heart, 100%, I already believe in it." And I always say, "Well there's a good way to test whether that's true." And they say, "How?" And I say, "Look at your results."

If you believed in it 100% and felt it 100% and act from it 100%, then the result is always 100%. So most of the time, when it comes to our beliefs and our goals, our models aren't aligned yet. And that's a beautiful thing. My model, I don't believe in the 100 million dollars 100% yet. How do I know? Because I don't have 100 million dollars yet. But it feels like I believe in it. It feels like I know it's going to be there. I feel confident of that. But I'm not there yet because my brain's not there yet. And that's okay.

I have models that have doubt and frustration and confusion in them. And I allow them to be there without getting upset and mad and frustrated by them. A lot of times, we think there's a better than here and so we get in a hurry to change our models and change them immediately and we want everything to feel good along the way.

I had a student ask me in our Certified class the other day on our Slack board, she said, "Wait a minute, I'm confused. You said we have to be willing to be uncomfortable. We have to be willing to feel negative emotion. Discomfort is the currency to our dreams. And yet you also say that negative emotion won't deliver to us the positive result. So how can we have a model that creates discomfort and also a model that we're trying to believe in?" I said, "Exactly."

That cognitive dissonance, that believing and practicing believing in something that hasn't produced that result yet, to have those two conflicting thoughts at the same time creates that discomfort. And yet, that is the recipe. That is the ingredient. Having multiple thoughts in your mind at the same time is always going to be the case. And when they're in conflict with each other, when one of them believes that you can lose weight and keep it off and the other one believes that it's impossible because of your metabolism, there will be that cognitive dissonance.

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And that's okay and it's temporary, as long as you don't beat yourself up for it, as long as you don't add another model that says, "Circumstance: model. Thought: this is a terrible model; I must get rid of it immediately. Feeling: upset, frustrated, worried. Action: do thought work all day on negative model and judge myself for negative model until I think it can change." Which, of course, it can't change if you're judging it and you aren't allowing it, because you have no authority over it.

When you really get that it's just a thought causing your emotion and you just get that negative emotion is no big deal, you'll find yourself feeling so much more powerful in your life because you understand that that model is just a thought and a choice and that your thought about that model is just a thought and a choice. And if your thought about the model is, "This is terrible, I need to get rid of this," you're never going to be able to get the authority over it to change it.

Now, the other thing I see a lot of is a model of shame about a model, which what that does is it causes us to deny our negative thoughts. So a student will come to me and say, "I believe in this thing or I want this thing or I'm doing this thing," and I'll show them that their result is not reflective of that. And they'll say, "But I don't have any thoughts about this. I don't have any negative thoughts."

But I say, "Look, your result's not there. We've got to uncover what's preventing you from creating that result. We've got to find the thought." And they don't want to bring up any negative thoughts. They don't want to look at it because they're afraid that if they bring them to the surface, they'll somehow come true, which, of course, the opposite is true. As long as you hide them in shame and tuck them away, their results will keep producing, but you won't have any authority over the thought that's causing it, because if you won't allow the shame to surface or you won't allow the emotion of doubt to surface, then you can't find the thought causing it. And if you can't find the thought causing it, you can't change it.

So when you understand intellectually and really get that your thoughts create your feelings and your actions and your results, the next thing you

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want to be aware of is that you might start judging yourself for your thoughts and feelings. And when you start judging yourself for your thoughts and feelings, you have added additional models on top of your models. They're like simultaneous models and you're actually burying them underneath each other.

So a great way to think about this, a simple way to think about this, is to ask yourself, after you've done a model, what do you think about that model? What do you feel about that model?

So, when I do my thought downloads and when I do my models and I look at them, I always try and tap into curiosity. Isn't it curious that I'm getting this result right now? Isn't it curious, the actions I've been taking and the way I've been feeling because of the thought I've been thinking? I wonder what that's about. From a place of fascination and curiosity, I can let it be there. I can hold space for that model to be there long enough for me to get some authority over it.

If I immediately see it and judge it and hate it and then try to get rid of it, I don't get any traction because now I'm resisting the model so I can't allow it in order to have authority over it, to change it. You have to own it without resistance.

So the thought that I used to have was, "Life without alcohol will be very boring." That made me feel very resistant to quitting alcohol, very afraid. And the action was I would go back and forth. I'd try, and then I'd prove that it was too boring and then I'd drink again, which, of course, proved that life was boring without alcohol.

So I let myself just be with that thought for a while. And then I found a thought, I want to quit alcohol, I want to stop drinking alcohol. But that was always a lie and I notice that for myself and I'd let that thought be there. And then what I realized was that the true thought for me was that I wanted to want to quit alcohol. And I let that thought just be present for a while with curiosity and I owned that I thought the things that I thought without judging

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myself, because I thought, “Brooke, you should want to quit alcohol. This is ridiculous, knock it off.”

And when I let myself just be present with the thought that I was thinking that kept reoccurring was that I wanted alcohol, and then I thought I needed it and that my life was better with it and I just noticed that the thoughts kept reoccurring and I allowed them to be there without judgment and noticed that they weren’t true but that they were just thoughts, that’s when I was able to change it.

The feeling that I had when I stopped drinking was restlessness. And what made it okay for me to quit drinking was that I stopped feeling bad about feeling restless. I started feeling good about it because I knew it was a sign that I was able to allow my emotions instead of drinking alcohol.

I’m going to tell you guys something; allowing my emotions instead of reacting to them, allowing my urges instead of reacting to them, being present with negative emotion without judgment is the secret to everything I’ve been able to create in my life. And the most important thing that I’ve been able to create in my life is peace.

I can feel peace even when I feel negative emotion. I don’t have to be mad about it. I don’t have to resist it. I don’t have to be upset about my upset. So what do you think about what you think? What do you feel about what you feel? What do you do about what you do? That is the meta skill that you want to start evaluating in your own life. You want to start thinking about your thinking on that deeper level.

Now, let me take it one step further for some of you real smarty-smarts. Sometimes, you’ll have a thought about a thought that sounds like, “That’s fine, that’s okay, that’s no big deal,” so you won’t be mad about your thought, you’ll just be kind of indifferent to it. And if you really do the model on that thought, you’ll recognize how poison it is. But sometimes, those thoughts sound positive, they sound good. “I just want my kids to be happy,” is one of those thoughts.

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That's a poison thought because the truth is, they're not always going to be happy, hopefully not. You don't want them to be happy about everything, right? "I just wish my husband would do this, that, or this or that." It seems like a nice thought, "I just wish my husband would respect me." It seems like a nice thought. "I just wish he'd come home on time. I just wish he would love me more." Poisonous thoughts, but we look at those thoughts and we don't even do work on them because we think that they sound pretty and they're okay.

So, sometimes our thinking about our thinking prevents us from doing work. Sometimes, our thinking about our thinking makes us feel terrible and doesn't allow us to do our work. So if you've been coaching yourself for a while and you notice that you've started to spin a little bit or you feel stuck a little bit, go sit down and look at your models and ask yourself what you think about them.

The most amazing skill you can develop is to have compassion with yourself for having a brain, for having a brain that thinks negative things about yourself, for having a brain that thinks negative things about other people and about other events, and then also knowing that you can change those things and there's no rush because feeling a negative emotion isn't a big deal.

You can be present with your negative thoughts and your negative feelings and be the observer and be curious and be fascinated. And when you notice that your model isn't changing, it's because you have a model about your model and you just need to take it one layer deeper.

Ask yourself how you think about your thoughts and how you feel about your feelings. How do you feel about negative emotion? How do you feel about that part of your life? Think it shouldn't be there? Think it should only be there 20% of the time?

What if you were willing to let it be there 50% of the time? How would your life be different? How much negative emotion about negative emotion could you drop? Your desire to have more positive emotion than negative

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emotion causes you to have more negative emotion when you don't have more positive emotion; hear what I'm saying? You with me on this?

Alright, if you're totally confused and freaked out, don't be upset that you're totally confused and freaked out. The best news I have for you – this is a podcast; you can replay it as many times as you want. And if you're brand new, don't even listen to it again. Practice your models and then come back to this when you want to think about what you think about, when you want to see how you feel about how you feel. Have a beautiful week, everyone, talk to you soon. Bye-bye.

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