

## Ep #274: Returning Models



### Full Episode Transcript

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.

What's up everyone? Okay, Tonya Leigh, she's one of my best friends on the planet tells me I can't talk about the weather so much, but I'm going to talk about the weather because right now in Dallas is perfection. It is 75 degrees with a gentle breeze. The sky is blue with some scattered clouds and everything is green.

I cannot get enough of the world right now. I go outside and I just want to breathe everything in. It's so gorgeous here. I love it. Chris and I just sat outside last night at our fire pit but it was like, in the middle of the day, the afternoon because it's light until like 8:30. So we didn't have a fire going but we just sat there and our dogs laid in the grass and we just talked about how amazing it was. So fun. Love it.

Alright, let's get down to it. Today we are going to talk about returning models. And it's kind of like returning clothes, those of you - or returning an item that just doesn't fit you or wasn't meant for you. That's how we're going to think about it.

It's almost like you got a package in the mail and when you really looked close at it, maybe you opened it up, tried it on, maybe it smelled bad, maybe it didn't feel good, and then you're like oh wait, this wasn't even mine. Didn't even have my name on it. I just opened it and put it on as if it was mine but it's not mine. So I'm going to return to sender. That's what we're going to do with models that aren't ours.

Now, here's how we're going to think about it. There are models that are yours. Those are caused by your thoughts, your feelings, your actions, your results. Always, always your models and we want you to become aware of your models and change your models, take responsibility for them. But there's also other people in the world and other people have their own models.

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So other people's actions are for other people's models. Other people's feelings are for other people's models. Other people's results are for other people's models. But a lot of the time, we want to take on other people's models. We want to store them in our psyche for us. We want to take responsibility for them.

And this doesn't serve them and it doesn't serve us, and so I want you to stop it and I want you to return to sender. Now, some people want you to hold their models for them. They'll say hey, here's my model. Will you please hold it for me? Will you please take care of my feelings? Will you take care of my results for me?

And that's not their fault. It's your fault if you pick it up, if you open it and keep it, but it's not their fault they want you to take it. All my students want me to take action for them and solve everything for them. I don't blame them. I want my teachers to do that for me too. But we incapacitate other people when we do that.

So I want to start with just to re-summarize that you are never responsible for other people's thoughts, feelings, actions, or results ever. Those belong to those people. Other adults get to have their own models. I think the only exception to this might be a minor child who gets in trouble. You may be held responsible for their actions.

But anything other than that, you are not responsible for. In general - I know I'm going to get all these emails. Well, in this case in the law. Like, I'm just talking about in general every day, what all you guys are screwing up on is taking everybody else's models on board. So let's start with what you like to do, what I like to do, what everyone likes to do is we take responsibility for other people's actions towards us.

So if you think about someone cheating on you, someone lying to you, someone abusing you sexually or physically or emotionally, stuff people have done to you, notice how often we want to put that action in our model. That action that they did, we want to put in our A line and take responsibility

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for it. But the truth is other people's actions can only go in our C line. That is it.

We have thoughts about their actions and we need to be responsible for our thoughts about those actions but we're never responsible for their actions. So let me give you an example. I recently coached an amazing woman who her husband had cheated on her, had had an affair. And this woman was taking responsibility for his action as if she had caused it by not being a good wife.

Her thought was the reason he had an affair was because I wasn't a good wife. And what's really important to remember is you can't take credit for someone else's action. You can't take responsibility. I mean, you can but it's just incorrect. Other people take actions because of other people's thoughts. So her husband puts cheating in his A line and the only person that caused that cheating was him and his mind and his feelings, and him choosing to act on his mind and his feelings. Period.

I've coached thousands of clients through sexual abuse, and one of the things that I tell them that is incredibly helpful that was also incredibly helpful for me was to recognize that what that person did is on them. That's their model to contend with. I may have happened to be there, I may have been the object of their action, but that action, that horrible, awful, inappropriate action is theirs. Not mine.

They get to own it. Not me. I was at the effect of it. I was there, but I am not taking that on. Here's your model back. Return to sender. So many of us blame ourselves for abuse. We think that if we would have just been better, if we would have just said no, if we would have just run away, if we would have just handled it differently, then they wouldn't have acted that way. We try to take responsibility for other people's models. It's incorrect. Return to sender. I'm not taking it on.

Now, the work we need to do on our own models there is to put that action, that other person's action in our C line. That's a circumstance we can't control, and then we get to decide what it means and we get to decide what

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to think about it. And what I decide to think about all those situations that happened in my life is that is on you, that is your work, not mine, return to sender. I will not take it on. Those actions were the effect of your thinking. Not mine.

I can't tell you how important this is in terms of your own self-responsibility because once you really understand that what other people do is not on you and that you're not responsible for it, then it has to go both ways and that you have to then recognize that what you do is on you. We often like to blame other people for our actions.

Well, the reason I did that is because you did this. If you hadn't done this, I wouldn't have acted that way. You made me mad. That's why I screamed my head off. Nope, nope, nope, and no. You screamed because you chose to scream. Period. You yelled or left or did whatever you did because of your mind and your feeling and your choice of action. You need to take 100% responsibility for that.

Same is true for other people. So that's I think one of the most powerful ways to use this concept. Other people's actions, return to sender. Even if they were literally on you, you can return those to sender. You don't have to take those on. You for sure don't have to try to get in that person's model and take responsibility for their actions ever again. Here's your model. You deal with your model. I'll deal with your action in my C line but I'm not going to try and figure out your model with your action and what you were doing. You take responsibility for that.

The second way that we take on other people's models is we try to control other people's T lines. We try to control what other people think about us. Wouldn't that be amazing if we could actually do that? We could just make everybody think that we were amazing. Everyone would love us all the time. Everyone would think that we should be first in line. Everyone would think that they should pay us lots of money. Everyone would think that they should help us clean our house. Everyone would think that we should - they should bring us flowers all the time.

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I don't know. Whatever crazy thoughts we have in our head. Other people would think we are thin and beautiful and amazing. Everyone would approve of us. No one would ever think mean things. It would be so awesome. Except that it kind of takes away this whole free will thing, which I think might have a rub. I'm just saying. And yet, it doesn't stop us from trying.

So here's what we try and do. We try and control other people's T lines, other people's thought lines with our A lines. So we act a certain way, hoping that other people will look at us a certain way. We try to be kind so people will think we're nice. We try to be funny so people will think we're charming. We try to be helpful so people will think that we're useful. We try to people-please so people will like us.

It's exhausting because as hard as I try, my A line never controls someone else's T line. Their model is theirs, they get to choose what they want to think, no matter what my action is. So I decided one day that I was going to stop trying to control other people's thoughts about me. I was going to stop trying to change their thoughts about me. I was going to stop trying to influence their thoughts about me.

And in fact, I decided to allow people to think whatever they want about me. Wasn't that nice of me? I did. I gave them permission. I didn't even tell them. Just permission. I give you all permission who are listening to the podcast to think whatever you want about me. Isn't that nice of me?

I highly recommend it because it's the only way the world works, and yet we really try to get in other people's models. So here's what you get to do. You get to stop imagining what other people are thinking about you, you get to stop worrying about it, and you get to stop trying to fill in their model for them. Stop trying to fill in their T line for them. Give them back their model. Return to sender, let them think whatever they want. It's completely up to them.

What they think about you will determine how they feel. Period. Their thoughts don't affect you. What they think about you doesn't affect you. So

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why are we trying so hard to control their T line? We think somehow if they think about us wonderfully, that they'll do wonderful things for us and then somehow that will make us feel good. But here's the truth; the only thing that can make us feel good is our T line.

So trying to control someone else's T line so we can feel good is certainly the long way around. It's exhausting. If you're a people-pleaser, you're like amen, I'm with you. The best way to control your feelings is to control your own T line. What are your thoughts about you? Feel good about that. What are your thoughts about them? Make sure they're really super positive and amazing, and then you'll feel good.

So step one, get out of other people's A line. Stop trying to take responsibility for how other people act. Get out of other people's T lines and how they think about you. The other thing we do is we try and take responsibility for other people's F lines. Their feelings about you. I don't want to hurt your feelings, I don't want you to feel bad. We start trying to take responsibility for how other people feel.

And so we start believing that our action line is responsible for their feeling line. Say it with me y'all. What causes other people's feelings? Their thoughts. Yes. They get to choose what they think about you and they get to choose how they feel. They get to choose how they think about the way you've acted, and they get to choose how they feel.

Now, sometimes you'll act in a way that you think is very kind and lovely, and they'll think you're being rude and condescending. And sometimes you'll act in a way that maybe you think is rude and condescending, and they'll think you're lovely. It's very confusing because you think you have more control than you do.

People will say to you, "When you do this, I feel this," in an attempt for you to change how you're behaving so they can feel better. Call that emotional manipulation. Trying to control other people to feel better. It is the long way around and it is super painful. Now, I hear the choir. I hear you. I hear you.

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What you're saying is oh, so we can just treat anyone however we want? Doesn't matter what we say to other people?

Well, here's the truth my friends. They're responsible for how they feel, so the reason why you act a certain way towards other people is not because you can control their feelings. Your A line is caused by your feelings. So the reason you want to be kind and lovely and wonderful to other people is because the thoughts that drive that feelings and those actions feel amazing to you.

And you get the benefit of feeling great because you're a kind person, a lovely person, a generous person. And you know what's so great about that? If you do those things, if you act in those ways so you can feel good, then you're not people-pleasing other people and requiring them to change how they feel based on what you did.

Your actions don't control other people's feelings. Other people's actions don't control your feelings. Remember that. Really remember that. Thoughts about you are other people's business. You cannot control them with your actions. Some people will have feelings about you not following their manuals or behaving the way they want you to. It's going to happen, my friends.

Mothers love this one. It makes me feel bad when you don't call me. No actually, that's not true mom. I don't recommend that you say this to your mother, by the way. I've literally tried it. It doesn't go over well. The reason you feel bad is not because I didn't call you. The reason you feel bad is because you think I should call you more often, and when I don't, then you feel bad.

Mom, the reason why you're upset is you think me calling you means I love you. But I love you madly even when I don't call you. I just don't enjoy talking on the phone. So when you make it mean that I don't love you, you're wrong. That didn't go over well, my friends.



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And sometimes I call my mom but only when it's from a place of love and generosity and when I feel good. I never do it out of the sense of obligation and I always tell her that. Mom, when I call you it's because I really want to. Not because you're guilting me into it, not because you're demanding it because then I'll feel all this resentment.

In fact - and this is what I told her - I'm like, here's the truth. If I call you all the time, I promise you it's not love I'm feeling. It's probably resentment and I know that's not how you want me to feel. When I call you, you know it's from a place of love and being genuine and really genuinely wanting to talk to you. And so now we have such a better relationship because I feel amazing when I talk to my mom instead of mad at her all the time.

Other people's results are theirs and never your fault. Never is someone's R line because of your model. Hear me out here. That doesn't mean that someone else's C line isn't because of your R line. I hope there's no new listeners. You guys are like, R line, T line, what's going on? So my result line, something I've created in my life could then become someone else's circumstance line, but I'm never creating results for other people's model's. It's impossible. Their results are only from their actions.

So here's what's interesting. I have a lot of clients who give me credit for their results. They'll write me the most beautiful letters, the most beautiful emails, the most beautiful Slack messages and tell me how much I've changed their life. And I so appreciate it and I understand the intention and the meaning, and the truth is of course I didn't do that.

What happened was they changed their life. I was in their circumstance line. I taught them a lot, I shared my experience, I gave them some tools. But it was their thoughts and their feelings and their actions that changed their life. And if you've ever had someone say to you, "You've ruined my life," maybe if you've gone through a divorce or a breakup, that's also inaccurate. You can't make someone's life better for them without them having a model that they've run. They have to run that model, thought, feeling, action. That is their result caused by their actions, their feelings.

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So let's use the example of saving someone's life. This just occurred to me. I was thinking okay, so let's say I save someone's life by grabbing them from jumping in front of a car. Like they don't see the car coming and I grab them and save their life. Where does it go in the model? First of all, whose model is it and where does it go? It goes in my model, doesn't it?

Me saving their life is my result. My action. Their circumstance now. So they would say my life was saved but if they put it in the circumstance line, they would put it in a very factual way. I got pulled back by this person from a car. It's kind of a trick to think about, you guys. You have to think about how often our language confuses whose result it is, whose action it was, who's responsible for it.

I especially want to offer this to people who blame themselves for stuff that was done to them. I think it's a tyranny of suffering that's completely unnecessary. Things that have happened to you in your life are other people's models, and here's what's so beautiful about understanding stuff this way is you can return that model to that person as their property and stop taking it on as yours, and then you can consciously decide how you will think about their action in your C line.

One of the ways that I've chosen to think about things that have happened to me is the thoughts that that was about them, not me. That had nothing to do with me. And it didn't. And I don't have to hate them for it because I understand that what caused that was their thought line and their feeling line and how they must have been thinking and feeling in that moment.

The other thing that's so beautiful about this concept, you guys, is then you get to own all your own models, and I want to tell you that when you bring back your models to where they belong and you put other people's models to where they belong in their life, then you start feeling so much more agency, so much more control over what you can control. There's so many things we can't control and we put so much energy into trying to control them.

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And when we stop doing that, we start being able to control the very thing that we can control, which is our thinking, our feelings, our actions. We can start owning what we've done in our lives and deciding what to think about it and giving what other people have done in their lives back to them. That's been an incredibly healing process for so many of my clients to set down the models.

The other thing that I really want to point out is that a lot of times, I think we inadvertently take on problems that we cannot solve that are negative thought loops, negative thought errors as a way of preventing ourselves from having to move forward in our lives because we're afraid. So I hear so often that people will say to me, well, this person did this to me, or this is how I was raised, or my mother did this to me, or my father did this to me, or this thing happened, and that is the reason why I can't move forward, which makes it impossible for them to move forward because they can never control that thing that happened to them.

And when they start telling the truth and they give that person their model back and they take their model into their account, they see, oh, the reason why I can't move forward is because of the way that I'm thinking about this. The reason I don't take action, the reason I feel debilitated is because of the way that I'm thinking about this, because of what I'm making it mean, because I'm taking on this person's model as if it were my own.

As if someone else's action somehow created damage within me. It's impossible. The only thing that can damage us and our worthiness - first of all, nothing can damage our worthiness, but our perception of our worthiness is the way that we choose to think about things and what we make things mean.

One final warning before I let you go. I've heard people use this concept as a way to justify their own terrible behavior with people that they love. So they'll be rude or inconsiderate or lie and the person will say to them, hey, I'm upset about this and they'll be like well, you should change your thoughts about it. I didn't upset you when I lied and cheated on you. Change your thoughts about it.

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That is of course not useful at all, so how do we have these conversations in a way that holds ourselves responsible for taking care of ourselves? So instead of me going to someone and being like hey, you cheated on me, you need to stop cheating on me, this is what you need to do. This is the manual you need to follow.

It's not useful trying to control the other humans. Doesn't work, my friends. But what you can do is you can say hey, here are my thoughts about that. Here are my feelings about that. Here's what I'm going to do about that. And notice, if you're trying to be in their model to control their actions, that doesn't work. Or if you're in your model trying to control yours.

So here's how those two conversations would be. When I'm trying to control your model, I say hey, you did this thing that hurt my feelings, you need to change your A line. That's one way of doing it that doesn't work and is ineffective. The second way of doing it; hey, when you did this, C line, here's what I thought, here's what I felt, here's what I'm going to do. Here's what I'm doing. Here's what I'll do if it happens again. Whatever.

Then you take back the responsibility because as soon as someone does something to you and you try to start trying to control them, you see how ineffective you really are in someone else's model. It doesn't mean we don't communicate, it doesn't mean we don't share our feelings. It just means we stop trying to control each other all the time.

We take responsibility for how we feel because sometimes it's hey, you cheated on me, here's how I think, feel, and what I'm going to do about that. And sometimes it's like hey, you didn't buy me flowers today and I really hoped you would. Here's how I think, feel, and what I'm going to do about that. And notice as soon as you start noticing your own feelings about circumstances like that, then you can start really taking responsibility for what you're thinking, and that's the game, my friends. That is the game.

First of all, becoming aware of what you're thinking, and then taking full responsibility for it. What are the models that you're carrying around that you need to return to sender? Whose models are you taking responsibility

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for? And what models of yours are you trying to outsource? You need to go and get those and take responsibility for those.

And when you do that, you will feel the most powerful you've ever felt in your life because you'll be able to control the only things that you can control, and you will let go of the rest. I hope that's useful. Have an amazing week everyone. Talk to you next week. Bye-bye.

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