

Ep #278: Belief Ceilings



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.

Well hello my friends. How are you today? I'm amazing, of course. I have been writing my book for you all and I'm super excited about it because so much of the content is brand spanking new. Straight from new ideas in my brain.

I was thinking about this the other day. Like, I love that I decided to write this book, even though writing a book is not my most favorite thing to do, but I've coached myself on it so I have a much better attitude. But here's what I've figured out. I am developing so many more high-quality ideas because I've chosen to write this book than if I hadn't chosen to write it.

So I'm super thankful to myself for challenging myself to do this very fun thing. So today, what we're going to talk about, I include a little bit in the book. So I'm super excited to share kind of some of the concepts that I'm developing. And the idea, the concept is called a belief ceiling, and I want to talk to you about belief ceilings today because so many of you have them without even realizing it.

And the reason why I'm calling it a belief ceiling is because they limit you from going higher in your life. Now, a belief ceiling is simply a thought that you think over and over and over and over again so it becomes a belief, and a belief, like I said, is just a thought you think a lot. And so you think it's true.

And this is a concept I've actually been talking a lot lately with my coaches about this idea of what makes something true. What is the truth? And is there a truth that exists outside of us in terms of like, a reality that is emphatically true? Now, for the sake of the Model, one of the things that I have taught you all to do is to put facts in the C line. And that facts are true.

We don't normally say that facts are true because you don't have to believe in a fact, but you kind of do. We have to believe that that tree is a tree and

Ep #278: Belief Ceilings

that it exists. So there's many things that are "facts" that we have all agreed to believe together in order to function in the world and on this place called the planet.

And I am not in any way suggesting that we shouldn't believe that things are true and that we shouldn't have common beliefs that things aren't true. It's how we function. We kind of all agree on certain things. We agree on certain rules, we agree on certain truths. But that's not to say that because we've made this agreement to believe that things are true, that they are true.

And it's important to know that, that just because we've agreed that this is reality, we're kind of all educated the same way to believe that this is reality and this is how reality works, and believing it in that way really helps us to function in the world does not mean that it actually is a reality that exists outside of us. And this distinction is super important because there are many things that we have all agreed to believe that are true that are not serving us.

And you can see that through history, this has been a common evolution as we have moved from believing certain things to believing other things. And we look back on some of the stuff we believed in history, and we can't even imagine that we as humans believed what we believed, now that we've evolved to the place where we are now.

Like, it's really hard for me to wrap my mind around the idea that we used to believe that certain humans were more valuable than other humans. We collectively believed this in many ways. And so that to me, I can't even fathom it and yet I wonder what we all believe today that in another 100, 200 years, we will laugh about.

So think about even 200 years ago, if someone was to say hey, you're going to be able to communicate with another human being who is in a different country without even talking to them real time - I'm of course referring to texting someone internationally. But if you don't understand what texting is and you don't understand that perspective of how that could

Ep #278: Belief Ceilings

work, the idea of being able to communicate to someone without speaking to them across the world is unfathomable.

You can't even make sense of it. So it's just not true. And at that time, it was possible that that could happen. We know that now because it did happen, but it wasn't true that it had happened. So that's the concept that I'm trying to share with you here is that there is no truth that exists outside of you that is definitive.

The world and our perspective in the world is always open to interpretation. And so as we define the world, we'll determine our experience of it. So that's the deep part. Deep thoughts of the podcast. So the reason why I introduced that idea from the beginning is because so many of our belief ceilings are beliefs that have gone unquestioned.

And one of the reasons why is that questioning beliefs is a very uncomfortable process and it's uncomfortable for three reasons. First, beliefs are hard to recognize. They're hard to become aware of because we've thought them so often, they just feel like they're true. The second reason is that questioning our beliefs, especially beliefs that we share with other people in our tribe creates a very isolating experience. I'm going to talk about that in a minute. And the third thing is when you question your beliefs, you have to be willing to have been wrong, and that does not feel good at all.

We as humans like to be certain, and we like to be right. And when we question ourselves and we determine ourselves wrong, especially if we've been wrong for many years, it's very discombobulating. It makes us feel insecure and doubtful and unsure. So let's start with the first one. It's hard to recognize belief systems that are shared with other people and that we've thought for a long time because we don't even recognize them as thoughts.

We don't recognize them as optional. We just recognize them as reality. For example, I could say to you that we're limited in the amount of money we can make in our jobs. Now when I say that, you, because you're a

Ep #278: Belief Ceilings

listener of the podcast, might be like, that's not true. But in general, most people would agree that that's reality.

We're limited by what our employer will pay us, we're limited by the possibilities that are out there in the world on how much money we can make in a job. So that's a belief system. That's not just true. That's not just reality. That's a belief system. It feels true because we have all kind of agreed that it is true.

There are other examples, like let's use a more specific example. Like a teacher who works as a teacher at a school could say the maximum amount that I can make in this job is this amount of money. Whatever that money is. \$65,000 a year. The maximum amount I can make as a teacher in this job is \$65,000.

Now, that feels very true, that's what maybe the principle offered her, that's maybe the going rate for teachers, that's maybe what's in the doctrine of the school or whatever. So that feels very true and there's lots of evidence for it. Most people would agree that that's true. And so therefore that belief would remain unquestioned.

Now, those are some pretty concrete examples, and there's many more examples that are less concrete, which is you know, I don't have a college education so I can't make more than \$100,000 a year, or I was never trained as an attorney so I can't make the same amount of money as an attorney or as a doctor or something like that.

These are like, subtle beliefs that you may not even be aware of our beliefs, you wouldn't even recognize them if you thought them because they're beliefs. I was talking to Kris Plachy the other day on the phone, and one of the things I said to her, I said this is how the brain kind of works. It's like oh, look a tree, oh, we're walking, oh, there's my friend, oh, watch out for that car. You're very dumb and you're never going to amount to anything in your life. Oh look, it's going to rain.

Ep #278: Belief Ceilings

Like, it just sneaks - these little thoughts just sneak in. And they're buried among other observations about the world and so you don't even recognize them. And this is what's true for all of these commonly held beliefs that we've kind of all agreed to together as a society about what's possible and what's true and what is reality.

So that's the first thing. They're just hard to recognize because they're so common and there's such agreement on them that there's not a lot of contrast to them. So if I give you the example of me being a life coach and how much it's possible for a life coach to make in a year financially, let's say, or weight loss, whatever. You pick one of the examples.

So one of my goals in life is to be an example of what is possible with the Model, and I want to be an example of how much money you can make as a life coach when you manage your mind. So let's say you're a life coach or you know of life coaches and you have beliefs about what's possible for life coaches.

And maybe for the last 10 years you've been sharing with your friends, talking with your friends, hey, how much money can you make as a life coach? And you kind of all have this common belief that it's about 100K that you can make as a life coach. And a lot of people would see that I was making a lot more than 100K and they would accommodate for their belief ceiling of 100K by excusing me as an outlier and talking about me as if I didn't apply to their belief system.

It's like a justification for keeping their belief system. And one of the things they used to say to me all the time is well, you can make more money as a life coach because you actually sell a certification. You sell a business opportunity, so it's easy for you to make money because you sell something that can then turn into a way for someone to make money. It was a very logical argument.

It makes sense to invest with me because you'll end up making that money back and much more, so it's not a hard sell. It's an easy investment because obviously, you're going to make that money back. And when

Ep #278: Belief Ceilings

people would say this to me, I would say you're crazy. Yes, that is true. Lots of people want to become life coaches and there's a huge demand and the industry is growing and you can make a lot of money.

Yes, I agree with all of that. But I also believe that there's lots of people who want coaching and who want to learn about life coaching tools and the processes and everything that go along with that, and there's people that want coaching. And you can make a lot of money as a life coach if you do group coaching or you do memberships or you do masterminds and that sort of thing.

And so one of the reasons why I started Scholars is I really wanted to show the coaching industry that the demand is huge for the tools that we offer. And so Self-Coaching Scholars really has been an example of that to many coaches, and I've had many coaches email me and talk to me about how they never knew that their belief was a belief ceiling until they saw me do otherwise.

And so that's one of the things that is important with belief ceilings is being able to recognize them by finding people in the world that contrast your belief system. Now, this is the opposite of what your brain wants to do because your brain is searching for confirmation. That's why we call it confirmation bias. It wants to find evidence for the belief ceilings that we already have.

So even though if you think about it logically, you don't want to have the belief that you can only make \$100,000 a year, that doesn't serve you and that your brain is constantly seeking to prove that true because it's the belief you've thought so often and your brain wants certainty. So when you see an example like me of someone in the coaching industry making a lot more than \$100,000 coaching clients, then we start to wiggle those belief systems.

So it's important for us when we have belief systems that create belief ceilings, that we're willing to search for the opposite of what we believe. We're willing to be wrong, and I'll talk about that in a minute. So number

Ep #278: Belief Ceilings

one, belief ceilings are tricky because they're hard to recognize. We think them automatically, they're under the surface.

The second thing I want to talk about is how isolating it is to have a belief system that is different than your tribe, than the people you hang with, than society. A lot of belief ceilings are beliefs that we have agreed upon unconsciously almost. It's like we have been taught these belief ceilings as if they're the truth and we feel very comfortable because we all are in agreement and we all feel connected when we have shared belief systems.

This is why religions are so powerful in terms of community because when we go to church, we all can believe in the same religion, or if we go - let's say we go to a yoga class. A lot of us all believe in the same ideas and methodology. If we go to a life coaching class, we all kind of believe in the same things and that makes us feel very connected to each other and feel like we're part of a very safe tribe.

Now, if I'm within a group where we have this collective belief system that's kind of under the surface and I start to question it and believe something else, I'm going to feel isolated. I'm going to feel separate. I'm going to feel outside of the group. Now remember, this ignites all of our primal fears because we as a species are a tribal species.

We find safety in numbers, in a herd of people because there's so much more protection when we have a lot of people. When you're left out of the herd, when you're left out of the tribe, you're very vulnerable and you're very open to danger. So in order to question a belief ceiling that is shared with a tribe of people that you're with, not only do you open yourself to ridicule and shame and maybe even disgust, is you also are separating yourself.

So even if you don't tell anybody that you have questioned this belief ceiling, you know that you have and so it feels separate. It feels isolating. It feels less connected. So those are kind of the first two things. It's like first of all, it's hard to recognize because it's so unconscious, all these belief ceilings. Then once you do recognize one, it's almost like you have to

Ep #278: Belief Ceilings

decide that you're willing to step outside of the group think and the group opinion and feel isolated in your own belief by busting through that belief ceiling.

I've actually experienced this a bit in my own life with my own success and with what I have been willing to believe that is counter to society about what's possible for me and my life. And it doesn't even matter if what I believe is true or not to other people. What matters is do we share the belief system? Do we share the belief ceiling? And if I decide not to share that, then I do feel as if I'm all alone in my belief, and my primal brain does not love that.

And I have to remind myself that it's okay, that I'm not really isolated, that I have lots of people that love and care about me. I actually have a lot of people that are willing to believe in me and my beliefs, but the people that don't share in that - sometimes when I talk to my immediate family and we can't quite get on the same page, it feels like I've broken that connection. It would feel more connecting for us all to keep and share the same beliefs that we've always had. So just be aware of this in your own brain, be aware of your desire to keep your status quo with your current tribe.

The last thing that you have to notice about breaking belief ceilings is that you have to be willing to be wrong and to have been wrong for so many years about what you thought was true. So I've had so many people who have told me that I was the first person really in their life to ask them the question, how much money do you want to make per year?

And then questioned what they believed was possible, for how much money they could make. This has also happened with my clients who I've asked them how much weight they want to lose, and they have just had this ceiling on what they believed was possible in terms of the weight that they could maintain based on this collective belief system that it's really hard to lose weight and you have a set point and all these things.

And so when I confront my students about this and I confront their belief ceilings, what happens almost immediately is they clasp onto them. They

Ep #278: Belief Ceilings

latch on and we always laugh. It's like their lovey and they hold on super tight. Don't take this belief away from me.

Now, the belief isn't serving them and they can get a sense of that intellectually, that the belief isn't serving them. But they've believed it for so long that it's very hard to admit how wrong they've been for so long. So if they say I want to make \$300,000 and I say you know that's totally possible and we start talking about the possibility of it, this part of them feels very uncomfortable with the idea that they haven't allowed themselves to believe that and that they've believed almost the exact opposite of that for many years.

There's a lot of cognitive dissonance that happens there between these two belief systems. So it's almost like you invite yourself to believe in a new possibility but you're still clinging to the belief ceiling of the belief system that you've had for so long that feels so comfortable and warm and so true.

So if you've ever noticed when somebody tells you something that you don't believe, you're like, that's not true. Have you noticed that? You're just like, what are you talking about? That's not true. And it feels uncomfortable. It feels confronting. And maybe they're able to prove that it's true, but you've believed something else for so long that you can't wrap your mind around it.

Now, this is actually an indication that you're probably up against a belief ceiling. When somebody says something and you can't wrap your mind around it, it's almost like think about that, wrapping your mind around this comfortable cozy thing. When you can't wrap your mind around something, it's because it takes too much effort to believe that something could be true or something is true.

You're like, what? You're like, huh? What? And people will talk a lot about having a-ha moments. They'll talk about having a perspective change or a perception change or something, and many times that can feel super enlightening and exciting. And when we have a-ha moments that don't

Ep #278: Belief Ceilings

confront us, when we can believe new things without having to give up old things, that's what those a-ha moments are.

But a lot of times, when we get a new perspective, it doesn't feel like an a-ha moment. It feels confronting and it feels like we want to reject it because we've become aware of something we weren't aware of. We all of a sudden feel super isolated and we feel uncertain because we've been so wrong for so long.

So this is the problem with changing belief systems and the problem with eliminating belief ceilings. Because as you go through the process, you will be very confronted. Many of my students try to deal with this by skipping the part where they really acknowledge the belief ceiling. So what will happen is I will say to them hey, I've noticed this.

And by the way, I want to talk about how important this is as kind of a side note, how important it is to be able to have someone in your life, preferably a coach, who can give you perspective on your belief ceilings. It is very challenging for us to see our own belief systems when they're unconscious. So a lot of times, a coach can point them out to you in conversation while you're being coached, while you're doing thought downloads, and you would not even have recognized that it was a belief system.

It's almost like you're embarrassed by it. You're like, what? I didn't even know that was there. Oh my gosh, that's not mine. So a lot of times, what'll happen is I'll point out a belief ceiling to someone or they'll recognize it and they'll want to immediately delete, move on, hide it, go to the next belief system. This rarely works because the belief ceiling is so engrained, because you've believed it for so long, it's almost like you're a fish in water and you want to get out of the water immediately.

And what I want to suggest that you do instead of that is that you just simply recognize the belief ceiling and its effect on your life and observe it and notice it and have your explanation. Look at the results that it's created and just be present with the belief ceiling for a while. Once you're there,

Ep #278: Belief Ceilings

then you can slowly let it go and decide to change your mind and to believe something different.

If you try and do it too quickly, what you'll end up doing is avoiding the belief ceiling and it will go unconscious again. It will still be active and it will still be producing results in your life. You just won't be aware of it because you don't want to see it. And that is a really common avoidance mechanism that I see in a lot of my students.

So once you recognize a belief ceiling, it's super important that you don't dismiss it because you won't want it to be there. Make sure you write it down and look at it and then really be willing to be wrong about it. Be willing to acknowledge it, see it, see its effect, and then be willing to change it only after you've been able to process it as true.

When you look into your life and you look into the possibilities of your future and you look at what you could be capable of, you are inevitably going to come up against some of your own belief ceilings. And one of the easiest ways to recognize them is you will use them as the very legitimate, valid reason for why you haven't created more success or more money or more results in your life.

It will be an explanation that you will give and it will seem very valid but really, it's just a commonly held belief that we all agree is a good excuse for not moving forward. And they can be very insidious in our lives and prevent us from being able to grow. So ask yourself where is it that you want your life to be? What is a result that you really want in your life? And what is your current explanation as to why you don't have it yet?

And whatever that reason is you will think is very legitimate and my guess is it's just a belief ceiling. If you think you're just describing circumstances that are preventing you from achieving what you want in your life, then you most likely are just interpreting the world, interpreting reality in a way that isn't useful and doesn't serve you.

Ep #278: Belief Ceilings

So if this concept is super intriguing to you but you don't know if you can quite get a hold of your own belief ceilings in your own life, I want to recommend that you - if you're not in Scholars, you join Scholars of course. What are you waiting for? But if you're in Scholars, make sure you sign up for a coaching session and do a thought download on why you aren't getting the result you want to get.

When you do that thought download with your coach, all of your belief ceilings will probably pop up and they'll seem like they're just observations. They'll seem like they're just legitimate explanations but really, they're the beliefs that you need to change in order to get what you want.

And I want to end this by saying if you find that you have belief ceilings that you didn't know you had, there's nothing wrong with you. You're not doing it wrong. I and everyone I know, even the uber successful people all have belief ceilings. We all have limitations on what is possible for our lives and many times, those limitations feel like safety to us and so we have attached onto them.

And it's just a question of questioning them. It's just a matter of going in and recognizing and then questioning them. So even for me with my goal of 100 million dollars, I have a belief ceiling on how quickly that can happen, and I have a belief ceiling on moving beyond that per year. And so I'm constantly being willing to question my own beliefs and my own thoughts about what's possible for my own life and how my own belief ceilings and my collective view of reality is holding me back from creating a life that is more to my delight and more to creating an example of what is possible.

And I just really want to encourage you to do the same. Alright my friends, I hope you have the most beautiful week and I'll be here same time same place next week. Talk to you then. Bye-bye.

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Ep #278: Belief Ceilings

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