

Ep #286: Pure Circumstance



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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. Before we get started, a story. I was in Lake Tahoe with my girlfriend Lisa, whom I've been friends with for, what, 25 years. And she had on the most beautiful necklace with a Tiffany color kind of glass piece on it that I was obsessed with.

And I said to her, "Oh my gosh, your necklace, I'm dying, I must have it. Where did you get it? What's going on?" And she said, "Actually..." she smiled, "Actually it's kind of a fun story." And I was like, "Okay, what's the fun story?"

And she goes, "Well my friend Courtney just happens to be a Self Coaching Scholar who loves your work and says that Scholars has completely changed her business and her life. And she's hitting all these crazy business goals because of Scholars and now it's completely changing her life, and she owns the business that made this necklace."

Come on, I was like, "Are you kidding me? I have to have one of those necklaces. They're so beautiful." But because I tell everyone not to send me gifts, we had to convince her it was okay. So we took a selfie, which I never do, and sent it to her and we were like, oh my gosh.

So, now I just received, in the mail, this necklace that I'm obsessed with and I will wear it in many of my Scholars calls so you guys can see it. But here's what I want to tell you; you have to go to her website. It's graycglass.com. And buy all of her things, I'm telling you, they are gorgeous. And Christmas is not that far away, my friends. And there are some beautiful pieces here that you can give as gifts.

So I just want to read her little about me paragraph. Listen, I never promote anyone, but I'm telling you, her jewelry is so amazing and so beautiful and if you have the same taste as me, you're going to be obsessed. Plus, if

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you're a Scholar, you should wear the jewels made by a Scholar, right? Obviously.

Her about me says, "I'm Courtney Gray, a glass artist living and creating in Northern California from my home studio. My love of glass started as a kid. I often went antique shopping with my family. I was always drawn to glass ash trays of the 1960s. So in my junior year of college, when I saw a sign posted for a fused glass class, I signed up. And a few years later, I created Gray C Glass from my two-bedroom apartment." Which, of course, we love a story like that.

When you're making something by hand, which is what she does, by piece, it's truly one of a kind. "Everything I make is one of a kind." Oh my god, that makes my eyes water, knowing how well her business is doing. She's working hard. But she prides herself on product consistency. So she can make all five wall sconces coordinate perfectly as well as make 20 of the same butterfly nightlight and they will look so similar, almost machine-made, but there are some pieces that are just so unique, so hard to replicate, that she puts in her one of a kind category. This means, when you purchase from this category, you're getting an exact piece that was photographed. So special.

What is fused glass? "It's separate pieces of glass melted together in a kiln at high temperature. I normally fuse to 1400 degrees. I also use a technique called slumping, where I melt glass dishes and wall sconces over ceramic and stainless steel molds to give them shape. Both techniques are done in a glass kiln."

Alright, my friends – and her website is freaking gorgeous; beautiful pictures of all of her work. And I'm just so in love with her and I'm so glad that she's a Scholar. And if you are listening to this, Courtney, please, please, please know how much I appreciate the beautiful gifts you sent me and you will see me wearing them for sure.

Alright, let's get on with the show. Listen, I know you're going to be distracted. You guys are all on that website right now, but you've got to

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come back to me because we're going to talk about a very important topic today; pure circumstance.

Now, here's what I want to tell you about this. This is a concept that I introduced a little bit in the episode on body thoughts. It was kind of like a little bit of a teaser. I kind of talked about it a little bit. I played around with it a little bit with you all to see what the response would be. Because sometimes, I introduce these concepts and I lose you. I get the blank stares. You guys are like, "What the hell is she talking about? She's so weird now."

But I got enough positive response, enough people that got it, that I wanted to take it deeper. I actually was preparing this curriculum for my master coach training, but I want everyone to be able to have access to it.

So, here's what I want to tell you; if you listen to the body thoughts episode and you had, like, an a-ha moment, you had a moment where you were like, "Wait, what? Are you kidding me?" If you had kind of a shift when you listened to that one, then you're going to love this one.

If you listened to that one and you were like, "Huh?" and you didn't get it at all, then this is going to really be weird, and that's okay. So, if you're brand new to the podcast, this probably isn't a good first round one. In fact, I know it isn't. But if you've been with me a long time, this may be something that kind of blows your mind.

So, for this episode and the next episode – they go together – you're going to have to work with me. And what I mean by that is let yourself be confused long enough so that you can have that a-ha moment. Let your brain struggle a little bit to explain this to yourself because this is going to challenge maybe a lot of the concepts that you've had before, and so your brain won't want to do it. It will be like confused and like it doesn't understand and what is the point of this, and it might get irritated. So, something to look forward to, my friends. But I just wanted to warn you that that is going to happen.

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Over these next two episodes, we're going to talk about some concepts that can be life-altering. The first episode, this one, we're going to talk about what I'm calling pure circumstance. and in the next episode, I'm going to talk about a concept called passing through neutral.

In this first one, what I want to tell you is – and I'm going to introduce this because it's important, is that a lot of the work that is done in meditation, a lot of the body work that is done, a lot of some of the kind of really woo-woo spiritual work that is done is inaccessible to a lot of us because we feel like we don't get it, we don't understand it.

And one of the reasons why I've always struggled a little bit with some of the mindfulness, meditation, spiritual work is I feel as if sometimes it leaves you with no progress. And it just doesn't feel right in my bones.

And here's what I mean by that; a lot of the spiritual work, a lot of the meditation work is about getting what I perceive to be as neutral, as at peace, as at steady energy. So when I imagine being able to meditate, when I picture Eckhart Tolle or Byron Katie being in that moment of pure presence, I don't see momentum or movement. And for me, that just doesn't feel right with who I am.

And so a lot of the work that I've done in terms of meditative practice and mind work that's been kind of un-intellectual in the sense that we're not cognitively finding our way there, but more letting go of everything and being in the present moment hasn't felt like my work. It hasn't felt truly satisfying.

And I know that many of you feel the same way. You'll use meditation as a tool or you'll use the relaxation techniques as a tool, but it's not something where you want to land there and stay there in that kind of lifestyle. And so for me, most of you guys know, I love yoga, I love doing yoga, and I love every piece of it.

And one of the most important pieces is the breath and being present with the breath. But I have always used that as a tool so then I can get my head

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clear, so then I can go create stuff in the world. And I feel like a lot of the messages I get in my yoga class and in my yoga study and in my meditation study is more to just stay in the present moment and not to think about the future so much and not to be ambitious and not to be creating.

So, I wanted to start there and recognize that because I think a lot of you who follow me probably feel the same way, otherwise you'd probably be pretty turned off by me and all my ambition, because you'd be like, "What, stay in the present moment and just be happy with existence."

And I've been doing a lot of thinking and studying as it applies to this and really trying to find for myself what that common ground is because I love them both so much. I love being in the present moment and yoga and meditation and, you know, all the woo-woo stuff. But I also love business and creation and making money and all of those things too. So how do we put those together in a way that really is authentic to me and not in some kind of pretentious way?

And so, I think I've found a really good starting place for us. Now, one of the things that I want to tell you is that, for the rest of my life, I will always be studying and I will always be searching and I will always be wanting to find the next best tool, the next best way to live in the world.

Now, a lot of the ways that I do that is by creating my own tools and creating my own way and researching other people and other ideas and incorporating it with what I already know. Most of my students will tell you, I'm always open to anyone's teaching that is better than mine, of course. Like, I want the best of the best and I will teach whatever is the best.

But what I have found to be most effective so far is to take pieces of everyone's work and to create a tool that works for me, which is the Model. So if you think about the self-coaching Model and you think about the terms and the letters that are in the self-coaching Model, there's the five things that we talk about.

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There are circumstances, which we define as the facts in the world. And then there's thoughts, which are your sentences, your thoughts about those circumstances, basically your interpretation of the circumstances, of the facts of the world. And my teaching is all based on thought work and recognizing that those sentences, those interpretations of the world cause your feelings. And that would be all fine and good if all of those feelings were amazing. And that would be all fine and good if our thoughts were accurate and authentic.

But what I've taught you and what you all know is that those sentences, those thoughts that we may not even be aware of are optional and many times programmed or inadvertently believed in a way that doesn't serve us. And so my work is about, first and foremost recognizing and becoming aware that you have those thoughts, and then recognizing the effects of those thoughts and then knowing that you can change them if you want to.

I think the most evolved piece of my work as I've become more authentic within myself has been the ability to feel my emotions, has been the ability to stay with my emotions long enough to not be in a hurry to change my thinking and to recognize my thinking and recognize the effect of it, and then to gently just let it go and let it be replaced with a thought that serves me better instead of rejecting negative emotion and rejecting negative thoughts as something that is bad. It's just something for us to be curious about.

So as I teach this work and as I share it with you in the podcast, I talk a lot about making sure your circumstance line, the facts in the world, are really boiled down to the most basic of basics. So, "I had words with a man," instead of, "My dad yelled at me." Or, "There was a conversation," instead of, "I had a fight with my husband," right, keeping that C-line very, very neutral and very, very factual.

And that work is game-changing. And that work will be work, of course, that we continue to do and that is super important. And I will do at least five Models a day just like that.

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But let me introduce to you this idea of the pure circumstance. So we have the circumstance, which is always going to inhabit that C-line of our Model, unless we decide to use a pure circumstance. So, what is a pure circumstance?

Here's what it is. When you think about that C-line and you think about putting facts in that C-line, "There was a person. I ate dinner. I had a conversation with my sister," those are all acceptable circumstances that we put in the C-line of the Model. But when you think about it, every one of those circumstances, even though it's a neutral set of words, is still a thought because it's made up of language, because it's made up cognitively before we write it down, it is still a neutral thought about a direct experience.

If you have an experience – now remember, I talked about this in body thoughts – if you have an experience directly with something, you touch someone, that experience is a direct experience. It's not a thought about an experience.

So whenever we're talking about the past, which of course, we could put in the C-line, we could put something that happened in the past in that circumstance line, it really is technically still a thought. "I graduated from college." It's a statement of a fact, but it's also still a thought about my past, okay?

So what I'm suggesting is that we can use the C-line as a pure circumstance, as a direct experience line that doesn't include language. And when we do this, we release, we go to complete neutral in that C-line, absolute zero of neutral.

Now, here's what I want you to imagine. I want you to imagine all of the animals on the planet that don't have language. So their experience is direct because there's no words. There's no letters. There's no sentences in addition to the actual experience.

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So let's say I'm sitting here and I pet my dog. If I say to myself, "I'm petting my dog," I actually have two things going on. I have the experience, the direct experience of touching and petting my dog, but I'm also having the thought about the experience, which is, "I'm petting my dog."

One is a direct experience, a pure circumstance with no language. And one has language involved in it. So I started to ask myself, is there a benefit to differentiating between a stated circumstance and direct experience without language. And here's what I came up with.

I think it can be a complete game-changer if we can experience and actually re-experience things without language, and here's why. Language is the only thing that can cause psychological emotion. Direct experience causes sensation, which is a direct experience of your body, not caused by a thought. And language is what causes emotion.

And I think sometimes we think that we are experiencing an emotion because of something that happened in the world or something that is happening, even though we're the ones creating it with language. And so as I've been doing this work over the past several months on myself, where I've been asking myself, what would this be like without any language, where I can't even think, "I'm in the world, I'm a human, this is a person, I'm having a conversation. This is going on for me," right.

There's no language. There are no words. There are no thoughts. What is the experience like in this present moment without the commentary, without the sound on, without the subtitles? Think of you're watching a movie, no subtitles, no sound; the direct experience of that without the attempt to interpret it.

How do you let go of language, how do you let go of words to be present in an experience? Now, when you study meditation or you learn from the masters of meditation, one of the things that they will have you do is just release thinking; try not to think. If you try not to think, it's very difficult. You just keep thinking.

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But one of the things that you can do when you're meditating is you could recognize your thinking. You could become the observer of your thinking. And if you can just watch yourself think without judgment, then you, as the watcher, are watching yourself think and not actually thinking. And when you are there, those of you who have experienced this – a lot of you, when you're doing Models, you have kind of an out of the body experience. It's so meta because basically what you're doing is you're observing yourself thinking without judging yourself thinking, which means you are truly in that meditative state.

You are the watcher. And when you're able to step out of your life and be the watcher without words, with just observation, with just experiencing yourself thinking, you can find a level of peace that many people have never known. And this is what's crazy about it.

You could be in the middle of an incredible round of anxiety or fear or stress and for a minute, as you observe yourself experiencing it, you are in a place of neutrality. You are in a place of peace where there is no direct language causing that emotion.

So when you think about being in your body without language, you may be like, "Alright, Brooke Castillo, you've lost me now." What's it like to be in your body without language? I described it in body thoughts a little bit, like what is it like to be a body without thoughts?

I looked outside to see if I could come up with a way to describe this and what it may be like, and it's kind of like if you were a tree experiencing a flower. It sounds crazy, but let's say you're a living breathing tree. You can't think. Trees don't think. How does it experience the flower? It's completely neutral. There is no judgment.

Now, when I say there is no judgment, hear me say this; there's no judgment good, but there's also no judgment bad. There's no judgment at all. A tree doesn't think a flower is beautiful. A tree doesn't think. A tree just experiences. How does a tree experience itself? Does it? Is there an experience that happens without language?

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And that is this amazing place that we can play with. So it's kind of like I was trying to imagine what it is, because if you can't describe it – can you describe it as this, or life, or is, or awake, or conscious? No, because those are all words.

So I think one of the ways that this is so powerful is it can give us a space to pass through and not a place to stay. And so I'm not recommending that you learn how to live without language or that you go and meditate without language all the time because here's the thing; you don't have negative emotion without language, but you also don't have positive emotion.

You can't create anything. You can just be in that meditative state. But the reason it's so powerful as a way of passing through is it gives you a place to land in between suffering and success. It gives you a place to land in between models. It ends up being peace for peace's sake. It's neutral to get out of pain, which pain can become a loop that you're creating with yourself if you try and talk your way out of it.

This is an alternative to talking your way out of it. This is a way for you to simply release all words, release all sentences, release all opinions, judgments, directions. You basically are recalibrating your emotions to zero temporarily. You are clearing out your words.

Now, have you ever had an experience that was so mind-blowing that you can't even describe it? This happens to a lot of people when they have a-ha moments or they have shifts in perceptions or they have, like, amazing orgasms or they have something happen, like a knowing, and they're like, "I can't even explain it to you. I can't even put it into words because it was such a direct experience of sensation, such a direct experience in the body."

Now, remember, even when you have a direct experience like that, it's not positive or negative until you label it as so. So that's when the words come and add to it. And what I'm recommending is that you learn how to just be in yourself temporarily to pass through for a moment without language.

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I'm going to give you an example of this. My dog has been having an issue with his eye and I am a hysterical mother and I don't want my dog to ever be in pain. And he's in a tremendous amount of pain because he has a problem with his cornea and he can't open his eye because he's in a lot of pain.

And so I've been practicing being present with my dog, with his eye, without words, without judgment, without worrying, without talking to myself about it, without saying that it's wrong or that it shouldn't be or that we should get it fixed, or that, oh my gosh, he's in so much pain.

What is it like to just be with him without words? And it has been amazing to be able to pull myself out of the negativity and just rest at neutral, to just rest with my dog at neutral. And you can do that with anything in your life that you think is causing you negative emotion. It's always just the words that are causing it. It's never the dog and the eye and his pain. It's when I label it, when I think about it, that's what causes me to have negative emotion.

So I've been sitting here and just releasing words, and I'll watch the words come in, "Pain," and I'll just let it go. What if that word didn't exist? "Dogs shouldn't feel," release that sentence. "I should fix it," release all of it.

What if you could just release all of it and just be present without language? And immediately, I feel everything relax. Nothing's changed except I've removed language. I've removed the cause of all of my pain and I'm just going into pure circumstance, which is always fully neutral.

Because even in the case of this, my dog has a cut in his eye, that's factual but it's also loaded with emotion for me because that sentence, even without another thought, causes me to feel so much because it is a thought that I'm interpreting, right? But when I go right to the direct experience and I release the word "Cut" and I release the word "I" and I release the word "Dog" and I just am present in this moment with this being, which I can't even use the word being, but I'm just here, it changes everything for that moment.

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So without the experience of language, without the experience of words, it is a pure presence. It's a pure place to be. So if you don't put words to it and you don't describe it, you don't even feel it emotionally. You only are present in your sensations. And that's neutral. That's true pure, that is a blank C-line. That is the direct experience when we haven't put any words.

Now here's why this is so cool. When we learn the Model, we get so caught up in wanting to change the thought from positive to negative that we don't learn how to let go of the original thought. So what we do is – and I watch brand new students do this all the time – we try and push against the “Negative” thought and replace it with a positive thought.

But then what happens when you do that is the positive thought becomes the heavy. It becomes the fighter of the negative thought, which creates tension. And the negative thought is still there, it's just the positive thought is trying to push it away. And I see this happen a lot where that old Model keeps coming up and being present because we haven't truly learned how to release the hold on the negative thought by recognizing that you can feel that emotion and you don't need to fight it at all.

And one of the ways that I have found is really interesting to do that is, between a negative model and a positive model, drop into pure circumstance. Drop into the space between words, where there are no words in the C-line. There is only the direct experience of being there. There is no language. There is no sentences.

Now, many people will tell you this is where you should live. You should live in the place of non-judgment, positive or negative. You should live in the space of pure positive – not even positive, but peaceful energy. It doesn't get too excited, doesn't get too upset, but just stays in neutral.

I do not personally want to do that. I do not want to be in pure circumstance all of the time. I do not want to be without words or without judgment. But I do want to know I can go there. I do want to know the difference between my interpretation of the world and the world and my direct experience of it without words.

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And the reason why I want to be able to do that is because I want to be able to go to a place where I'm not creating any emotion. I want to be able to take a respite from emotion when I'm having a lot of negative emotion. And what I have found is if I can release all language, if I can release all thoughts about something, meaning all words about something, if I can just watch the words come in and let them go as if they don't exist, I find a presence and a place that makes me feel indestructible, that makes me feel the most powerful I've ever felt in my life, that makes me feel like no one can hurt me. Even if I die, no one can hurt me. It's the craziest thing.

And so I feel like sometimes these people that are just totally into meditating all the time, I'm like, I get it. It feels so good to be without the language. It's so awesome.

And it's even more, I think, awesome to be in that space powerfully than even to be fanaticizing about possibility. I think it's such an amazing present place to be. And the way that I'm recommending it and the way that I'm introducing it on the podcast here is just introductory.

My master coaches are going to go through this process of learning how to be in pure circumstance. I also want to give you all a heads up that Self Coaching Scholars in 2020 is going to be all brand-new monthly material and I will teach this in detail in Scholars for sure, so get ready. We still have all the material there and we're going to teach that as well.

So I'm excited to be able to introduce this concept. I think it's going to take our work to the next level. So it's really important that you understand this concept before you listen to the next podcast, which is going to be on passing through neutral and the power of why I'm recommending you do that and then how to get through it; how to get from this bad negative emotion to this neutral direct pure circumstance, to then going to positive, possibility, love, and compassion.

Because, if you can fully release the negative by passing through neutral, then the positive is going to be so much more powerful. It's not going to be using the positive against the negative, which is what some of us do when

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we try and swap Models, but we're going to be using all of the positive energy towards the positive creation, versus using it to fight against or avoid the negative emotion.

Now, did I lose some of you on this? If I did, I love you. Listen to it again and again and again and again, especially if you're one of my master coaches. I want to make sure you get these concepts deep within you, so listen to it over and over again. If you're in Scholars, you can, of course, ask questions about it. We're going to be studying it deeper in master coach training. So don't worry.

I'm going to be talking about this a lot because I was just telling Corinne – I was with Corinne Crabtree in Las Vegas and I was like whispering to her. I'm like, "I'm in this place right now where I feel like untouchable. I feel like the most powerful I've ever felt and it doesn't feel like you think it would. It feels gentle. It feels like the most love I've ever experienced." And I think a part of it is this ability to go in and out of language.

Because here's the other thing – when you recognize that everything that ever hurt you in your life was caused by language, that was caused by a word, and you have the ability to disconnect from that long enough to pass through neutral, think of how powerful that is. Think of how amazing that is, okay.

So if you feel like this is too challenging or you're bored or frustrated or whatever, I want you to earmark this one and come back to it, especially if you haven't listened to all the previous podcasts. But a lot of times, when I introduce these kinds of concepts, people are like, "Those aren't advanced. I've been doing that for years." And I'm like, okay, well some of us are more elementary.

And then sometimes I introduce this stuff and people don't get it at all. So wherever you are, hopefully this was helpful to some of you. I want you to start practicing it. What is it like to be in the middle of an argument – imagine this – in the middle of an argument with someone and say, what

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would this be like without language, without words, without sentences, without thoughts in my mind or out loud?

You'd just be a person. You wouldn't even be able to be mad, right? It would just be two people. Even if the other person had language but you didn't, what would I be like? Can you drop into that pure circumstance?

Okay, so once you get this concept, we'll go into passing through neutral, and the next concept, and then I will answer all of your questions. We'll dive into this in Scholars if you have questions in this next month. But just remember, also in 2020, we're going to be doing a deep dive into some of these concepts so I can show you how passing through neutral helps you create all the results you want at like twice the speed because you're not pulling nay negative thoughts with you that are dragging you down.

I'm telling you guys, not only do I have all these people in my life, all these students in my life, all these coaches in my life who are having the most extraordinary success, that is blowing all of our minds when we look around, but it's happening faster and faster and faster. And I think these concepts, these ideas, these practices are the reason why. So I look forward to teaching you, as well as I possibly can, these concepts, so you can start applying them to your life.

Have a beautiful week, everyone. I'll talk to you next week. Take care, bye-bye.

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