

Ep #314: What You Can Control



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With Your Host

Brooke Castillo

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You are listening to *The Life Coach School Podcast* with Brooke Castillo, episode number 314.

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. Welcome to the podcast. How are things? Maybe don't answer that. I'm just kidding. Hey, so, today what I wanted to talk about is what we can control.

And I've been doing a lot of coaching, probably more coaching than I've done in my whole life, on lots of traumatic things that are going on in people's brains right now. And it is my honor and pleasure to be able to coach everyone on everything during this time.

But one of the things that I wanted to offer to each and every one of you, and it doesn't depend at all on what your circumstance is, is that there are a lot of things that we can't control. And there are a lot of things that we can control.

And when you think about the model and you think about that circumstance line, that is the line we can't control. But everything else in that model, we can. So, of the five things in the world, one of the things, we can't control. We can't control our circumstances. But we can control our thoughts. We can control our feelings, our actions, and our results, and what we decide to do with all of them.

So, when we try to control the circumstances, we lose our minds. It makes us a little nutty and we get mad at the other people and we try to control the other people, we try to control the universe, we try to control whether we get sick or not. We try to control the government. We try to control our neighbors. It makes us nuts.

So, the people that I'm working with that are trying to control circumstances are having the toughest time right now. The people that I'm working with

Ep #314: What You Can Control

who are attempting to just control what they can control, which is their thoughts, their feelings, and their actions, and their results are having a much easier time.

And, in fact, what I'm noticing is the ones that are focused on what they can control are producing, are creating, are contributing to the solution. So, I want to make sure and I wanted to take some time today to talk about this because it's an obvious thing that I think most people understand intellectually, but it's not something I'm seeing people practice as much as they can.

And one of the major areas where I'm seeing this is people using the virus and using the economy not to control what they can control. So, "Well, I can't control my emotions right now," or, "I can't control my thoughts right now because this is just out of control."

That is not an excuse. This being out of control is true. The world being out of our control is true. But everything else is within our control. And I've spent a lot of time, over the past few weeks, talking about how we can control our thinking and how important that is and how we need to make conscious choices about what we're thinking.

We need to be careful thinking and mixing up circumstances and thoughts and trying to control what we can't and then not controlling what we can in terms of our thinking. I've talked about how important it is not to mis-assign meaning to things and make things mean something that they don't, understanding that circumstances are neutral and the meaning that we give to those circumstances is what matters.

Our feelings and processing our emotions is so important right now. I've seen so many people trying to deny what they're feeling, trying to deny their emotions, not allowing space to feel them and honor them. And so, if you find yourself buffering or escaping or going online and trying to get away from yourself, that's going to create a lot of negative consequence and make you feel even more out of control.

Ep #314: What You Can Control

So, what I want to recommend – and normally I would teach you to do a thought download and to take a look at your thoughts and create models and to create new models and choose new thoughts you want to think. And I still highly recommend that. But I've already done a lot of podcasts on that.

I wanted to offer something a little bit more practical. And I'm going to call it Worry While You Work because so many of us right now are worried and we're trying not to be worried, which isn't working. And so, instead of trying not to worry, what I want to offer to you is the concept of continuing to worry, but make sure you're utilizing the worry energy into producing a result that you want.

And one of the ways that I do this and is super-effective for me is organizing. Not what you were expecting; organizing and cleaning. In a time where the world feels out of control to me, I find an immense sense of calm in controlling my environment, in organizing my environment and in cleaning my environment.

So, my recommendation to those of you who worry and have anxiety is to schedule time to worry and be anxious, but don't do it while you're sitting down. Don't do it while you're meditating or walking. Do it while you're organizing. Trust me on this.

When I first started Scholars, we created curriculum for the first three years. That curriculum is now in the archives within Scholars. We call it Archive 1.0. And when you join Scholars, you get access to all of the archives, which means you get the online workbooks, you get all the videos, and you get all the coaching sessions that we did on that topic.

One of the topics, October's topic, was how to organize your life and your mind. And you'll see that book Aimée Gianni's on the front of it. And if you go into Scholars and you go into Archive 1.0, there's Organize Your Life and Your Mind.

Ep #314: What You Can Control

I want to highly recommend that if you're new to Scholars and you don't know about that section, that you go and find it and that you read it. I'm going to read a little bit of it to you here today – but that you go in and you read it and that you do some daily work within that book in terms of organizing.

Now, the key here is not to overwhelm yourself. The key is not to say, "Okay, I'm going to go organize my entire house or my entire kitchen or my entire closet." What you want to do is pick one small area.

It might be your underwear drawer or your sock drawer or your office drawer or a section of your kitchen or an area in your house; a very small area. It shouldn't take you longer than one hour and you're going to schedule this time.

Now, remember, you're scheduling it. And during that time, you're going to worry while you work. You're going to allow yourself to process the emotion of worry and anxiety and fear and all of that while you're organizing this space or this drawer or this area in your life.

I personally have a small closet in my office. And most of you who have seen me on video in Scholars, you see that it's behind me and to the left. There's this door, and when you open it, there's all these shelves in there. And this is where I keep my books.

Now, the problem is that I buy at least four books a week. So, that very small closet cannot accommodate all of my purchasing and reading. And so, when I'm done with a book, I donate the book. And sometimes, if it's a book that I think I'll read again or I'll reference again, I'll keep it.

So, inside that closet are all my books that I haven't read yet, that I'm about to read. Or there's books that I love so much that I kept that I've underlined inside of there and kept notes inside of there.

So, for me, going through that and cleaning out that area and looking at all my books – I love books so much – and making it pristine and lovely in

Ep #314: What You Can Control

there gives me a sense of calm like nothing else does. It's the energy that I put into the physical, I think, picking up the books and putting them in boxes and carrying the boxes outside is part of it, it's physical, but it's also revisiting all of the books that I've done. And I just allow myself, during that time, to let my brain just buzz away with all the horrible things that could possibly happen in the world. And I flow that energy out into this activity.

So, one of the things that is very important when we're thinking about organizing your life and organizing your mind is this sense of control. And I love the metaphor of cleaning out your mind like I love the metaphor of cleaning out your house because I feel like it's the last thing most of us want to do.

We want to just say, "Oh, it's fine. It's fine." And I feel like hiring a coach is the equivalent of hiring a mind-cleaner or a house-cleaner to come in and help with all the things that we need in order to get everything kind of organized and everything done right. But it's also something that, when we do it ourselves, gives it a different layer of satisfaction, a different layer of release.

So, I say this in the book in *Scholars*. Organize your mind to organize, to arrange into a structured whole. Your brain is filled with thoughts; 60,000 thoughts per day. Imagine that many thoughts in a room. Whoa. You have thoughts that run subconsciously because they are efficient and repetitive.

For example, lifting up your leg, moving it forward, setting it down. These repetitive programmed thoughts that serve us don't need to be organized deliberately. Our brain does that very well.

The repetitive and programmed thoughts that don't serve us do need to be organized. Think of them as the thoughts stuffed away at the back of the closet. They seem harmless because you don't really know what's in there. You aren't really paying attention. But these thoughts are continuously creating unwanted emotion in the background. We need to pull these thoughts into our consciousness and make decisions about them.

Ep #314: What You Can Control

Is this thought serving me? Do I really want it? Is it current or outdated? We will use these same questions as we go through this entire month and organize our minds and our lives.

So, as you're going through, let's say you've picked the drawer in your office. As you're going through that drawer, you're going to notice stuff that you didn't even know you had. You may find stuff that you didn't even know you had lost.

And what you will do when you go through that drawer is you'll ask yourself, is this item serving me? Do I really want it? Is it current or outdated?

And you will decide to let some of the things in the drawer go. And what I've noticed is even with the books that I let go, some of them I only read a couple of pages, never got into it, and I let it go. There's something powerful about the process of letting things go, getting rid of things, creating order in a place where there was no order.

And when we do this physically, when we do this mentally with a space in our home, it becomes much easier for us to do it with our minds. And so, what I will recommend to you is that if you feel worried and anxious, you do the organizing activity on an area first and then you do it on your mind. What is going on in your mind that you need to declutter? What are the thoughts that you aren't even aware of that you need to let go of thinking; you need to make a choice not to think?

I'm going to skip forward a couple of pages and read another piece of this. Now, if you're in Scholars, you can read this whole thing. It's already in there. You just need to pull it out.

Thought organization – I'm on page 11 of the book now. With so many thoughts per day, we have to get a closer look in order to get organized. We do that with a thought download. So, that means we go into our brain and download every thought. The exact same thing is what I recommend you do when you're going through a drawer.

Ep #314: What You Can Control

You take everything out of the drawer or everything out of the closet or everything out of the cabinet, whatever space you're working on, you remove everything, then you clean the space while it's empty, and then you decide what to put back in. You ask yourself, is it serving me? Do I really want it? Is it current or outdated?

I'm going to warn you; these questions do not apply to the circumstance or the situation. They only apply to the thought. When you ask these questions, make sure you have a sentence in mind and not just any problem you're dealing with that you aren't recognizing as a thought.

For example, let's say your husband yelled at you about the kids staying up late and you thought he was rude and dismissive. You're not asking these questions about your husband's behavior or any other circumstance. You're asking these questions about the thought, "He is rude and dismissive."

Does that thought serve you? Do you really want that thought? Is the thought current or outdated? So, when you're doing this work on your mind, you want to pull all the thoughts out of your mind and put them on paper.

Now, recognize anything that is a circumstance when you do that thought download. And that, you just simply release. We're not going to do work on that. And it's kind of like when you clean out a drawer. There's certain things that you just don't need, that you don't need to think about. You have to keep them, or you know that you have to get rid of them. Let them go, okay.

Now, when you go through this process and you organize the space in your house and you organize your thoughts in your head, you're going to start realizing that you have much more control over your immediate environment in your home and your immediate environment in your brain.

And this will start to develop a contrast for you because you'll start to know and remember that the most power you have is in your ability to make a decision. And when we are in times of chaos, we forget that we have the

Ep #314: What You Can Control

ability to make decisions because we can't decide, maybe, to go to work or we can't decide whether we get sick or not, or we can't decide what's going on with the stock market, we start to feel powerless. We look outside of ourselves at the circumstance and we start to feel powerless. And the best possible thing that we can do is to come back to ourselves and to start making decisions.

Now, because this isn't a time to be making big decisions in our lives, for most of us. We don't really know, you know, we're not deciding what we're going to do immediately for really big decisions, most of us. What we can do is make little decisions.

We can make little decisions about what to keep in the drawer and what to get rid of. And we can make decisions about what thoughts to keep in our minds and what thoughts to get rid of. And all those little decisions start to build up our sense of control, our sense of power over what we can control.

I just coached a woman today. She and her husband were both laid off from their jobs and she was in a really negative mind state. And she was thinking thoughts like, "I'm stupid. I'm not good enough. I'm a dunce. No one likes me. No one's going to hire me. This is never going to work."

And what I said to her was, "You need to clean that up aggressively." You need to get rid of the garbage that smells in that drawer, right? This is not something that you want to continuously be used to and that those are the thoughts that are in your mind that are berating and self-loathing and negative. You need to literally throw them away and do not let them be believed or thought of consciously again.

A thought like you are stupid is not allowed. It's just like you wouldn't allow the trash in your house to overflow all over the kitchen and pretend like it wasn't there. The same thing is true with our minds. And if you feel like you're having a really hard time with thought work and putting your thoughts down and organizing them, pick a drawer. Pick an area. Take all of your emotion and put it into the organization of that area.

Ep #314: What You Can Control

And when you feel the sense of relief and the small sense of control that comes from being able to organize that one area, you'll be in a much better place to then do your thought downloads.

One of the quotes that was pulled out here on page 19, it says it's truly a choice what you keep in your brain. It's truly a choice what you keep in your home, what you purchase. It's completely your choice. You have so much more control than you think that you have.

On page 23 I say, your house organization – the two main places you reside are your brain, internal, and in your house, external. Your house is usually a direct reflection of your brain. When I meet clients who are overwhelmed and stressed out their homes show it. When I work with clients who are living in an unconscious way, there seems to be tons of hidden corners in their homes filled with unusable stuff.

I want you to think about your house right now. Is it organized? Can you find things? Do you know what you have? When is the last time you really did a thorough examination? Think about the garage, the closets, the attic, the storage areas, the cabinets, underneath all the sinks. Are you feeling overwhelmed right now? Pay attention to that. It truly does matter.

I want to help you have a house where every single thing serves you. You want it there and you like your reason. It serves you and your family members. It's current; the best version of it for you. There's nothing in your home that you have to keep; nothing. You don't have to keep that blanket your grandma knitted you when you were five. Keeping it doesn't mean anything. It doesn't make it valuable. It doesn't make you love her more. It doesn't make your memory better. Things aren't people Things aren't love.

And I keep going and I talk about how all of the things in our lives make us feel cluttered and overwhelmed and disorganized. And I talk about how that's the same with our brains.

Ep #314: What You Can Control

So, I really want to encourage you, those of you who are feeling completely out of control, to work through that entire workbook and to clean all of that up. And I go through, in detail, how exactly to do it.

But for now, and for those of you who maybe aren't in Scholars and you just want a tip, instead of sitting in front of the news and instead of going into the pantry, pick one area, organize it, sit down and organize your brain and notice how different you feel. There's what you can control, and that's what you should focus on.

Make decisions. Feel the power of those decisions, and come out on the other side of the idea that we have no control right now. We both don't have control and we do have control. And we want to make sure we're giving equal play to those.

Please enjoy organizing over the next week and I'll talk to you next week. Take care. Bye.

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