

Ep #329: Change Your Life or Your Feelings?



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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 329.

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. I'm excited to talk to you today about a question and I think a confusion that is pretty common. So I first want to start off and let you know that there are lots of ways to use the Model to change your life. And there's lots of ways to misuse the Model and to use the Model as a weapon against yourself to perpetuate belief systems that hurt yourself.

And it's amazing how we, as humans, we're very clever. Our brains are very clever. How good we get at creating ways to literally hold ourselves down from our own capability, from our own capacity, from our own abilities to really change our lives.

And one of the ways that I want to make sure that you're not doing this, and it's very clear on how to use your Model is the difference between changing your life or changing your feelings about your life. And how often important it is to do both.

So a lot of times, what'll happen when we get into a coaching situation is someone will come to us and say there's this thing in my life that isn't working. It's a job or a relationship or a behavior, a way of eating, or a result, financially, something. So a client will come to us and say, hey, this thing isn't working.

And it's very commonplace for us to believe that okay, the way to solve this thing in my world that isn't working is to stop doing the thing in the world, or to change the thing in the world in order for me to have a life that works. And oftentimes, this actually is the case. This is - we often say, hey man, if you can change the C, change it. We're all about changing the C, the circumstance.

Ep #329: Change Your Life or Your Feelings?

But I always want my clients to consider the circumstance and their Model around the circumstance before they make any changes. Because often, what happens, there's two things that happen if you try and change your life before you understand your Models.

The first thing that can happen is that you change your life and you eliminate something that's stressing you out or causing you pain or maybe it's even abuse, a challenging situation, whatever. You change it. And it changes for the better, but because you hadn't done that original Model and didn't really understand how to process your feelings all the way through from that original thing, you take that unprocessed emotion with you.

So let's use the example maybe of a job. Let's say you're in a job that's really stressful, your boss is obnoxious, causing you all sorts of pain and trouble. This is just a hypothetical situation. And you decide enough is enough and you quit that job, and you go to another job.

Well remember, that original job had its own Model. So the original job would just have job or career in the C line, and then it would have your thoughts about that job, and then it would have your feelings about it.

Now listen, just because you're causing your own feelings with your own thinking doesn't mean that you shouldn't be doing that. So here's one of the places where I think people get confused about this. They think that if they're in a situation that's causing them to feel pain, then they should just change their thoughts about that situation, since all pain comes from our thinking.

And this is not true and I have never said that that's what you should do, to stay in a situation you don't want to be in. But what I do say is when you're in that situation, when you're originally in that situation, you want to understand what your thoughts are about it and you want to decide if those are thoughts you want to have.

Ep #329: Change Your Life or Your Feelings?

So for example, let's say your boss yells at you every single day. And the thought that you have about that is he shouldn't yell, this is abusive. And you feel abused, right? You feel scared maybe. And when you look at that Model, the goal there is not to change that thought really quick. The goal is to understand the Model and understand how is my thinking, how is this situation, how is my feeling, what actions am I taking, is this a Model that I want to continue to live within?

And one of the things that I always recommend is that you make sure you evaluate your situation and if you are going to make a change, just make sure you really like your reason. So in this situation, the Model is the boss is yelling at you, that's your C line. Your T line is this is abusive, he shouldn't be doing this. And your feeling is abused and scared and maybe frustrated.

And the action that you want to take from that is a decision that you get to make. And when you're scared and frustrated, typically, most of us when we're feeling that way don't produce a high level of work, which of course, creates more situations that could possibly create results that would make you not perform at your highest level, which would of course set up situations where the boss would have more reason to yell at you.

But you can stay in that situation and recognize that you have a decision to make about what you want to think. Most people in this situation would not want to change the way they think about that circumstance. When they're in a situation where someone's yelling at them, they want to believe that's not okay when someone's yelling at them.

Most of us do not want to change the thought to this is totally fine, go ahead and yell at me every day. No, not at all. So in that situation, most of us would look at our thinking and say no, I don't want to change my thinking about this, I don't want to find a way to be happy when someone's yelling at me in this situation. I want to make the decision to leave.

Ep #329: Change Your Life or Your Feelings?

So if you really want to understand your Model in that situation, you're going to see that you have a lot of emotion that's happening. Fear, frustration, feeling abused. Those are emotions that you want to make sure you acknowledge and process through.

Now, you may change that situation before you have a chance to process them through, and this is the number one mistake I see people making. They'll leave a "terrible" situation without processing the emotion from that original Model.

So we'll look at the world and we'll say this is my boss's fault, he's the one that's causing all this emotion, and therefore, if I remove my boss from this situation, then I will no longer have this emotion and therefore, that Model will no longer be relevant. But that's not what happens.

Many of the times we change our circumstance and we take that unprocessed emotion with us to the next circumstance. And so we're already on guard, we're already resisting emotion, we're already holding unprocessed emotions in our bodies when we go into the next situation, which if you're going into the next situation with an unprocessed emotion and you're feeling scared and you're feeling frustrated and you're feeling abused, you're going to show up very differently than if you were showing up to that situation having processed through that emotion.

So the number one mistake that I see people making - there's two, but the first one is changing the circumstance without processing the emotion. So we need to process the emotion, we need to acknowledge our part in every situation that we're in because if you're in a situation with someone who's abusing you or someone who's not being kind to you or in a situation that's causing you a lot of stress because of the way that you're thinking about it, it may be in your best interest to change that circumstance and to do something different.

But you must first understand the thoughts that are causing your feelings and how to process through that emotion before you make a decision to try

Ep #329: Change Your Life or Your Feelings?

to start a new situation without unprocessed emotions. Because you can think about this; if you're consistently having the same situation show up in your life, you're consistently attracting bosses that abuse you and that put you in a situation where you're feeling stressed, frustrated, and scared, one of the reasons may be because you're not processing emotion, you're not recognizing your own Models. You're not owning your own power in those situations to be able to process that emotion through.

And one of the reasons why that is so important is you have to understand how much power you have within your own mind. Not only to make decisions to stay or to leave, but also to make decision on how much you will be affected by other people's behavior, how much you will take it on, how much you will ignore your own emotion, how much you won't process it through.

Those are really important things for you to recognize. So a way that people might misuse the Model in that situation where they have an abusive boss, they may say, "Oh, I can feel good because of the way that I think, therefore, I should stay in this situation and just change the way that I think and find a way to be happy in this situation."

As if being happy in all situations are the goal. And a better question to ask yourself is is this a situation I want to be happy in? Do I want to make myself feel better about this situation honestly, or do I want to change it?

Most people when confronted with a situation like that and looking at it honestly and evaluating all of their thoughts will most likely make a decision to change something. And they will like their reason.

And the only thing I want to warn you against is make sure when you're changing your life that you also process the emotion through before you start your next circumstance. Process it all the way through. Do not take that emotion, do not take that layer of thinking with you.

The second mistake is kind of the alternative. So it's changing your life versus changing your feelings. So the second mistake I see people doing a

Ep #329: Change Your Life or Your Feelings?

lot, this is before they really have the Model, is they start just trying to change circumstances in order to change how they feel.

They haven't really understood how much their thinking affects how they feel, and so they keep trying to change the external world in order to change their internal world. I used to do this all the time in terms of changing where I was living and changing who I was talking to and changing the kind of work I was doing and changing all of my inputs and the books I was reading.

I kept trying to change the world externally in order to feel better. I didn't understand that I didn't have to change a circumstance. I didn't have to change a situation in order to feel better. So I could be in a situation that if I really evaluated it, was a positive situation.

I was being treated fairly, I was being treated well, I had a good kind of environment that I was in, and yet I was still feeling frustrated or still feeling sad or anxious. And so I always was looking outside of me. What is it out there? What circumstance is causing this emotion right now?

I just want to keep changing the circumstances. Well of course, I kept taking the emotion with me because I kept taking the thoughts with me wherever I was going. I didn't recognize that the reason I was feeling anxious and upset was because of the way that I was thinking about myself and the way that I was thinking about circumstances.

And because I wasn't recognizing that thought line, I just kept trying to change everything in the world. And so I decided that I was going to stay longer in situations and find ways to be happy in situations, as long as they weren't harming me, as long as they weren't abusive, as long as they weren't unhealthy, I was going to stay in those situations that I felt were intolerable and understand what was going on in my mind.

And what I ended up being able to do was find a way to be happy in almost every situation. And so I stopped trying to change everything outside of me in order to feel better. And so I hear this a lot with my clients. They'll say,

Ep #329: Change Your Life or Your Feelings?

“Well, I just needed a new husband or a new house or a new job or a new friend, and so I just deleted all those other things and tried to replace them and put different things in their place and I’m not finding a way where that’s really working.”

One of the challenges is that sometimes we change a circumstance that does change our thoughts about the circumstance, and then we end up attributing the change in our life to the feeling changing. But we always need to acknowledge that if our feelings are changing is because what we’re thinking is changing.

And that doesn’t mean that we stay in situations and change our thinking in order to be happy. There are situations that we don’t want to be happy in. That was mistake number one. So once we’ve recognized, wait, this is a situation that I could be and maybe should be happy in, I’m going to stay here long enough to do the work on finding a way to be happy while I’m here.

Okay, so those are our two situations where we are making mistakes with the Model, where we are changing situations but not acknowledging the Model causing the feeling, and so we’re not processing our emotions all the way through even though we’re in a new circumstance. That’s problem number one.

And problem number two is we keep changing the circumstance in order to change our feelings, without acknowledging that it’s our thinking causing our feelings. So once you understand those two challenges and mistakes that are made with the Model, then the question becomes should I change how I’m feeling in this situation, or do I need to change the situation altogether?

And my answer will be both. Always both. I want you to understand that you can change your feeling if you want. If you don’t want to, you just need to process that feeling and then make a decision to change the circumstance.

Ep #329: Change Your Life or Your Feelings?

If it's a situation that you want to stay in, you can change the way you're thinking about that situation to acknowledge and show yourself how much power you have with your own thinking, and to recognize that you can be happy in a situation if you choose to be. Not saying you should choose to be. I just want you to recognize that you can.

Now, people will say to me, "Okay, so I've found a way to be happy in this situation. I see the power of my mind in this situation. Now, should I change the situation or not?" And here's kind of my criteria for how I decide whether to change a situation when I've taken back all my power and I've recognized my thoughts create my feelings, and then I have a choice in what I want to think in any situation.

Any situation that's abusive, unhealthy, not for my highest good, I just change. I process the emotion and I change it. In situations where I've found a way to be happy in a situation, I simply ask myself, do I want to stay or do I want to go? As it applies to any situation.

And oftentimes, what I'll recognize is that many situations require a lot of thought work to stay in. Yes, I can be happy in that situation, but I have to do so much thought work in order to be happy in that situation that I choose not to do it.

And what that does is it gives me my power back to recognize I can go and be anywhere and be happy in any situation that I go into, and I notice that some situations require me to do less thought work than other situations. And sometimes, I think the thought work is going to be a lot, and it's just a simple change.

And this is where you have to kind of unwind the belief systems that we've been taught our whole lives, that if you could be happy somewhere, why would you ever leave? Why would you ever change? If you can be happy, just be happy.

I was talking to my son recently about this. I was telling him about how I used to work at Nordstrom and I used to sell jewelry. And it wasn't a job

Ep #329: Change Your Life or Your Feelings?

that I really wanted to do for a career, but I was really good at it and I was like, the top salesperson.

And I was able to be happy there, but I just didn't want that job. I just didn't want to be there. It's not something that I wanted to do, even though I could be happy there, even though I made really good money there, I just wanted to do something else with my time and with my life.

And so I think that was the big first decision that I made where it was like, yeah, I can be happy, and yes, I can make great money, and no, I just don't want this job. And I've heard from a lot of you that you've done thought work in situations where you've thought the situation was healthy and good enough to make an effort to be happy in that situation, and many of you have decided yes, it was so powerful for me to understand how much responsibility I had for my own happiness in that situation, and still I decided to leave.

And what that did is it just left me empowered that no matter where I was going to go, I knew I'd be able to be happy in other situations as well because I'd already practiced it. But even more of you have told me that situations that you thought were unsavable, situations that you thought were unlivable, careers that you thought you couldn't stay in, once you've done thought work within them and taken back your responsibility for your happiness and stopped relying on other people for it, have been able to stay in jobs and are very glad that you've stayed in jobs and relationships and in friendships and in houses and in cities in situations that you had one time thought were intolerable. But now because of thought work, have been able to have more longevity in those situations in ways that have served you.

So this is the order that I recommend. I recommend that you do, whatever situation you are in, do your Model, which means understand, what is the situation, what are your thoughts about the situation, what are your feelings about the situation, what do you do when you have those feelings, and what is the result that you're creating.

Ep #329: Change Your Life or Your Feelings?

Is that a Model that you want to have based on the situation that you're in? Does the thought serve you in that situation? Notice, I didn't ask you if the thought made you happy or if it made you feel good. I asked you if the thought was conscious and it served you in that situation.

For example, someone's abusing you and the thought is this is not okay with me, this is painful and terrible. That is a thought that doesn't feel good, but it's a thought that serves you in that situation. So you're going to keep it.

And so once you've really understood your Model and understood the emotion that needs to be processed and needs to be felt and needs to be acknowledged, then you can decide to either change your circumstance and go to a different situation, or you can change your thinking and stay in that situation.

So it's not a matter of should I change my life or how I feel about my life. That's the wrong question. The question is what is the order that I do it in. Understand what's causing your emotion, understand the Model that's perpetuating that emotion, feel that emotion, and then decide if you want to change the circumstance or your thought in that situation.

You want to leave the situation on purpose because you really like your reason, or do you want to stay long enough to change your thoughts and process a new emotion before and if you decide to leave.

This is the work of the Model. The goal is not to feel better. The goal is to feel. To understand. To bring consciousness and awareness to your brain, to your life, to your emotions, to your behaviors. We need to bring that to the conscious level so we can understand.

And then once we understand, then we can process emotion. And once we process our emotions, we're going to be in a much better place to be able to make decisions. Remember, decisions are where all of our power is.

Ep #329: Change Your Life or Your Feelings?

And when we decide to change the way we think, we change the way we feel, which means we change what we do. That is the ingredients. That's like the trifecta of creating the results you want. Thought, feeling, action equals results.

So when you look at your life and you see the results that you're producing based on the way you're thinking, feeling, and doing, you need to look and understand, wait, how much of this am I blaming on external things, and how much of it do I want to take back under my own responsibility so I can start making sure that the results that I'm producing, I'm producing on purpose and consciously because those are things that I want to have in my life, those are things that I want to be creating.

If you hear yourself saying I just don't have the results I want and the reason why is external reason, external reason, external reason, blame someone out there, someone this, then you know that you have work to do. Because you aren't using the power that you have to make those decisions, to process those emotions, to become aware of your own thinking in order to change it in a way that changes your results.

The only way - hear me. The only way to change the results you're getting in your life is to change your thinking. You may think the way to change the results in your life is to change the world or to change other people or to change situations. But that's not how it works.

You don't have to change the world in order to change your results. You only need to change how you're thinking. And deciding what to think on purpose consciously, understanding that it's not just you observing the world, it's you deciding how you want to observe the world with your mind that will determine the results that you create.

Thoughts are optional. The goal is not to be happy all of the time. If you wanted to be happy all of the time, you would have to be happy in a world that gives you many reasons not to be happy. You would have to be happy

Ep #329: Change Your Life or Your Feelings?

about all the things that currently make you unhappy, which would make you a very unbalanced person.

Not to mention kind of weird. If you're happy about terrible things, it's kind of weird. Oh, this is great, everything's so great all the time. That is not the goal. But the goal is to be conscious. The goal is to decide to look inside your brain and understand your brain and how it affects your feelings, and then and only then to decide to make a change once you've processed your emotion.

Make sure you're using the Model for good, and what that means is you are noticing that the world is 50/50, noticing that your emotional life is 50/50, and paying attention to what your brain is doing so you can then make any adjustments you want to change your life and your feelings at the same time.

I hope this was helpful for you. Make sure you're using the Model correctly, my friends, and have a beautiful week. I'll talk to you soon.

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