

## Ep #331: Good AND Bad



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With Your Host

**Brooke Castillo**

## Ep #331: Good AND Bad

You are listening to *The Life Coach School Podcast* with Brooke Castillo, episode number 331.

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.

Welcome to the podcast, my friends. Are you ready for this one? I have been coaching so many of you on this in Scholars. This has been a topic that is coming up over and over again and people are struggling with it, but also having life-altering changes when they get it.

I did a podcast, I think it was several weeks ago now, called All or Nothing Thinking, that is very similar to some of the concepts that I'm going to talk about today. But I wanted to talk about it kind of from a different angle, so that you can apply it not just to your thinking, but also to your relationship with yourself and your relationships with other people.

When we think about the world, we are taught to think that things are good or things are bad. There are the good guys and the bad guys. There's good things and there's bad things. And much of what we are taught and much of what the messaging is that we get is that the goal is to get rid of all the bad. The goal is for the good guys to defeat and kill all the bad guys, and then the good guys will live happily ever after.

These are the messages we get. This is what we're taught. And it's a very kind of juvenile way to look at the world, and yet most of us, including me, of course, think about the world in this way. We have this kind of utopian idea of happily ever after, we're going to get to the place where there's only good things and good people and goodness left.

And most importantly, so many of you are trying to be 100% good and virtuous and you have no tolerance for any part of you that isn't because you have made the goal perfection. You have made the goal a perfect world, to be a perfect world. And you've made the goal to be a perfect person.

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Many of you don't even realize that you're doing this. So, I want to help you by sharing how I deal with this in my own self. And it's really worked in a way that has changed my life so tremendously that I think it will be valuable for many of you to hear.

You've already heard me say, it's really important to understand that human beings are not, nor will they ever be, perfect in the way that they won't have any flaws or won't have anything wrong with them. Now, you can say they're perfect in their imperfection, but most of you aren't thinking about it that way.

The other thing that I want to tell you is that the world isn't perfect. Humans aren't perfect. And humanity isn't fair. And it's not going to ever be fair. Sometimes, babies are going to die. Sometimes, young kids are going to get cancer. There will be accidents. There are things that happen in the world that we can't control that are not fair.

And when we start trying to believe that the world should be fair and we should be very upset when it's not, we're going to be miserable a lot of the time. It doesn't mean that we don't work to make our lives better. It doesn't mean that we don't work to make the world better. But when we have an intolerance for anything less than perfection, we are exhausted and miserable and upset way, way, way too much of the time.

So, what I teach and what I do in my own life is that I accept the 50-50 of life and instead of using, "Or," I use, "And." Human beings are not good or bad. Human beings are good and bad. The world is not good or bad. The world is good and bad, right and wrong, fair and unfair, better and worse. It's "And" that gives us some relief.

So, I was coaching a woman today and she was talking about her sister and she was talking about COVID and she was talking about how she feels like she's right about how we should be looking at COVID, how we should be acting, what we should be worried about, what we should be thinking.

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And here sister had an alternative view on COVID and they couldn't agree. And because my client had this idea that she was right and her sister was wrong, the only way for her to feel connected to her sister is if she brought her sister over to the right, quote unquote, side. And then they could both be right together and then they could feel connected.

So, very well-intended. She went after her sister to convince her sister to think the way that she was thinking. This did not go well. Her sister hung up on her and she hasn't talked to her sister since. And I told her, I said, "It's because you're using or. You're saying you're either right or wrong," so of course, her sister was wrong and she was right.

What I said to her was, "Hey, here's something to consider. Maybe you're right and wrong, and your sister is right and wrong. Maybe you're both both." And when we can look at ourselves that way, notice how it changes how we feel. Notice how it opens us up and allows us to listen? "Where may I be wrong and where may she be right?"

And what's so interesting about it is when we allow ourselves to be right and wrong and we don't judge ourselves, we feel better. We feel more connected. We feel like we can understand the alternative view.

So, I have many conversations with my girlfriend Kris and we disagree on a lot of things, which is very fun. I love that about our relationship. And we make fun of each other a lot, which has us laughing hysterically a lot of the time.

And one of the things that – I think I've told you all this before – is I say, "Listen, if you're going to listen to one news channel, make sure you listen to the other one for just as much time." Right, so if you're going to listen to CNN, then you've got to go listen to Fox news, or you've got to read the alternative argument.

And she's like, "Yeah, I'm not going to do that." It's like a complete intolerance to hearing any view that isn't within her own conviction. And, of course, that's all of our choice. We can be so knowing that we're right. But

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just notice how that intolerance for even listening to someone else's viewpoint, to even understanding where they might be coming from leaves us with zero authority in the conversation.

I'm always, as a coach, trying to understand where people's pain comes from, where people's hate comes from, where people's violent actions come from. I want to understand the source of what's going on in someone's mind.

So, I spend a lot of time actually thinking about villains. I spend a lot of time thinking about convicted criminals. And it really helps me to do this because if I consider people in prison as good and bad, as people who have committed multiple atrocities against humankind as both good and bad, I feel less tension. I feel less afraid. And it can help me to understand something so severe. It helps me understand my own humanity.

And so, when I think about, like, a sociopath or I think about a serial killer, I challenge my brain to find what is good. Is there anything good about that person? Or do we just write that person off completely? Or is there something I can find?

And for me, many times, I think about it in terms of mental illness or what has gone wrong in that person's brain that causes them to do that. And it's crazy, but even when I think about it that way, that compulsion that someone may have to kill another human being or to hate another human being or to hurt another human being, I can't understand it to that degree or that level in terms of murdering or being violent with someone. But I can understand compulsion and I can understand mental illness somewhat and I can understand the need to be in control when I feel so out of control.

And it helps me have more compassion for all of humanity. It helps me back up from being within the tight group of humans that I'm surrounding myself and allows me to step back and ask why. Why did that person kill that other person? Why did that person go to jail? Why did that person

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commit the crime? Instead of judging them for what they've done, understanding it, good and bad, right and wrong.

Where does it come from? Where does violence come from? Where does compulsion – when you are fascinated, like I am, with human behavior, what you understand in the context of the model is that there is thought patterning and emotion that leads to those behaviors. And when we can understand that, we can understand humanity on such a deeper level.

The more we understand humanity, the more we can understand ourselves because we are human. I've done quite a few podcasts on this recently where we talk about what it is like to disagree with someone, what is it like to make a mistake, to get it wrong, to do something, quote unquote bad? What is it like to be part of the human experience, to whatever degree we are?

So, one of the steps there is to look inside of ourselves and to understand that as long as we're walking on this Earth, there will be negativity within us. There will be bad parts within us. There will be ugliness within us. There will be discomfort and there will be pain.

This does not mean there's something wrong with us. This means that we are humans. This does not mean we need to desperately change the world so it can be perfect so we don't ever have negativity. As we walk this Earth, we understand, "Okay, wait, this is part of the deal. And I will take action and I will improve what I can improve. But I'll do it from a place of possibility and love and excitement and abundance and not from the resistance to the reality of pain and discomfort that is part of being a human being."

Because as we improve more things within ourselves and within the world, we will have additional challenges. We will have further obstacles that we will need to overcome. And when you approach your life as if that's how it's supposed to be, you just have a much better time.

If I sit around and think about how unfair it is, I feel miserable. When I look at, you know, some people have many more opportunities as some other

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people – it's kind of fascinating for me to look at that because I see so many people with so many opportunities that are so miserable. They're suffering so much. Good and bad, right?

What is the experience in the human brain is what will determine what your life is? And if you don't look within that own brain of yours to make the changes that you want to make, to take the power back – so, right, life isn't fair, and now what? Now what? What am I going to do?

Here's what I want to recommend. And this is really important. The goal isn't to be happy all of the time. I don't want you to be happy about life not being fair. I don't want you to have to be happy about getting screwed over by your boss or getting fired or someone treating you terribly. That's that whole toxic positivity where we have to be happy about everything, we just pretend like there's no negative emotion and everything's great.

That is mental illness. That is not healthy. We need to acknowledge our feelings. We need to process the parts of our life that we don't think are fair, where we think we've been done wrong, and where we've certainly been done wrong, the horrific things in the world. And then what? Where do we go? Good and bad.

I often think of my life this way. And it's just a fairytale that I tell myself. It's just a concept that I made up. But it serves me and you may want to borrow it. I had a lot of crap happen to me when I was kid, as a little kid. Just a lot of not good stuff. And I often want to rail against that and be mad about that. I especially did when I was younger.

And then I realized, "Wait, oh, good and bad." Right? Now, we'll balance that out. That will change. All of that bad needs to be balanced out with all of the good I'm now about to get and I'm about to do. We've got to balance out my life.

And that's up to me. That's a choice I get to make. And that worked for me, my friends. That worked. Instead of feeling like I was going to have a great life in spite of what happened to me, it was all part of it. It was all part of the

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balance of my life. It was all part of the imperfection perfection of my life, the good and the bad of my life.

When you look at yourself and you understand that you're good and bad and you can love yourself madly and you are 100% worthy within that good and bad, by design, that you don't need to be virtuous all the time in order to love yourself and feel like you're worthy, that's when you start having compassion for other people as well, when you stop writing people off, when you stop looking at people as only bad.

When I'm working with clients, sometimes, what I'll have them do is notice their own prejudice against people. And this is a prejudgment that they've made, "That person's dumb. That person's stupid. That person's bad. That person's wrong."

It seems like it's often family members, unfortunately, or politicians that we do this with. So, what I have you imagine that that person that you thin is always wrong and always bad and always stupid imagine someone you love and respect saying the exact same thing that person just said.

Notice how you would hear it differently. Notice how you would make it mean something different. Notice how it's not actually the circumstance but it's what you're bringing to it, the confirmation bias you're creating based on your prejudgment of that person.

Now, listen, it doesn't mean that you can't do that. Of course, you can. That is your choice. But if you are seeing people, other humans, as one-dimensional, you are missing half of life. You are missing half of the experience of being alive and appreciating other human beings.

You're labeling that person as good or bad. If you label them as good, you're only going to see the good in them. If you're labeling them as bad, you're only going to see the bad in them. You're not going to see the full dimension, the full experience of who they are.

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And here's what's a shame about that for so many of you, is that you are afraid to love people if they've done something bad because you've made them bad. But I want to give you an invitation to be willing to love humans who are good and bad. They are not the worst thing that they've done. You can love them. You can see their goodness, even if they've done a horrible thing. And that applies to you too.

So many of you think that you're so horrible and that it means you're wrong and that you're bad and that you need to go away or that you need to hide. No, I agree with you that you have all that horribleness in you. I agree with you and I love you for it. You're a human being.

So many of you gave self-loathing and hate and anger and frustration and you think that that means that you're a bad person. It just means that you're human. But you also have beauty and love and you're gorgeous and amazing and worthy. You're all of those things together. Use the "And," not the "Or."

And then right now, think about the person that you just can't stand, that person that just grates on your nerve, that you can't even hear a word they say, everything that comes out of their mouth you think is stupid and wrong and bad. And put the "And" there. Find some goodness there. Find what is good.

And if you resist it, if you feel yourself resisting finding the good in other human beings, just notice that. Notice how that feels to you. Notice what you might be missing. What if they are right and wrong and you are right and wrong? It's not that they're wrong and you're right. What if it's both?

What are you missing when you don't allow someone else to speak their mind or hear their side or understand why they may be coming from where they're coming from? Why are they doing that thing that you think is bad? Where is the good within them? Explore it. Be willing.

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And if you're afraid to see the good in other people, ask yourself why. See if there's some underlying reason that you might want to process with yourself.

When you try to be good and perfect all of the time, you are filled with shame. I know this because I talk to many, many, many of you. You think that you're showing up perfectly for the world. You think you're showing up virtuously and good for the world. But inside, you feel horrible because you know there's still darkness and ugliness in there. You're afraid someone might see it. Spoiler alert, I see it if you're a human. I see it and it's okay you're a human being. Stop fighting it and hiding it and avoiding it, and feel it.

I think that the tragedy comes when we suppress our ugly emotions, when we push them away, when we buffer them away, and then they explode, oftentimes in violence. When we allow them to be there, when we allow the experience of negativity to be there as part of the experience of being human, it dissipates so much more easily because we're able to allow it to be there without judging it or pushing it away.

You can be a loving person who does bad things sometimes. You can love yourself and hate yourself, all within the same lifetime. Trust me. And think about your relationships. Think about all the people you know. You can think of one good thing, one bad thing. And if you have someone in your life that you think is all good all the time, you're missing half of them.

Ask them about the part of them that isn't that. Sometimes, that's the most interesting part. Are you missing half of yourself because you're trying to be perfect all the time and put on this show? Or are you admitting part of you is not so great, and it's okay?

One of the most important pieces of understanding that you are good and bad and right and wrong and the other person is good and bad and right and wrong is listening. You are going to be so much more humble and open to listening.

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When I think I'm right, when I get my arrogance involved, when I get convicted in my own rightness, I can't hear what you're saying because I can only hear what I'm right about. I've no tolerance to hear your opinion. But when I'm like, "Wait, if I'm right and wrong and they're right and wrong, what am I missing? What can I hear?"

I've been doing this a lot lately, like really listening to different perspectives on different things, different ideas. And I purposefully seek out conflicting ideas, like, extremely conflicting different ideas, and listen to them. And then, from that place, I tend to find a place usually more in the middle on most things.

And even when I'm pretty extreme in my convictions, even for my human rights convictions, I'm pretty extreme in those, I can still understand where other people are coming from. I can still understand why they might be afraid or they may not understand or they may not get it. I can understand, so I can hear them. And because I can hear them, I can respect them. And because I can respect them, they can often hear me too. And that's what brings us together and lets us connect.

My goal as your coach is to help you connect mostly with yourself. My dream is that you understand your own worthiness, that you understand that you are 100% worthy, even in your imperfection, even in the lack of fairness in the world, even in your shortcomings, your ugliness, your mistakes, all of it.

I love your ugliness as much as I love your beauty. I want you to feel that way towards you too. Because when we do that, when we do this work on ourselves, when we allow ourselves to feel the ugly feelings, to feel and process our hate and shame and pain and blame and all of it, when we can go all the way through it and then decide from there to take our power back, from there, that's when we have the most powerfully connected people.

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And yes, then we can change the world. But here's the spoiler again. We're going to change the world and make it better, and we're also going to make it worse at the same time. That 50-50 I going to follow us. The themes will change. Some things will get better. Other things will get worse. But that is the game of life. That is the process of humanity.

And I'm just going to love all of it as hard as I can for the time that I'm here. I invite you to do the same. Have a beautiful week, everyone. Talk to you soon. Bye-bye.

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