

## Ep #338: When You Decide to Leave



### Full Episode Transcript

With Your Host

**Brooke Castillo**

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You are listening to *The Life Coach School Podcast* with Brooke Castillo, episode number 338.

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 am excited to talk to you today about when you decide to leave. For some reason, this has been such a big topic recently for so many of my students, so many of my friends, so many of my colleagues. And I wanted to address it.

I haven't ever done a podcast on it. I talk about it a lot in Scholars, but I wanted to do a podcast on it because I think sometimes there's some confusion about some of my teachings. And, as most of you know, I teach the concept of get happy before you leave. Don't leave a situation in order to be happy, because happiness is something that happens inside of your brain and you want to be the one in control of it. You don't want to be changing circumstances.

So, as most of you know, late last year, I decided with my husband Chris, we decided to change our relationship. We decided to no longer be business partners and not to continue pursuing our romantic relationship. And we are very committed as parents and very committed as very good friends and very committed to each other as family. But we changed our relationship.

We left it, in a sense, in terms of we left being business partners and we left being romantically involved with each other. And it was such a beautiful thing that we were able to do because neither one of us left because we hated each other or we were unhappy or we were trying to fix something.

I also have been working really closely with a friend of mine who has left her job and left her business and done that in such a beautiful way, where she was able to leave her career, literally, that was her business and her

## Ep #338: When You Decide to Leave

job, and do it in such a loving way that it fortified her instead of diminishing her.

And the other example that I have of that is some of my friends who have decided – I actually have one friend who decided to leave her boyfriend and did that in such a beautifully gorgeous way. I want to talk about that a little bit. And then some other friends of mine who are in the process of deciding whether or not to leave something.

And I think a lot of times, we tend to believe that when things end, that somehow there's a failure there, that somehow we aren't doing it right, or if a business doesn't last or if a marriage doesn't last in the same form, that somehow it wasn't a success.

And so, first and foremost, I think it's important for us to understand that relationships and jobs and careers and even places that we live can end and they can end in the form that they were in and still be a tremendous success and still be complete and still be amazing. And not having the sense – so many of my clients have this sense that you have to keep going at something in order for it to be successful and in order for you not to be a failure.

So, I want to address and use some of these examples as we're going through and talking about how to decide when to leave something. So, first, I want to talk about the concept that I teach and I've taught for a long time, which has been be happy before you leave. Find your own happiness before you leave. And to address the idea, well, if you're happy, why would you leave?

If everything's great, why would you leave something? And my answer has always been, because you want to. This is your life. You get to decide what you want to do with it. The decisions are yours. It's where all your power is. And the presupposition that we have to be unhappy in order to change something perpetuates this idea that we just change our circumstances to

## Ep #338: When You Decide to Leave

be happy and that we just keep having to chase happiness by changing our circumstances.

So, one of the ways that you'll know if you're doing this – and I've taught this extensively – is that you will be in a hurry. If you are unhappy at a job, in a marriage, in a business partnership, in a career, in a house, in anything and you feel a sense of urgency to change that so you can be happier, in my opinion, you haven't done your work yet.

When you can leave something slowly and with love and with caring and with communication, you can do that in a way that honors the people that are associated with you, the commitments that you've made to them, to open up a dialogue, to not have to destroy something before you leave it.

This is one of the things that I have seen happen with lots of people, actually. There's this abruptness to changing and there's this sense that in order for something to change, there has to be destruction.

So, let's use the example of a marriage. I've seen a lot of my clients and colleagues do this, where they'll end up lying to each other and cheating on each other and treating each other terribly so then they have kind of an excuse to leave the marriage and try to find happiness somewhere and have an explanation as to why they're justified to leaving the relationship or leaving the job.

And one of the things that I want to offer to all of you is that you don't have to justify your decisions to anyone. That being said, I think it's really important, when you're making decisions that affect other people and change your life, that you're able to have a sense of calm and peace and love around those decisions. And if you aren't, my suggestion is that you have work to do.

So, let's say you find yourself wanting to change something, wanting to leave something, wanting to quit something. My suggestion first would be to breathe. The only thing you're in a hurry about is to get out of pain. And

## Ep #338: When You Decide to Leave

you don't need to change any kind of circumstance in order to get out of pain. You can just change the way you're thinking about something.

So, in terms of a relationship, if you start feeling a sense of dissatisfaction or you start feeling some incompatibility or you feel like something isn't working there, or you just feel unhappy in your relationship, it's very normal to have the inclination to want to leave, to want to escape, to want to get rid of that thing that is, quote unquote the source, of your unhappiness.

And I've experienced this many times, in many relationships. And I was just talking to a girlfriend about this and she was saying, "Well, how do you know when you should stay and work on the relationship or when you should leave?" And what I told her, I said that's the wrong question.

The question is, how do you know if you should stay and work on your mind, or if you're ready to leave? And one of the best indicators is there's no rush. You can tell the truth. You can have an open dialogue. You can have an open communication. You feel good about it. You don't have fear and shame around it because you've processed the work around it. So, that's step one. If you're in a hurry, slow down, take a breath.

I always recommend, if you're going to leave something, if you're going to change something, that you can do it with love. And if you can't do it with love, question why. And even if actually there's abuse involved, you can still love yourself through the issue. You can still love yourself fiercely.

And in most situations, you can love – when there's not abuse involved – you can love the situation. You can love what it's done for you. You can love the history of it. You can love the person. You can love your manager. You can love your coworkers. There can be love all around. You don't have to get to a space where there's anger and hate and all of these things. It's completely unnecessary. So, slow down. Find your way to love.

If you notice that the reason you're giving yourself for leaving – because remember, the advice that I always give, the guideline that I always give is, if you're going to leave or you're going to stay, just make sure you really

## Ep #338: When You Decide to Leave

like your reason. Make sure your reason isn't, "I'm trying to manipulate the outside world in order to be happier internally."

And if you really like your reason, you will feel solid and confident in your choice and you won't be in a hurry. You'll be able to pace yourself and feel stabilized by your decision instead of destabilized by your decision because you're able to communicate, you're able to have love, you're able to stay present.

So, let's use the example of my friend who left her business and her job, her career, doing what she was doing. She had committed 25 years to it. She had been doing it her whole life. People depended on her to do it. She had made lots of promises. She had made lots of commitments. She had offered, you know, employment opportunities. There was a lot that went into that relationship with all of her employees and with the business.

And she simply did not want to do it anymore. And this had been brewing for a while for her and she felt like – and I actually feel this sometimes too. I think all of us can relate – this desire to just run away and hide sometimes. And she never wanted to do that. But she felt like she had a lot of responsibilities, a lot of commitments, a lot of promises that she had made.

And so, she wanted to make sure that she was in a place where she wasn't trying to chase the dopamine hit of quitting and just being free from all of it. So, she put a plan together, a process together that was extensive and long and slow. And she went through and made sure that she was loving herself and it was the most loving decision for her. And then made the most loving decision for all of the other people involved and took it very slowly and calmly and listened to people and heard their emotions and felt her own emotions through the whole process.

I want to warn you, when you make decisions like this, people will be confused. They won't understand. Everything seems great, why are you leaving? You seem so happy in your relationship. Why are you changing it? You seem to happy in your job, why would you leave it?

## Ep #338: When You Decide to Leave

And you may get pushback from people around you, like this seems reckless or this is kind of out of the blue, or whatever. And people will have opinions because it's not typical to not be able to justify a very dangerous, significant, important reason as to why you're deciding to change something that is good.

And what's interesting about this is this is some of the work that I have to do with so many of my students who are running their own companies. There is often times where we have to leave strategies and we have to leave processes and we have to leave models of how we've run our company, we have to completely leave them behind, quit them, destroy them in order to go from good to great.

And it's hard to leave something that's working, even if it's metaphorically. It's hard to leave it because it seems like it's perfectly well-functioning, it's doing its job, it's successful. And, sometimes we have to say, "Yes, and we're going to let that go, that thing that is good go in order to have the next evolution, in order to have the next stage of growth for everyone involved.

And you need to remember that what is normal and what is standard and what is acceptable to the world is ordinary. And what is normal and acceptable to you may be extraordinary. And you don't have to explain or justify any decision that you want to make when you want to leave.

It's very important, when you make decisions – and this is something that I highly recommend for everyone – that you process the emotion of quitting or leaving or changing before you leave as much as possible.

So, a lot of times, when we're impulsive, we'll quit something or change something in the moment in order to get away quickly. And then we end up processing the emotion afterward. We end up going through the pain of the decision that we've already made after we've made the decision.

And what I want to recommend is that you make the decision out in the future. You say, "I'm going to quit my job in 90 days." Or, "I'm going to

## Ep #338: When You Decide to Leave

change my career or sell my business or leave my relationship or change the format of my relationship with someone. I'm going to do it in 90 days."

And as you've already made the decision, you've already committed to the timeframe, it gives you time and the people involved time to process the emotion of it before it actually happens. And I have found this to be the kindest way to go through the world.

Now, it doesn't mean that you won't have additional emotion after you actually move out of the company building or you move out of the house in terms of the relationship. It doesn't mean that you won't have additional emotions. But when you decide ahead of time to put the decision out there in the future a little bit, it gives you time to process.

And I know for me, processing emotion all the way through oftentimes comes in waves. And so, being able to allow a wave of it to come and process it through and then another one to process it through and to have really meaningful and beautiful conversations with the people involved as you're kind of letting go slowly can make it so it's so much easier to leave with love and growth and commitment.

There are so many times where I've made a decision in my company to either terminate an employee or the employee has made the decision to leave, where there's been a lot of notice and a lot of time. So, they're like, "I'm going to leave in 30 days," or I give them notice of 30 days when their contract will end. And so, it's like we have that 30 days to kind of process together and talk together and go through emotions together, so when that last day comes, there's nothing really left unsaid. We're able to go to that place together.

And I feel like all of the work that we do with the Model of being able to allow emotions makes it so we can do that. When you don't have the Model and you don't have a way to allow emotions and you make decisions that people don't know how to deal with the emotions with, there can be so



## Ep #338: When You Decide to Leave

many things left unsaid and so much love not exchanged that it can end up destroying a relationship.

Even when a relationship is fully complete, even when maybe you're never going to see that person again, it doesn't mean that you won't still be processing emotions of those relationships throughout your entire life. This has been true for relationships that have literally physically ended, meaning the person has passed away. And for people that are still members of my family, still involved in my life but that I don't talk to.

And so, being able to process emotion and have a complete relationship with someone because you aren't in such a hurry to escape them changes your life, literally, and changes your experience with the people around you.

I know for me, for my family, my immediate family, my relationship with Chris and my kids, there's nothing more important to me than loving them and supporting them. That is my priority. That is what's important to me.

It's also very important to me that I honor what's true and my growth and my evolvment. And being able to do both of those is absolutely possible and that's true with careers and that's true with moving and that's true with friendships. It's not either-or. You can have both priorities and you can be honest and caring and loving with all of the people involved.

So, I love the idea that you can have a good-bye, like a good goodbye, a good-bye. And my goal in life is always have all my goodbyes be good. I actually have experienced this so much more often since I've been the CEO of my company, since I've hired and fired and people have quit, there's been way more goodbyes than I've ever had before I owned a company, which makes sense. People come and go. People move on. They go and start their own companies. They decide they don't want to work or it's not a good fit anymore.

And so, I've had to deal with a lot of good-byes. And the feedback that I get a lot is that they've never worked for another company where the goodbye was so amicable or it was so loving or it was so honest, where we had

## Ep #338: When You Decide to Leave

enough warning. And that's something that I'm really proud of and that I want to continue to do.

And then, a lot of people ask me about how do you do that in a way that's really caring and loving. And I've done a whole podcast on this and I've done trainings on this. But one of the important things to remember, when you are leaving a situation or when you're asking someone to leave a situation is that there are your feelings, there's what's going on for you and what's going on in your mind, and then there's the situation itself. And then there's the other person and their feelings.

And oftentimes, when something isn't working anymore, it's not personal to the person. It's not their fault, so to speak. It's that the job has changed or that my thoughts or feelings have changed about who I want or how I want the job to be done. And so, when you're able to take full responsibility for your own decisions in a loving way, it makes it so you can keep relationships ongoing and intact.

One of the tragedies that I have seen in marriages especially is people leaving and hating each other, especially when there's kids involved. And one of the things I always recommend to all of my clients is that they try to find their way back to love before they make any decisions.

And I will tell you that half of the time, when my clients do this, they decide they don't want to leave. The desire to leave comes from the desire to get out of the hate and pain. So, I always recommend that you do that first. It has to be a good-bye or no deal. No bad-byes. We only want good-byes not bad-byes. Good goodbyes not bad goodbyes.

And so, I think for us to find our way to love and find our way to the good goodbye is a way that we can honor our own decisions in our life and honor the people that we love in our life. So, those are kind of the steps that I recommend when you decide to leave.

The other thing that comes up for so many people is, is this the right decision? That's a question that so many people ask themselves. And a lot

## Ep #338: When You Decide to Leave

of times, people will tell me that they don't think it's the right decision because other people will be hurt or other people will be upset by the decision that you're making. And that's something that I really take seriously because of my own work on people pleasing. And it's something you're going to have to give yourself the space and time to question and go back to that idea, do I like my reason?

So, if you're questioning if something's the right decision, let's use the example of maybe quitting a job and you're making the decision to leave. Maybe you've had a boss that's treated you well and that has had your back and gave you an opportunity when no one else did. And you don't want to leave because you don't want to let them down and you don't want them to be mad and you feel like you've made a commitment to them.

This is a very legitimate situation that a lot of people deal with on a regular basis. So, your option is to stay in that job as a way to keep that person happy and to deny your own desire to leave, or to leave that job, which honors your own desire to leave and allow that person to have their feelings about your decision.

And making it a moral judgment on who should feel bad makes it an impossible choice. So, if the decision is between me feeling bad or another person feeling bad, for me as a people pleaser, I'm always going to go with, "I'll feel bad instead." And you can end up living your whole life taking on the sacrifice of feeling bad so the other person won't feel bad. And I just want you to question that.

When I say to someone who's considering leaving a marriage, for example, I say to them, you have to be honest with yourself and tell yourself the truth about why you're staying. And if the reason that you're staying is to make the other person feel happy, that is a legitimate reason for staying. But don't lie to yourself about it.

Because if you lie to yourself about it, you will destroy the relationship with resentment. When you say to yourself, "I'm staying because of my

## Ep #338: When You Decide to Leave

children...” for me, I really always wanted to have a home with two parents in it while my kids were at home. That was always very important to me. It was always very important to me that I loved my husband and did the work to be happy in that relationship. And I did all of that work and I was very honest and conscious with myself about making those decisions.

I was also really honest with myself when I wanted to leave and I was very honest and we took a long time talking about it, my husband and I, about what we both wanted and what was important to us. And we didn't make our desires – and this is really important – right or wrong. And we also didn't make our desires immediate, that needed to be honored immediately.

And I think that's important. If you decide that yes, you want to leave but not right now, or you want to leave and you don't want to stay in the marriage forever but you want to stay until your kids go to college, those are all really valid decisions. But telling yourself the truth about them and committing to love and committing to focusing on the work that it requires in order for you to be happy in that situation, I think, is so powerful, so important to know that that's a choice.

When we tell ourselves we can't stay in a relationship and be happy, so we have to leave, we take all of our power away from ourselves and we give it to the world and we give it to other people.

So, if you acknowledge to yourself that you're staying because you want to make the other person happy or you're staying because you want to do that for your kids or whatever, that's absolutely valid and you get to stay or leave for whatever reason you want.

I think people are afraid, if they acknowledge that maybe they want to leave, that then they'll have to. And the truth is, you don't have to do anything. You don't have to leave a job ever if you don't want to. You don't have to leave a relationship ever. And you can. This is your world. These are your choices.

## Ep #338: When You Decide to Leave

And you may want to stay – let's say, for example, you want to stay for religious reasons. It's really important to you that you honor your religion. But you also have this desire to leave a relationship, let's say. I think it's really important to honor both of those desires and tell yourself the truth about both of those desires fully and then make those decisions. And make them honestly.

It is never true that you can't leave. And when you tell yourself, "I have to stay, I can't leave," you are lying to yourself. When you say, "I am staying because I want to honor my religion," or, "I am staying because I want to have a two-parent household," or, "I'm staying because I want my 401K and my stock options," that's much more the truth than, "I have to stay." Because nobody really has to do anything. And that's important for you to acknowledge.

There are some other things that I've noticed that happen when people try to explain or justify decisions that they're making, especially I think in their careers. One of the things that I see happen a lot when people decide to leave their jobs to become fulltime entrepreneurs is I notice a diminishing of the reason why they're doing it to other people. And they try to justify and make up for what that other person might think of them.

And I want just to point this one thing out because it's very important that you pay attention to the lies you tell. And they're very subtle. They sound pretty, but nonetheless, they are lies.

So, for example, if the reason you're quitting your job is because you want to start a business because you have the hopes of maybe building an empire, that's the reason why you're doing it and you're very committed to it, and someone says to you, "What are you doing? This is crazy?" And you make up a lie as to why you're doing that, "Well my job was going away anyway. That career wasn't serving me," or whatever instead of acknowledging, it's almost like you're justifying your reason in a way that's acceptable to the other person.

## Ep #338: When You Decide to Leave

It invalidates your own desire and your own commitment. And I just want you to be aware of it. You can still tell the lie or you can still talk about it in any way that you want. But I want you to be aware of those little lies because I've seen this happen so many times, where they add up.

And I want to give you permission to not talk about it. I think that's important too. And this is something that I'm doing what my family, to protect the confidentiality of the other people involved and also to not allow other people's energies, other people's opinions to affect your decision of what you want to do with your life.

Because if you're trying to make people on the internet happy or you're trying to make your friends happy by choosing a career that you think they will accept, you are going to be in purgatory. You are going to be working at a job to control someone else's opinion that you literally cannot control.

And if I could advise anyone on that, I would just say, please, please, please, it doesn't mean that you have to tell them anything specific. But at least tell yourself the truth. At least acknowledge if you're going to lie to someone. Please, acknowledge if you're going to withhold something, some information from someone.

And you don't need to explain anything and you certainly don't need someone else to give you their opinion about what you should do with your life. Nobody knows. Nobody knows what you should do with your life but you. That includes every single decision.

So, when you look at your life – and this is something I do very regularly – I ask myself, where am I lying? And it's very often that I'm either lying to other people. And if I'm not lying to other people, I'm lying to myself, if there's shame involved.

And so, I want to recommend that if you're going to pick, don't lie to yourself. Tell yourself the truth about why you're staying or why you're going before you make any decisions. Growth is uncomfortable. And when

## Ep #338: When You Decide to Leave

you are committed to the truth, you will be growing. You will be changing. You will be leaving many situations over and over and over again.

There's nothing you should do with your life. Your life is yours for the creating. And when other people tell you what you should or shouldn't do, you want to really pay attention to your own heart and decide what you're going to do, not based on what other people think you should or shouldn't do.

Please remember that when you make decisions, you're not going to be happier for long. You leave jobs, you start a career, you start a business, your life will always end up at 50-50, no matter what you choose to do with your life. If you're chasing happiness, you're always going to end up with the 50-50. So be careful not to consistently be changing your circumstance in order to chase happiness.

The other thing I want to remind you and I want to give you permission to do and to know is that you are allowed to change your mind about anything you want to do in your life. I want to give you permission to change your mind. My suggestion is you change it slowly and you change it ahead of time and you process the emotion ahead of time.

Do not change your mind impulsively. Do not be in a hurry. Do not be responding or reacting to emotional whims. Other people do not live your life. It is okay if they're upset with how you live yours. Let them be wrong about you. Let them judge you. Let them not believe in you. Let them think you're doing it wrong. That doesn't matter as much as what you think is true.

Listen to people's opinions. Your mother will always have one. Your boss will have one. The people that have a vested interest in you staying the same will have one. Listen to their opinions. Honor them. Try them on and see what you think, what you believe. You may be influenced by their decision. But make sure, if you are influenced, you feel how it feels to be influenced by their decision because of that you believe. Let it be hard. Talk

## Ep #338: When You Decide to Leave

with honesty and with love. Explore all your options. Try all your options on. If it's not loving, stop. Slow down. Breathe.

I want you to know that your life is your own. And when you go around trying to change everything in order to feel better, you will exhaust yourself. When you stay in situations because you're afraid of what other people will think about you, you're afraid of doing the wrong thing, you will lose yourself.

There's a place in the middle where you get to decide to stay as long as it takes to be at peace with your decision to leave. I honor that decision for you. I believe that you can do whatever you want with your life and I support you doing that with love and patience and honor for yourself and for the people around you.

When you decide to leave, make sure you feel loving towards yourself and everyone around you. Sometimes, the decision to leave will lead you to growth. And sometimes, the decision to stay will lead you to growth. I recommend that you find the one that will grow you and evolve you into the best version of yourself and to always honor what is true in your heart.

You're the only one that knows. Have a beautiful week, everyone. I'll talk to you soon.

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