

Ep #349: Dreams Do Come True with CEO Erika Royal



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 349.

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.

Brooke: Hello my friends. Today I sound like a radio DJ because we're going to talk about dreams coming true. And dreams do come true, and we're going to talk about it with my brand-new CEO, who I'm going to introduce you to in just a minute.

I could not be more thrilled to do this podcast. It has been a long time coming. I have been, as most of you know who listen to the podcast, been searching for a CEO for a long time. I have had lots of discussions, lots of interviews, lots of projects with potential CEOs.

And I have been learning how to be a founder that can bring a CEO into my company. So although I've talked to some extraordinary people over the past few years, there has been a lot of growth I've needed to do in order to arrive in the place where I was really ready to actually hire someone, and I have found the perfect person to come in and do that job.

And for those of you who run your own companies and who have been looking for staff and looking for people to work for you, you know that when you find a person who you know will come in and do a good job, it is like finding a soulmate. And I have found myself a soul sister I would say in being able to hire her for this job. I couldn't be more seriously content with this decision and delighted for it.

So I've had a lot of false starts, I've had a lot of excitement before, thinking that had found someone, but what I want to say about this is I just desperately wanted someone to take all that work off my plate and have someone do a better job than I was doing at that job. And what I realized is the reason I didn't find someone sooner is because I needed to get really

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good at that job and do it really well before I could bring this person in, and that's exactly what happened.

Just when I settled in and was kind of like, resigned to the fact that I would be the one doing this job forever, she appeared. And I want to tell you how she appeared. And what's interesting about this whole podcast and the reason we titled it the way we have is that this whole connection where I'm hiring a CEO and found the perfect CEO for my beloved company is my dream come true. But her being the CEO of The Life Coach School is also her dream come true.

So it's this magic of two women's dreams coming true together to make one bigger dream together. And we're going to be able to do more together than we ever would have been able to do separately. And that is the magic I think, of not just people coming together, but especially women coming together.

And I feel like I'm part of something that's happening in the universe that's way bigger than me, way bigger than her, way bigger than our company. It feels like a sense of magic to me.

So the way that I found her was completely unexpected. As most of you know, I have been running ads for a CEO, running job descriptions, asking for people to apply, encouraging you to tell your friends I'm looking for a CEO, I want to find someone.

And one of the things that I noticed, and this is important for all you women to listen to is that most of the applicants were white men for this job. And if you think about what this job is and that most of my customers and most of my listeners and most of the people that I associate are women and that's who I was talking to as my audience, the fact that most of the applicants were white males is telling.

And that's of course nothing against white males at all. I interviewed and did projects with many of them. But I do want everyone to think about this, everyone listening to this to think about it. Why didn't you apply? If you

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would have liked that job, why didn't you apply? We're going to talk more about that in a minute.

But what I realized is that the reason many of you might not have applied is because of me and because of my way of putting out the job description, my way of talking about it, my lack of inclusion and diversity in my own company and being able to speak to, literally to the women who I wanted to apply for this job and who I actually had envisioned seeing in this position.

So one of the things that I've done over this past year is really learned a lot about how I'm showing up as the founder of this company and how I'm attracting and not attracting a diverse group of people to be part of my corporation and understanding that diversity and having a lot of different insights and backgrounds and cultures in my organization really adds to the value of what I'm able to create.

So one of the things that I did last year is I pulled a group of all of my Black women coaches into a Slack group and on to a phone call. I actually didn't do it. One of the women who was one of our coaches did it. Brig actually pulled everyone together and said, hey, I want to have a conversation.

And I asked if I could come and she said yes, and so I went into this conversation and I basically said hey, I want you guys to tell me what I'm missing. I want you to tell me what I'm not seeing, what I don't have the ability to see because of the way I was raised and the color of my skin. What do you all see and what do you all experience that I don't?

And so while I was part of this group, it was really actually one of the most painful and one of the most amazing experiences I've ever had listening to each of these Black women tell me what their experiences has been like being in the life coach industry, being in relationship with me, being part of the school as a Black woman and where they thought maybe I was falling short in being inclusive.

And that completely changed my life in the understanding of what I had been missing, what I literally didn't have the ability to see because of all my

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blind spots. So that in and of itself was such a powerful, amazing experience.

But another part of that experience that was amazing is that I met a woman who was so extraordinary. It was like love at first sight. And I know that you all know what this is like. So you can fall in love with a man, love at first sight, you can fall in love with a friend, love at first sight. Turns out you can fall in love with a CEO at first sight.

So this woman, Harvard trained attorney, wonderful energy, really amazing way of being present and holding space with me. And one of the things that is true about me in the world, especially with my students is I tend to intimidate people. They tend to be a little bit nervous to talk to me, be straight with me, and disagree with me.

And this woman was not afraid to do any of those things. And she did them in a way that didn't make me feel shame and didn't - not that she could make me feel shame, but she didn't create an environment of that for me to be triggered by or anything like that. We just had these amazing, wonderful conversations.

And I felt like at that moment, I went, "Huh, maybe this woman could be my CEO." And we had many conversations after that and I watched how she was with other people, I watched how she showed up in the world, I watched her presence, and I just became more and more convinced that she was going to be an extraordinary option for me to maybe introduce to the possibility of this job.

I was very excited to hear that she was looking to maybe have a new opportunity, looking to maybe change careers and try something different. She had had it in the back of her mind. It wasn't something super active.

So I asked for a call with her and I said, hey, can we jump on a call, and she told me later she was freaked out. She had no idea what it would be. I think I had said it would be an opportunity to consider and I'm sure she thought it would be a little tiny project that we would do together.

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And I want to tell you about this phone call that I had with her because I think it's significant and it's for all of us, especially women, especially those of us who make excuses for not believing in ourselves. I think it's one of those opportunities for us to all go, huh, could that have happened to me in my field? Could that have happened to me in a different opportunity?

So I got her on Zoom and I said, hey, have you ever thought of possibly maybe considering being the CEO of The Life Coach School? And the look on her face, and literally her looking behind her to see who I was speaking to was classic. It is so classic to - she was so dumbfounded.

It literally hadn't even - and I'm going to let her of course speak to this, but it literally hadn't even been a consideration for her. And what's so amazing about that you all is that she is the perfect person for this job in every way. She has all the credentials that I want, she has all the experience that I need, she has the personality, she has the professionalism, she has the warmth that I need, the ability and the experience of coaching, the experience of managing people.

Literally every single thing on her resume in terms of her experience is the perfect fit for this job, and yet it hadn't even occurred to her to apply. And so we went through, I'm going to say, three significant conversations where her belief system had to catch up with the offer, and to catch up with the opportunity.

And we kept talking to each other and we did a couple projects together and talked about some things that she could do to kind of demonstrate and see - talking to the team, seeing if maybe it would even be a possible fit in the future. And everything she did was a yes. Everything she did was perfection in my view.

And every time we come back to the call, it would be like, wait, you're going to tell me this is a terrible idea and a terrible fit and you've done everything wrong and this isn't going to work. And I was like, no, actually, the exact opposite, I couldn't be more excited.

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And it's funny because as you guys know, Kris Plachy is my best friend, we talk all the time, and when I first started telling her that I had found someone I thought could be my CEO, she goes, now slow down, you know how you get. And I'm like, no, this is totally different, this feels so right.

And so as the months went on and the conversations went on, she really was able to see like yes, the way that you are, I didn't have any anxiety, I wasn't freaked out, I wasn't in a hurry. We were able to really take our time and establish a relationship with each other that is so important to me.

I had told her like, listen, we're going to have a business marriage, the two of us. So it's really important that we have good communication with each other, that we're able to be honest and that we're able to be direct with each other. So that is all to say that I then offered a multi-million-dollar contract to come on as the CEO of the company for a minimum of three years.

And she signed that contract, I signed that contract, it is official. Erika Royal will now be the CEO of The Life Coach School. I want you all to stand up wherever you are and applaud. She deserves a standing ovation. I deserve a standing ovation for finding her. I am so excited about the example that she is going to set for not just the life coaching industry but for women, for Black women, for CEOs, for how to run a company truly being your most authentic self.

So that being said, she has been sitting here listening this whole time, which has been excruciating for her, to not be able to say anything. So welcome Erika, congratulations on being the CEO of The Life Coach School. Our team is so excited and thrilled and agrees that you're going to be an amazing CEO. So welcome to the podcast and welcome to the company.

Erika: Well, thank you so much Brooke. You're wrong, this has not been excruciating. This has been fabulous. I can listen to you talk about me all day. I'm all in for that. And congratulations to you too because listening to

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you talk about how long you've wanted this and we're both finally getting here and we're both finally getting our dream is amazing. So thank you very much. I'm very excited to be here.

Brooke: Yes, awesome. So I want to let you speak to what your experience was like. I kind of gave you my version of it and my side of inviting you in and convincing you that yes, this was real. And I did want you to come in and be the CEO. But I think it's important for you to talk about your experience and kind of the transformation you've gone through over the past several months as we've been discussing this and I made the offer to you. Other people are probably...

Erika: I would love to do that. Okay, so going back to where this all started for me, I feel like this all started in the late spring, early summer of this year when there was a lot going on with the world. It was obviously the pandemic so everybody was kind of in their house and had the ability to be a lot more focused on things than they might otherwise be.

And then all of these things happened with Black Lives Matter. Because I think that Black Lives Matter is how we all ended up on that call. I think it's important to really acknowledge what happened there. So for me, the Black Lives Matter movement brings up a lot of stuff. I experienced these events, different ways through the different parts of my identity.

So personally, as a Black woman who has Black children and Black family members, a Black husband, I experienced what happened with George Floyd and Ahmaud Arbery before him, and Breonna Taylor. I experienced those things as a mother, I found it very devastating and very terrifying and very horrible.

And that felt very emotional to me. It's a reminder that racism is inescapable. You can't out-earn it, you can't out-educate yourself from the predicament of being Black in America. And so I had a lot of emotional response to what was going on then.

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And then in my corporate life, the world's on fire but we have to keep working and everything's fine. And it had been my experience that people who have the privilege of avoiding the discomfort of this do so. And why wouldn't you?

So at work, for a while, everything was just proceeding as though everything was normal, even though it felt like personally, everything was on fire.

Brooke: So what was your work? Just for people who...

Erika: Right. So I've worked at a corporate law firm for 22 years. So I've been a partner at the firm for the last 12 years. And it's a very corporate environment. We're a very large national firm and it's not a place where these types of issues take center stage very often and that wasn't the case at first here.

And so even though personally I was having a lot of emotions around this, professionally, it was as though nothing had happened. And that was, at first, what it was like in The Life Coach School as well. Because I'm also experiencing it from the perspective of a coach, and I just have the expectation that no one is going to do anything.

And that's I think part of what was painful. So when we had the opportunity, when Brig sent out that message and said let's just a bunch of us get on the call and talk about how we're feeling, I was really excited to do that because I was excited to have somewhere to share that.

And then I saw that you had asked about getting on the call, but I still didn't really think that was going to happen. So when I got on that call, I was really surprised to see you there. And you kind of glossed over this when you were talking earlier, but really thinking about it, it was a really big deal for you to show up there.

Because at the time, you were coming under fire a lot from a lot of different places, and it was possible that you could have gotten on that call and it

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would have been confrontational, it would have been people who were really angry. And instead - which I think this might have actually been worse for you, it was 20 people who said we expect nothing from you. We're not surprised, we're not angry because we have grown to expect nothing. And so I think that kind of surprised you.

Brooke: It was terrible. Terrible.

Erika: But having you on that call, the way that you showed up, as a student, you showed up and you just listened. You sat there and listened while we talked and we vented and we said what we wanted to say for at least an hour before. You were just sitting there holding space for all of us to talk and then you were like, can I speak?

And then of course it was full Brooke Castillo moment, this is what I heard and this is what I think and this is what we should do, and you were coaching us, and it was just amazing. And I know from my perspective, it was not anything that I expected.

And then at the end of that, you said can we do this again next week? And I was like, wow, okay, she's all in. And so that was the beginning of us having these calls for a few weeks where you would come on and like you said, you would say to us, what am I missing? What could I be doing better? And then you would also coach us and we would coach each other.

I remember one of the interactions that you and I had talking about privilege. And I said to you that when I talk about privilege, I'm not trying to discount any of the obstacles that you faced. I'm just saying that the color of your skin wasn't one of them and that you've experienced the world differently from the people on this call. And I think that that explanation kind of diffused things a little bit because it didn't seem so us against them. It was more like no, this is just how it is.

Brooke: I remember exactly what you said. What you said was - and you did say that, but you also said I don't think your white privilege takes away from your extraordinary accomplishment.

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Erika: Absolutely.

Brooke: And the fact that you didn't have this one obstacle that permeates your entire life - and we say one obstacle, but it ends up being a thousand obstacles because it shows up everywhere, right? So the color of your skin affects so many different things, and you said I don't think you not having that obstacle makes what you did as a woman in your business any less extraordinary. You just didn't have this one to deal with.

And I think for me, that had such an impact. Because I've coached a lot of white women on white privilege, and I think many of them feel like well, I've worked hard, I was poor, I was raped, or I was molested, bringing in all the other obstacles. But I had obstacles too. And I think that that's the piece that we start getting petulant about and missing the entire point.

And for me, the way that you approached that with me, it just helped me drop into this area that I just do not understand and didn't understand at all. And having conversations with you and all of the other women on those calls and continuing to talk about your businesses on Zoom calls monthly, that has changed my life in such an extraordinary way.

And one of the things that we had talked about is I want to show up for these calls and be there for you and help support you in any way I can. But the trade off is my education and being able to learn as much - and it's very humbling. But I think white women and white men are resistant to being humbled in that way because we immediately get resistant and defensive.

But when we can open to it, it just opens up the world so much more. And it has for me and it's made me actually a much more self-aware and externally aware person. So for that I'm so thankful for you, so I'm actually glad you brought that up.

Erika: Thank you. So that may have been your moment, your transformational moment for us. Mine was a week or two later when you were coaching me about this belief that I had that I couldn't make money as a life coach, that I had had this career as a lawyer and I obviously knew

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how to make money. But I felt like as a life coach, I wasn't going to be able to do that.

And I was really stuck because I had this idea that I had to completely turn off one and turn on the other. And so you coached me on the idea that I actually didn't have to give up my identity as a lawyer to be a coach, and I didn't have to give up 25 years of education and work to turn around and have a different career as an entrepreneur.

And there was something in the way that you explained to me that I wasn't starting from scratch. I was just bringing all of that with me. And your holding space for me to believe that I could bring my whole self to this other role just really blew my mind and it was very impactful for me because it was the first time that I considered that oh, okay, I actually can still have all of this and be this other thing.

And so that would obviously be important to me later when we started talking about this other role, which I love that we're talking about these calls because I believe that at some point, we transitioned into a bit of a job interview, but only one of us knew that job interview was occurring.

So to get to when you reached out to me in Slack and asked me to get on the call with you, yes, I had very small and retrospectively inconsequential projects in mind when you said that. And it was funny because you asked me and I was like, yes, how about today? And you were like oh no, no rush, let's talk next week.

I was like, okay, next week. And then the other thing is you didn't just get on that call with me and say oh, would you ever possibly consider maybe. You spent at least half an hour talking to me about my life, about my practice of law, my kids, my family. You spent - to the point where I was like, she is so personable. Look at her calling me to ask me to do a webinar or something and we're talking so much.

And so when you got to the point where you did broach the subject of your search for a CEO, and I was just listening, I was like, oh this is lovely, and

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then I thought maybe you'd ask me to recommend someone. And so I started racking my brain like, who do I know who could possibly do this? And I was like, I have no one but I can't tell her that.

Brooke: Oh my gosh, that's hysterical.

Erika: Yes. When you got to the point where you said would you possibly consider this, I'm fairly certain that I said to you, "I think you're confused." And you were like, no, I'm not. And so that was our first of many calls where you kind of brought me around.

But I will tell you after we got off the call and I was able to decompress and replay it in my mind and everything, I was able by the end of that day to get to anything is possible because Brooke Castillo just called me and talked to me about being the CEO of her company.

Brooke: That's awesome.

Erika: So now I know that anything is possible.

Brooke: Yeah. And what I think about too is had you applied for the job two years ago, one year ago or whatever, you would have been hired for the job 100%. And so I wonder the lesson in that for us to share with other women, men, humans, is you will never get hired. You will never fulfill an opportunity that you don't apply for.

That's actually not true. Someone might chase you down on a Slack and force you to take the job but that's pretty rare. That's pretty rare that that's going to happen. And so I just want anyone who's hesitating thinking oh, I'm not qualified. Because by the way, so many of the people that applied for the CEO of The Life Coach School were not qualified. It did not stop them from applying for the job.

Erika: That's amazing.

Brooke: Yeah. And so I think that's something that we need to consider. I think we look at job descriptions, we're like, oh, I don't have that training in

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basic plus plus, so I'm not going to apply when really, it's like, could I learn what I need to learn to do this job and would I be a good candidate for it? So if you believe in yourself, that's where it goes. So tell them about how you closed that gap in believing in yourself from the moment I asked you to get the job to now, really embodying this role.

Erika: So there's been a lot of self-coaching, a lot of coaching by others, a lot of self-coaching. It's been a lot of also me not understanding what you wanted. So I think that even when I was listening to you talk about your search for a CEO on the podcast, I had my own ideas of what that must look like.

So somebody who must have experience as a CEO, who knows how to do CEO things and all of that. So I was just - it never occurred to me that I would be that person because in my mind, I did not have what you wanted. And when we started talking and you started explaining to me what you were looking for, one of the things you wanted was not someone who was going to come from running a company into running your company because you wanted someone who wouldn't want to change everything.

So somebody like me who's going to come in and say I want to learn how you do everything, and then I want to figure out how we do it better and how we do it bigger is more what you want than somebody who already knows how they've achieved this someplace else.

And so understanding the job helped me to see better how I could fit in there. And also, working on projects with you and talking to The Life Coach School employees also helped me to see how I could fit in there. But then I also started to feel like everything I had done up until this point was leading to this.

So all of my background as a lawyer, working, advising clients, particularly working with employees. And then also my experience hiring a coach, hiring a Life Coach School coach, being coached, really, really believing that it is life-changing and that it made a huge difference for me, so much

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so that I went to certification and became certified, so that I was coming in really understanding the products, really understanding the why, and really understanding who we are looking for because I am that person.

Brooke: Oh, by the way, what kind of law were you practicing?

Erika: I was practicing employment law.

Brooke: Oh, by the way, my friends. I mean, could there have been a more perfect person for this job? I don't think so. And I like you so much and we get along so well, we have such good communication chemistry too. What are the chances of all of that aligning, right?

Erika: It's amazing.

Brooke: So good. So once you started recognizing that, then you started going, wait a minute.

Erika: Right. Then all of a sudden there was this counter thought to my self-doubt that was like, what if this is perfect? Just keep going. And even now, having this conversation with you in December versus having a conversation with you in August, it's just a world of difference in terms of my confidence in my ability to do it and my belief that I will figure it out and my belief that as long as you just show up and you're all in, we'll figure it out.

And one of the things I love about The Life Coach School is that I was comfortably uncomfortable in my law firm job that had a ton of rules. Here, I think the reason that I was so intimidated at first was that there are no rules. There are no rules. You say how do we do this, and then the answer is I don't know Erika, how do you do this?

So at first that was very intimidating, but it's actually become very freeing because it's like, you can harness your own thinking and you can try it out immediately. And you might fail and that's okay. If you fail you just correct and get back up and keep going.

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Brooke: That's how we do.

Erika: I mean that's what you say, but that is also really what you do. So anybody who's wondering, because who's heard Brooke say this? It's real, you guys. It is real.

Brooke: And one of the things I want to share with everyone that was kind of, I don't know, super satisfying to me was we had a meeting here in Austin. We had an in-person meeting where the team, most of the team came to - you were wearing an amazing red suit, which I'll never forget. It was the perfect outfit.

You know how I feel about you got to have the right outfit, and to be introduced as the CEO of The Life Coach School. But we had a conversation afterwards and I pondered that conversation for a long time after, wondering how many founder CEOs had had conversations like this.

And one of the things that I had said to you is that I love you. And that that is super important to me, that I love you and that I care about you, and that no matter what, we have to maintain that love whether you stay as the CEO. And we had actually during that conversation, we're talking about our contract that we were writing and what would happen if you left or if we decided it wasn't a good fit or whatever, how important it was for both of us to maintain our relationship with each other, regardless of what happens business-wise.

And I think that that is something that most founder CEOs, I'm picturing like, other boardroom conversations. I'm not picturing them telling each other they love each other, right? And a couple other things we talked about in that conversation that I think are so amazing to share for other people who are considering creating businesses like we're creating and managing businesses like we have is really talking about - for me, I wanted you to know what it's like to be the head of a corporation like this. There are haters. There are people that are going to come after you. There are

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people that are going to say things that are terrible about me and about you and about us and about our organization and all of that.

And I wanted to make sure that you knew that that was going to happen and that I have your back. No matter what, I will always have your back. Even if we disagree on things. And I want us to disagree on things. I don't want you to come in and be anything other than who you truly are. And what that inevitably will mean is that we'll have differing opinions on certain things.

Now, I don't want you representing the company with opinions that differ from mine. We have to discuss those and share those in a way that's appropriate for our corporation, but that the way that I have built this company is by being honest and being myself and inviting people to disagree and hate me and that is okay and that is something that I wanted you to know you were getting yourself into because it's not as easy as it looks.

Erika: I'm all in. It's fine. And you know, let the haters come. Haters are not enough to keep me from my dream.

Brooke: Let's pause there because there's a lot of people that don't go after their dream because of what people will think and because of haters. So that's not a little statement.

Erika: And just to elaborate on that a little bit, so one of the things that I had to do to get from August to December is I had to really work on the fear that I had. And the fear wasn't just oh, I'll try this and fail. Because okay, that could happen. The fear was more what if I allow myself to truly want this? What if I allow myself to say this is my dream come true and go after it and don't get it?

Because just failing doesn't feel like that big of a deal. But failing at your dream come true feels like a lot. And the thing that I just had to keep telling myself is, listen, you can let fear decide you don't even try, you can

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definitely do that. You can just say thank you Brooke, but no thank you, good luck and god bless you.

Or you can say I'm going to go ahead and feel this fear and I'm going to try anyway. Because it's going to feel terrible either way. The trying feels terrible but not trying also would feel terrible. And in that moment, I knew what the not trying would feel like because I was there. I was already not living my dream. I was already not having it.

And so I was like, do I stay here, which feels terrible, or do I feel the fear and feel terrible and just really go for it? And so when you talk about haters, I feel like getting over my own nonsense...

Brooke: Your own hate.

Erika: My own hate, right. I was my own biggest hater. And so getting my over my own hate, all the other haters feel like nothing.

Brooke: That's so beautifully said. And the other piece, and this is something I really want all employers and all managers to really consider. One of the things I said to Erika and I really meant this was I want you to come to The Life Coach School and be you. 100% of you who are. I don't want you to try to be some version of yourself that you think I want.

Because I can do that. I can people-please myself. I want you to come and bring you. I've already brought me authentically. I don't need more of someone trying to be me. I need you to come and be you 100%. And I think we need to give more opportunities to extraordinary people to be their authentic selves.

Because my belief system is you are the way you are on purpose. You were created on purpose to be you. And trying to control other people to be who we want them to be misses them completely. And so that's what I'm most excited about for this adventure is you know I'm bringing all of me and you're going to bring all of you, and together we're going to create

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something so much more magnificent than we could alone. You want to speak to that too?

Erika: So I was just thinking that anybody from my law firm who might hear this will be laughing out loud at that last part because Erika, bring your whole self to work is not something that I was ever hearing there. It was more bring your best self, Erika.

Brooke: Leave that other part at home.

Erika: Leave the other part home. And in this year in particular, I have become a lot more outspoken at work about certain issues, and I think that the response has not always been great. And you can't just exist there. You can't just show up as your full self and coexist with other people being their full selves.

Everybody still believes they have the right to tell you that you have to be quiet, or that you can't say that or you can't do that. And so I think that here, the opportunity to show up as my full self, which just means being my authentic self. It doesn't mean showing up as somebody who is not professional or somebody who is not running a company. Those things are a thing.

But just being able to know that I don't have to pretend to be something that I'm not to have this job to me was exhilarating. And when I finally allowed myself to believe that you were really looking at me, it felt amazing.

Brooke: Yeah. And one of the ways that I'm able to do that, this is a really important distinction, is knowing that Erika has the model and has the ability to coach herself and has enough self-awareness gives me the trust and the confidence that she will be able to bring her managed mind to the organization.

A lot of times people are a hot mess in their mind and you're like, come bring your whole self, clean up those thoughts first, right? And that's something everyone in our organization is held responsible to. And we

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immediately decided that - well first of all, if you work for me, you get a coach. You get a coach to work with/

But Erika and I decided early on because her belief system was so far away from mine in terms of what I was believing she could do and what she was believing she could do, we wanted to get her a coach right away to help her overcome those things. I could tell her all day long, but if she doesn't believe me because she doesn't believe in herself, that's not going to matter.

And so that has made your transformation just over these past several months extraordinary. Who you are as a woman, as a CEO now, versus when we started has been really amazing and fun to watch for sure.

Erika: Absolutely. Anybody out there who thinks they don't need a coach, very much mistaken. I mean really, that's what I walked away from my experience having a coach with three years ago, I walked away thinking there are so many people who have no idea about the fact that this could absolutely change their lives. Working with a coach now on these issues and just being able to clear up all the clutter in my mind around everything is unbelievably - it changes everything.

Brooke: Yeah. So I think the message I wanted to convey on this podcast is first of all, dreams do come true. Ours did. And I kept believing and knowing that I would find the perfect right person. And I will say for me, what brings me so much joy in this relationship is that it's easy. It's so easy.

We get along so well and we're able to be so direct and honest. It's both our personalities anyway that we can lay stuff on the table that's uncomfortable and we both can hold space for it and move past it, whether it's between the two of us or our employees or something that's going on in the company that's creating havoc or tension or whatever. We can come together and have those conversations.

And I feel like having a partner, I feel like in so many ways I've been alone on an island trying to figure this out and having someone that brings your

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breadth of experience and knowledge to be able to guide and advise me through so many of these things I don't understand, it makes me eyes water. It just feels like, oh my gosh, I don't have to do this all alone.

And I think for the message that I want to give to everyone out there and to you, Erika, you've learned this lesson is to overestimate yourself. Stop underestimating yourself and start overestimating yourself and what you're capable of. I feel Erika got to the point where she had accepted that she was going to be the CEO of the company. She signed the paperwork, the contract, she gave her start date to me.

And then of course, as the coach that I am, the next question I had is okay, so now you're the CEO, that's the baseline. Now where are we going to go? And do you remember what you said?

Erika: I feel like I said something small and inconsequential and then you said, just multiply that exponentially because my thoughts are much bigger for you.

Brooke: So her thought was something like I want to be a really good CEO for The Life Coach School. And here's the other thing that's kind of interesting that you should all kind of consider as you're witnessing her ascension into my vision is one of the most influential and significant CEOs in America.

Not just in our industry, not just within the school, but being an example of taking a company to 100 million dollars the way that we're going to do it with love and compassion and inclusion and diversity and the model. All of those things. Not just doing a good job for the school, but doing a good job literally for humanity is my vision for all of us and for everyone who's a part of the school.

And I see you leading that charge for us and continuing to think way beyond what you think is possible for yourself. Everything I teach in Scholars is everything I live, which means that the people who are close to

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me and that I'm working with, we all have to be believing in the same thing. So what do you think about that?

Erika: As always Brooke, you're leading, you're ahead of us. So first I will say this. I will say that I personally am just so honored and humbled by this because even just for me thinking about the example that I can be to my own daughters, and then to other Black coaches at The Life Coach School, and then to Black women and Black girls everywhere.

If people walk away from this with nothing else, I want them to understand that anything is possible. And so you really have to be willing to think outside of what you think possibility is because I mean, a friend and I were laughing about this a couple of days ago.

If I had told you a year ago that I would be making this podcast and saying these things, we both would have thought that was preposterous. And so now, I just - I want people to look at me and hear my story, which people will come to know me more over time. And really just feel like anything is possible.

And I really want to live that. I really want to live that and show that and be an example to particularly Black girls and Black women, but all women that - all the women who didn't apply for this job that anything is possible.

Brooke: Yeah. And I want to just add to that. And all men who want to run an organization that makes 100 million dollars, that is set up in a way where you can have a balance in your life and you can tell the truth and be yourself and feel like you're living your purpose. This is all the way that our organizations and our corporations and our lives need to start directing towards.

Because the trajectory has not been in the way that we are able to balance ourselves and be who we are and fulfill our mission in the world. And so Erika and I are going to show you how you do that by running this corporation together in a way that lives it and demonstrates it. So you should all pay attention and take some notes.

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And I've always said that from the very beginning of starting this company and everyone was telling me, everyone was like my mother and my husband, telling me I don't know if this is reasonable. And I just was like, in my mind, y'all need to just sit back and take notes because this is how it's going to be done. And I feel that way now more than ever. I'm so stoked to be able to do that with you.

So I wanted to do this podcast to make the announcement and I'm so honored and proud to do so. I'm so happy I found you. You have no idea how satisfying it is to know that I have someone that can run my company that I trust 100% to do such an extraordinary job and to figure out what I don't know yet. That is truly - I just want to say I'm so happy you're here, congratulations. I feel like you earned this job before you even realized you did by the work that you've been doing over the past 20-some odd years.

Erika: Well, thank you. Thank you so much and I mean, I don't even know how to convey to you how amazing this is and how exciting it is for me. And so I just want to say thank you for the belief that you had in me and thank you for lending me that belief until I could have it for myself. And yeah, I'm all in for this and excited for what I know is going to be an amazing ride. So I can't wait to see what we do.

Brooke: I love it. Hey y'all, help me congratulate Erika. Please go to The Life Coach School Instagram or Facebook, write her a message, give her some encouragement, help me celebrate her and her accomplishment here and I think it's a beautiful way to end this year.

Erika: Yes, I agree. And our next in-person event is going to be epic.

Brooke: Yes, yes, I can't wait. Erika will be speaking. We will have thousands of people there. It will be amazing. Congratulations, I love you. Take notes everyone. Here we go. Talk to you next week.

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