

Ep #107: When Something Sucks



Full Episode Transcript

With Your Host

Brooke Castillo

Welcome to the Life Coach School Podcast, where it's all about real clients, real problems, and real coaching. Now, your host, Master Coach Instructor, Brooke Castillo.

Hello, hello my friends. How are you guys? Let me tell you how I am. I was going to do this podcast on visualization and I had the cover art done, I had everything done, then I had a week last week that rocked my world. I decided to change it from visualization to when something sucks. Because that is what I had been working on all week, is what I call, "A sucker punch to the gut." That's what I've been dealing with all week.

A sucker punch to the gut is something that happens to the best of us for many reasons and it's our, I think, responsibility to get good at dealing with that. I will say it has been probably a year since I've had to deal with anything like this. It's been such an amazing year for me. We've done just so well in terms of my family, my kids, my business, it's constantly killing it, it's like we sell out everything, there's so much interest, there's just so much good going on that I was not expecting my sucker punch.

Now, let me define what that means. You guys know that feeling when someone tells you something and it takes your breath away. It's like, "Oh God, that's awful. I wish you hadn't told me that, say it isn't true." For some of you, it may be a diagnosis, for some of you it may be someone telling you that they don't want to be your friend anymore, they don't want to be married to you anymore, they don't want you to work for them anymore, they don't love you anymore, you have a diagnosis or something horrible that's happened to you or someone that you love, or something bad, those kind of like, "Wait, what just happened?" That kind of feeling is what, it's a sucker punch.

I know that life is filled with them. I know that we have to deal with them, but I will tell you what, I never want to when it happens to me. There's a couple reasons why this can happen. It can be completely out of the blue like say with the diagnosis or someone crashing into your car and you find out they didn't have insurance and you have broken bones and that you can't do something you wanted to do or something like that, or it could be something

you've completely created yourself and done to yourself because of a mistake that you've made.

Either way, I think that the feelings can be the same. This is not to say that you aren't the one creating your feelings because you are. I think there's a big misunderstanding when people say, "Okay, if I'm creating my own feelings, why would I ever create negative emotion for myself?" The point is, is that 50% of the time, you will because that's how you're wired. You don't want to create negative emotion for yourself unnecessarily, but there are times in your life where you will be triggered and it's appropriate, and feeling a negative emotion is very appropriate.

For me, what happened caused me to feel a tremendous amount of shame. Shame is the feeling that comes from the thought that there's something wrong with you. I was thinking that there was something terribly wrong with me because of this thing that had happened, and I was constantly perpetuating that.

For those of you who have children, if your children do something, if they get sucker punched, you might as well be getting sucker punched as well, right? It's that same kind of experience when you go through it with your kids, when you go through it yourself. I just recently had a client who her child didn't get into a school that they had applied to, and she felt like she was being sucker punched by the universe. That sucks so bad.

There's situations where you put yourself out there on a limb and you don't have to, you're just putting yourself out there like really wanting to create something good in your life, really wanting to take that chance and then it doesn't turn out the way that you wanted and you feel sucker punched. For example, you may apply for a job or ask someone out, or put up a class that you want to sell, or send out a book proposal or something in it. The answer is "no" and you get rejected, and the answer is "no", or you ask someone, "Hey, do you want to go have coffee with me?" They are like, "Yeah, no." You can tell they're just not interested and you or being your friend or whatever.

That can feel such a sucker punch like, "Oh, I wish I hadn't done

that. I wish I didn't put myself out there." That can be that same feeling. Regardless of your reason for why you feel the way you do, I really want to offer a solution and I want this to be a podcast that you can come back to pretty regularly if you are feeling like you got sucker punched or you're feeling something all of a sudden really sucks in your life. You can follow this process to help get you out of that feeling that everything is so horrible.

What I want you to do is acknowledge that you've been dealt a terrible blow, whether it's self-inflicted, or inflicted by the universe, or inflicted by somebody else. You've experienced a terrible blow. Take a moment and just be like, "This is where we're at right now. This sucks." It may be a big mistake that you made, or it may be nothing that you did at all, but the feeling is the same, it feels like someone punched you in the stomach.

Now, if it's a big mistake, you may be feeling guilt and shame. You will most definitely be feeling powerless. This thing has happened, there's no undoing it. You'll feel immediately if you're in shock like you want to undo this thing that's happened. You want to go back in time, you want to change it, you want it to be different. That's how you know you've been dealt this terrible blow.

One of the things that I like to ask myself, and I did ask myself as I was going through this was, "What's appropriate for me to be feeling right now? Is it appropriate for me to be feeling shame?" Often times, we feel shame because we have over-dramatized it, made something mean something terrible about ourselves...when really a more appropriate emotion would be guilt. Guilt is, "I've done something wrong and I feel guilty about it." Shame is, "There's something wrong with me."

It's, "I am a mistake versus I made a mistake." Ask yourself, "Is it necessary for me to be feeling this way?" Is it appropriate for me to be feeling this way?" For me, the answer was yes. I felt like I'd had this huge thing happen and I really felt awful and terrible about the situation. I was watching my mind and that's something I really want to encourage you to do. Notice, okay this big tidal wave just came and crashed down on me. I'm feeling like I'm in

the undertow. I'm feeling like I'm completely powerless.

The only thing I have power over right now is my mind and I'm going to watch my mind. You deliberately decide how you want to think, how you want to feel, and how you want to act. You don't let your mind decide that without your consent. It's really, really important. In these moments of us feeling powerless is a lot of times when we start acting out of control. What we'll do is we won't pay attention to our mind. We'll try to disconnect from the pain by overeating, over drinking, over gossiping, talking about our problems too much, victimizing ourselves, dramatizing the problems, reiterating the problem over and over in our own mind, and perpetuating, just continuously sucker punching ourselves over and over again.

You want to make sure you stay aware that you're watching your mind and you're deliberately deciding how you want to think, feel, and act. It may be appropriate for you to be feeling shame. It may be appropriate for you to be feeling guilt, but you will decide on purpose to do that instead of feeling like it's happening to you and that you are powerless and that you're dramatizing everything.

One of the best ways I have found to when I realize that I've done something wrong let's say and I'm feeling guilty about it, is I like to allow myself to feel shame or to feel guilt, whether it's appropriate or not. Just be aware of it and carry it around like a heavy purse and just know that it's there and not try and get rid of it and take deep breaths into it and just allow it. Just know this is part of the experience of being alive. This happens to people all the time. Everybody goes through a sucker punch in their life, regularly, and ongoingly.

Nothing terrible has gone wrong here, because when we start thinking something terrible has gone wrong, then we perpetuate it and make it worse, right? We just allow the guilt, allow the shame, allow the pain, allow the fear, whatever it is, just allow it to be there. The next step, when you've held the pain long enough and when you've been that space, then the next step is to start asking yourself great questions. This will give you your next layer of relief.

Your first layer of relief comes from this identifying with being the problem and being able to watch yourself think about it and to make decisions about it. You're powerless over the thing that happened and it has happened, but now you can decide how you want to think, feel, and act about it. That's your first layer of that. The next one is you ask yourself great questions. I'm going to give you four really good questions. If you're right in the middle of this write this down, "How can this make me stronger? What can I learn so this makes me smarter? How can I use this? What do I want to create from this?"

One of the things that I like to do is focus on the best case scenario. There was a time back in the day where I got involved in a situation where I lost a lot of money and it was just a really unhealthy situation. I basically lost an inheritance and the situation was eek. Had I not been involved in that situation, I never would have met my husband. Because I had lost all my money is why I went and got a job at Hewlett Packard and that's where I met Chris.

I see now that that was the most valuable wonderful experience I ever could had. I'd do it again a hundred times just to have the experience of meeting my husband and being with him. At the time, I couldn't see that. It's really helpful to help get yourself into a frame of mind where this may be useful. You have a best case scenario. A lot of times, you can only see that best case scenario after it's already happened. We want to start trying to find that now if we want to get some relief. We want to get these layers of relief by disassociating from making it worse first of all.

One of the best ways that I know how to do that is by watching our mind think and asking questions that make our mind think about something other than the problem. Brains love to spin catastrophe over and over and put us in that fight or flight position. One of the things that you can do is distract the mind, take your mind off of it by asking questions, having it be forced to think about other things because your brain, it has a very hard time not answering a question.

If it's trying to perpetuate the problem, now as soon as you stop asking the question, it's going to go right back to obsessing about the problem, which is okay, just keep asking questions. The next thing that I do... so the first thing is you're watching your mind, you're watching it spin the problem, you start asking questions, get refocused, start focusing on the solution to the problem, right?

You know that the problem is in your mind, so the solution will also be in your mind. You want to make sure you're spending more time focusing on the solution rather than focusing on the problem. Here are some thoughts that might be really useful to you if you're right in the middle of doing this, repeat to yourself, "I made a mistake, but I'm not a mistake. This horrible thing happens, this horrible thing happened in my life, but my life isn't horrible and I'm not horrible. I love you. It's okay." Repeat that over and over to yourself, "I love you. It's okay. I love you. It's okay. It's all going to be okay. I love." That's what I kept doing all last week.

I said, "life requires I feel negative emotions and have negative action sometimes and that's okay. That's okay. I will use this and be better and stronger." Another question that I like to ask myself is, "Who do I want to be through this experience?" I really want to be deliberate about who I want to be? The best way that I know how to do that is by using the self coaching model. If you are new to my podcast, I really want to recommend that you go back and learn the model so you're able to use it when you're in a situation that "sucks."

The only reason it sucks of course is because of your thoughts about it. One of the things that I do and love to do is to do the model on the current thought that I'm having and then do a model on the thought that I want to have. The first thing you do is write down the circumstance in a very factual way. Let's say it's a cancer diagnosis or my child didn't get into the school that I wanted, or my husband just told me he doesn't love me, or my husband just asked me for a divorce, or I just got laid off from my job, I just got fired from my job, or I just got rejected, whatever it is, wherever you are in that thing that sucks for you, put that in

that C line but make sure it's factual.

Then write down the thought that you currently are having about that circumstance that's creating such a negative emotion. I'll give you an example of what mine was. My circumstance was this horrible thing that had happened with my son, but I couldn't say this horrible thing. You can't put that in the C line so I just put my son's name in the circumstance of what had happened.

The thought was, this is terrible. My feeling was shame and worry. My action was to talk about the problem constantly to anyone who would listen and to talk about it in my own mind over and over again. The result from that was I just perpetuated the problem and made it even more and more terrible. There were more people thinking that it was terrible and there was so much energy around the terribleness of it.

Now, you take that exact same situation with my son and what had happened and you have the thought, "It's okay, this is happening for him. The feeling that I had was peaceful and confident. I took protected action." That was my action was to really access my wisdom and take protective action. The result was "it was okay". I actually took something that could have set me off and made me crazy and upset.

I took it as an opportunity to instead of being afraid and worried, and shamed, and acting that way, I went to a place of peace and confidence, and I made it so I could talk to my son and be more connected to him, be more present for myself, be more forgiving of myself and of him, and everything that happened around the situation. It really gave me a place where I could heal myself in this situation.

I felt a lot of shame and I was still carrying around that heavy purse of negative emotion, but I was actively doing something instead of feeling powerless and acting out that powerlessness by overeating, or over drinking, or something like that, I was constantly telling my brain what I wanted it to be focused on.

I really was able to focus on the solution and be in a really

aligned and humble place. From there, I asked myself some questions like around the best case scenario and wrote down some thoughts that I could read. The best case scenario for me ended up being this, this will teach him how to handle what is hard. That could be true for us too. This will teach us how to handle what is hard. We are humbled into being the best version of ourselves by being sucker punched. We don't get too big for our britches, as someone would say, right? We really remind ourselves where we are in the work that we need to do and stay in that place.

We learned to turn away from anything that doesn't serve us. We get refocused on what does serve us. We can be more connected to ourselves, more aware of ourselves. For me like I had to go through something so negative in such a long time that it really brought me back to suffering and what it's like to suffer, and really help me align more with my clients and where some of them are right now, and be able to help identify that, and really think it though like what it feels to be here and to be suffering and what my options are, that really genuinely work.

We can learn to be more respectful, kinder, and more aware. I will tell us the things that teach us to be more aware, to be kinder, and to be more respectful are usually the negative things, not the positive things. The best case scenario is not that this goes away. It's not that this changes. It's that we'd learn how to handle it well. We can recognize the blessings and manage them. Asking yourself, "Can you handle whatever it is that comes to?"

One of the things that I told my son is I said, "This will not be the last time you're sucker punched. This will not be the last time you sucker punch yourself, put yourself in a situation that's terrible." The way that you deal with this and learn how to deal with this and develop the skillset of overcoming adversity will really define you as a man. It's what develops your character. If you never have to suffer, if you never go through anything challenging, you never have to learn how to be that best version of yourself. Because there's never an opportunity for you to have to dig deep through your own suffering, to find that best version of yourself.

If we can learn how to handle hard things, if we can learn how to deal with our own sucker punches that we give to ourselves or the universe gives to us, we will be stronger, we will be better on the other side of it. I really want to encourage you that if you are one of those people who is in that situation right now, if you are in a situation that sucks and you feel powerless, I want you to sit down and say, "I do have control over what I think. I can decide how I want to feel. I get to decide what I want to do."

I can ask myself these questions and use this difficult thing, use this thing in my life that's so challenging to work on my character as a human being, to work on my skillset as a human being, and to come out better on the other side of it. If this is you, I just want you to know that I get it. I understand what it's like to be in the position. I also understand that there's two things that you're going to be tempted to do. You're going to be tempted to feel like a victim and victimize yourself over and over again.

You're going to feel like you want to catastrophize and spin and the problem, and make it worse in your mind and make it mean something it doesn't mean. That is what your brain will automatically do. What I want to encourage you to do is instead, ask yourself, "How can this make me stronger? What can I learn so it makes me smarter? How can I use this? What do you want to create from this? How can you use it to make yourself better?"

For sure notice that you may want to then retract from life, to take less risk, to put yourself out there less, to fail less. What I want to encourage you is that you do the exact opposite, you try something you fail and then you immediately try again. Because all of those failures are what bring you into an active life. All of those things are what bring you into success. All of those failures are what will make you stronger and smarter and able to create something different in your life.

Just know I have your back on this. I understand when you're in that space but it's a necessary part of life. If you use it, it will make your life better. You can use it to make your life better. All right, you guys have an amazing, beautiful week and I'll talk to you next week. Bye-bye.

Thank you for listening to the Life Coach School Podcast. It is my honor to show up here every week and connect with people that are like-minded, wanting to take their life to a deeper level with more awareness and more consciousness. If you are interested in taking this work to the next level, I highly encourage you to go to the lifecoachschool.com/howtofeelbetteronline. It is there that I have a class that will take all of these to a deeper application where you'd be able to really feel and experience how all of these concepts can start showing up in your life. It's one thing to learn it intellectually, it's another thing to truly apply it to your life. I will see you there. Thanks again for listening.