

Ep #132: Stop Buffering



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, my friends. My friend, Angela, who is also an avid listener of the podcast, got mad at me. I saw her in Dallas, and she's like, "I'm getting very frustrated that you're not saying 'Hello, my friends' when you get on the podcast," which, of course, I didn't even notice. I didn't even notice I did it until Sasha told me, one of my students told me in the class, "'Hello, my friends' is what I say to my dogs." We're pretty sure I love my dogs more than anything else in the world, so take it as a huge compliment. Whenever I get home, they come running up to the door and I, "Hello, my little friends. How are my little friends?" I guess that I started saying it on the podcast because I love you all so much. Hello, my friends, is what I want to say to all of you.

Today we're going to talk about buffering. I've been thinking so much about this lately, because ... Three reasons. The first reason is overeating; the second reason is overdrinking; and the third reason is minimalism. I have the most amazing group of women in my current Stop Overeating Masterclass. We have some brilliant minds in that class and we have lots of conversations about overeating, which, of course, leads to conversations about everything else.

One of the things all of us are obsessed over in that class is minimalism and the idea of minimalism. There's a woman in that class that's going to be a minimalism coach, which I think is brilliant. We were talking about how being a minimalist is so similar to the work that we're doing with our eating and showing up for our food and our protocols and stuff like that. She's lost 42 pounds in Stop Overeating Masterclass so far. We've only been at it 3 months. She's lost 42 pounds.

One of the ways that we do it is we create a protocol for ourselves and then we follow it. For many people, they feel like a protocol is restrictive. It's like a diet. It feels depriving. Very similarly to how people feel about getting rid of the extra items and clutter in their house. I can't even ... Like it blows my mind how the similarities are in getting rid of our excess weight on our bodies, getting rid of our excess stuff in our house. One of the other students in that class, who

is equally amazing, she was telling me that her items, the items that she owns, weighs 5,000 pounds. She knows that because she had to move all of her stuff and I guess they weigh it in order to charge her.

I was thinking about, like, it's so interesting how the weight of our stuff and the weight of our bodies are so, so similar. One of the issues that I notice a lot with my overeating clients is clutter and lack of organization. It's fascinating to see the similarities there. I talk a lot about this idea of buffering, and how buffering is one of those things that we do to not fully experience our lives, to not fully show up and face the truth and face the music. The reason why we don't want to face the truth of our lives is because we don't want to experience any type of negative emotion. We feel entitled to feel happy and pleasure all of the time.

I think part of the reason why that is, is because we are constantly bombarded with ways to feel pleasure. You should go eat something. You should go buy something. You should do that thing that will bring you pleasure. There is a lot of money made on pleasure: the pleasure of food, the pleasure of drinking, the pleasure of purchasing, the pleasure of spending money, right? A lot of organizations and corporations take advantage of that by not just playing to our natural inclination to seek pleasure, but by compounding it, by selling us things that are concentrated pleasure.

Not only do we want them for the pleasure of them, but we feel like they are almost as important as survival. They're so important to us because they have tricked our brain into thinking that that pleasure, that dopamine hit is the most important thing. What happens is the more we purchase, the more we purchase; the more we eat, the more we eat; the more we drink, the more we drink; the more we watch porn, the more we watch porn. It becomes like this perpetual issue in our lives because pleasure just wants us to beget more pleasure. Then we feel entitled to have pleasure all of the time. We feel that we can always escape our negative emotion. We can always feel pleasure because it's so immediately available in so many ways for us.

I've been thinking so much about this lately because I've been working with the overdrinking and working with the overeating and

even working with some of the minimalism and trying to encourage people that there is so much value to less: to less food, to less drinking, to less stuff. There is value. Yet, when you talk to people about less, all they want is more. We're sold on more. You can get more. You can have more. You can be more. You can feel more pleasure. When I'm like, "No, no. Less is better," they're like, "No, I'm not one of those people."

I remember feeling that way. I remember feeling like if you take pleasure out of my life, you're going to take all the fun out of my life. If you take away the false pleasure, if you take away the artificial pleasure, you will have taken all of the things that I think are fun in my life. I was thinking about going to parties and not drinking, going to parties and not eating. I mean this is me now, you guys. I go to party. I don't overeat and I don't overdrink, and I'm just like present. I used to think, "Oh my god, that would be so boring. That would be so awful." Like I can't even imagine that being a possibility, and yet it is way better than anything else I've ever experienced.

The question is why and how do I sell you guys on that idea. It's not an easy sell because, basically, I invite people to consider the possibility of not having that false pleasure, that buffer in their life. I just asked someone today actually and she burst into tears. Like the idea of a life without being able to cope by using food seemed completely intolerable to her. I've been talking to a lot of people and asking a lot of questions and talking to my husband about this idea of what ... My husband likes to drink beer. He loves to drink beer. I talked to him about the idea of what if your life will be better if you didn't drink beer at all. He looks to me like I'm nuts, which is totally fine.

Have you considered the possibility and how is it better? In what way is your life better if you don't have all these false pleasures? I remember one time my mom telling me like that she only likes to eat salads. I was like, yeah, I would just lose my desire to live. Like what's the point if you're all going to eat is salad? Like eating all these amazing foods is part of being alive. I never questioned that. I never questioned whether like drinking alcohol is part of the fun of being alive. Eating really pleasurable food is all part of being alive.

I read this book, it's called Presto! It's written by the guy, Penn, from Penn and Teller. He lost a hundred pounds recently. He did that by going on some crazy diet. He calls it the potato famine diet. He started by just going 2 weeks with just eating potatoes. One of the things that ... He was working with a coach at the time, and the coach said to him was that he needed to reset his palate. Penn thought to himself, "Maybe you've done enough of that kind of eating," meaning overeating, meaning eating all of the foods that have gotten him to the point where he was a hundred pounds overweight.

I read that in the book and I thought, "That's so interesting," like when are we willing, if ever, to give up a false pleasure, to get ...? Like I remember when I was younger and I remember I made the decision like I'm done dating guys like that. I'm just done. Like I went through a period where I dated a bunch of unavailable guys and I'm no longer doing that. It's what all of us do when we get married. We constrain ourselves to one person. We stop having all of these different things and all of these different options. A lot of people are unhappy about it.

A lot of us are really happy about it. The constraint actually being married to just one person gives us a ton of freedom and gives us a ton of freedom from chatter in our brains. I feel the same way about not drinking at all. I feel like it gives me a ton of freedom. It gives me this sense of not having to make decisions about it. It just gives me freedom in my brain. Like I don't have to think about other men; I don't have to think about whether I'm going to drink or not; and I don't have to think about whether I'm going to gain weight or lose weight. I'm just the same weight all the time because I pretty much eat the same thing all the time.

It's just opened up my brain to be able to focus on so many other things that I want to do with my life and do in the world and do with my kids and be with my family. I think that's the same thing that's true about minimalism as well. I think that so much of our stuff is just a buffer. It's a distraction. It creates overwhelm so we don't really experience what's going on in our life. It's like if we have a really hard time cleaning our house or keeping things straightened up, it's probably because we have too much stuff in there.

The question becomes "What is left? What remains when you stop

buffering? What is your life without false pleasures?" The way that I like to define a false pleasure is something that your brain has an inordinate reaction to that it's not evolved to accommodate and, therefore, has a negative consequence. What that means is that when we concentrate grapes into wine, basically, and we get that burst of dopamine, your brain is not used to it so your brain thinks that wine is a very important thing for our survival, and therefore we drink it at the expense of other things. It's the same with sugar. It's the same with flour. It's the same with heroine. It's the same with cocaine.

We take all these natural-occurring things in the world and we make them so they affect our brain in a way that is artificial and it's a false pleasure. Your brain is like, "Wow, this is amazing. This experience is much more amazing than the experience actually is in our life." We've escaped our life into this pleasure place. What it does is it buffers us from reality. I was actually ... I'm working on a podcast. I'm creating a new podcast for Stop Overdrinking, and I was working on one of the episodes.

One of the things that I was talking about in the episode is how when you go to a party sometimes, there's somebody there that's really drunk that thinks they're having a great time. You know this person, right? They're like having the time of their life but you look at them and they're not even home. The question is, is that person having fun? Like the person isn't even really conscious of what's happening, so are they really having a great time? Some people may say yes, but would you trade places with that person in order to have as much fun as they're having when they're super drunk like that?

I think we do that in little ways all through our life. We're having an experience that's unpleasant and we try to make the experience more pleasant by eating something. Maybe we're feeling anxious or maybe we're feeling stressed, or maybe we're feeling frustrated, and we eat and then we get that pleasure which helps us escape from that emotion. Now, does it mean that we're actually happier? Does it mean that we're actually having less negative emotion or have we just put ourselves into a space that makes us less aware of it because we've given ourselves this artificial dopamine hit or we've given ourselves this artificial alcohol?

I think that's what buffering is. It's when we use external things to change how we feel emotionally; an artificial external thing changes how we feel emotionally. Now, if you're a long listener of my podcast you know that what I suggest and encourage is that you use your mind to create the emotion. That's what's happening, anyway, and that you recognize that. If you want to change your emotion, you use your mind to change your emotion. Or you simply are willing to feel the emotion that you're feeling.

I was working with one of my coaches and she keeps telling me that she wants to do all these things to make herself happy. I just want to be happy. I want to leave this situation so I can be happy. I want to do this other thing so I can be happy. I told her, I said, "Here is what you don't realize is that you keep trying to be happy by changing all these external things. As soon as you recognize that you can be unhappy and you'll be fine, that you are willing to be unhappy, then you will find the thoughts causing it and get some authority over them.

Because you're constantly rejecting unhappiness, you're trying to solve it by seeking false pleasure and you're never going to get yourself out of that loop because what happens is you feel unhappy, you overeat, you watch Netflix, then you feel even more unhappy so then you overeat, you watch Netflix, then you feel even more unhappy. This is where my sales job comes in to stop buffering. What is the world like if you don't ever overeat, over drink, overspend, overwork, over people please, over Facebook? What is your world like if you don't seek the false pleasure and you just go for the true honest authentic life?

I teach a lot of coaches and a lot of them want to start businesses that offer clients an authentic life, but here's the truth. Nobody really wants that authentic life, because authentic to me means it's a 100% true. Like if somebody says, "This is an authentic item," it's a 100% true. It's not buffered in any way. It's not tarnished in any way. It's just like, "This is the truth of what it is," so the happiness is true and the sadness is true, and everything is authentic.

If I come to you and I'm 3 glasses in and I'm super happy, is that happiness authentic? If I'm 5 glasses in and I'm bawling my head off,

which has happened, am I genuinely sad? Am I authentically sad? Who knows? We've messed with my brain so much. If you want to live an authentic life, are you willing to live a life without any brain substance manipulation, without any false pleasures, without any pretend emotions?

I like to imagine, and I've used this example before but I want to use it in a slightly different way and I want you guys to think about this with me. Let's say that I could purchase happiness. Now, most companies, including Coca-Cola, will tell you that you can. It's in a bottle of Coke. Happiness is in a bottle of Coke. Let's say you actually could. Like you could take a drug, you could take like an injection and it will give you that emotion, okay? Like, "Oh, I'd like a little bit of happiness, I'll just inject it. I want a little bit of this." What we have done is taken food and taken alcohol and taken situations and manipulated them so we can create those emotional substitutes, those artificial emotions.

For example, when I have a lot of sugar, I have an intense dopamine hit of desire that happens in my brain. Because of that sugar, I have an endorphin hit. It gives me the sense that I have done something wonderful. My brain is like, "That was brilliant. Great job," and so I feel good because I just had that sugar in that immediate moment. Now, do I really feel happier or has my brain been tricked into thinking that I've done something wonderful? Your brain has been tricked. I think that we need to really consider how much we want pleasure to be the happiness that we feel. I'm talking about false pleasure, right? Do we want to cobble together a bunch of false pleasures and call that happiness?

Most people are like, "Yeah, I'm happy." Or do we want to remove all of those things and find a way to be happy without them? Is it possible? Now, if you've been using a lot of pleasure in your life, you probably won't think it's possible because when you remove all those pleasures, you go through withdrawal and you probably feel deprived and you probably are left with all the emotions that you've been unwilling to feel and life feels terrible.

On the other side of that, when you take away all those buffers and you pursue well-being, this is what happens. This is why I can

genuinely say my life is better now. I'm going to use the example of drinking, but please, just put anything in this slot that you overdo, okay? With drinking, I loved drinking. I would have a glass of wine and I would feel that wonderful warm glow in my brain and in my body that would make me think that the day had just gotten tremendously better within the last hour even though I'm sitting in the same spot, nothing has changed. I've just convinced my brain that everything is better now.

I tried to imagine a life where I didn't have that ability to drink something and immediately have my brain think that everything was better. I thought that what I would be left with, in my imagination is what I would be left with if I didn't have the buffer would be the feeling of emptiness, the feeling of loneliness, the feeling of boredom. I wouldn't ever be able to make that better. I had given myself this false idea that the only way to change the way I feel after a long day is the alcohol. What I learned when I stopped drinking is that, first of all, none of those emotions need to be eradicated immediately. It's okay to feel unhappy sometimes. It's not the end of the world.

In fact, when you allow yourself to really feel it, you get to know yourself in a much deeper way. When you get to know yourself in a much deeper way, you start finding the causes of that happiness and then you can start to change them. What you notice that's very different from the false pleasures is that it's sustainable. When I get pleasure from being able to wake up in the morning and not feel icky, when I get the pleasure of being able to sleep all the way through the night because I haven't had any alcohol, when I get the pleasure of feeling totally in control of myself because I haven't had any alcohol, when I get the pleasure of being able to put on any clothes that I want to wear and not worry that I've gained weight because I'm not buffering, that pleasure is ongoing and sustaining and actually gets better and better and better.

That is the pleasure that we are meant to experience in our life. I think natural pleasures accumulated equal happiness. Natural pleasures. The pleasure that we're meant to get from food is pleasure of eating a regular fuel meal. Now, when I eat a salad right now, I feel great afterwards. I get a dopamine hit that's very subtle. It's nothing like a dopamine hit that I get when I eat ice cream. When I eat ice

cream, I get this very intense dopamine hit. Here's the difference. After I eat the salad, I get the subtle dopamine hit and then it's beautiful after that. It's just a subtle little hit and then it goes away, and then I feel good and I have healthy food in my body, and then I go to the next salad, and I go to the next thing. It's just this constant steady stream of wellness that I get to experience as it pertains to my body.

Now, that doesn't mean that I don't have a negative emotion ever. It doesn't mean that I don't get upset. Of course, I do. I just don't deal with it by eating ice cream. When I eat ice cream, I get this immediate, very intense rush of pleasure and excitement and anticipation, and then it drops and then I have regret, and then I feel icky, which requires me to eat more ice cream and want more ice cream. What happens is the pleasure that we get from food over the long run actually diminishes. The pleasure we get from taking care of ourselves and fueling ourselves increases.

I'm going to do a podcast on hedonism and I'm going to talk about this idea of why don't we all just buffer the whole way through? Life is a hard battle, why don't we just buffer all the way through and make it through to the end? Eat as much as want, drink as much as we want, and have as sex as much as we want, buy everything we want, go into debt. The reason why is because all of that pleasure doesn't add up to happiness because of that equal and opposite consequence that comes with all false pleasures. It's such a bummer, right?

If we could have all those pleasures with no consequence, with just positive, positive, positive, positive stuff, then all of us would be on that train and nobody would care. Because we end up feeling so much pain on the other end of it because we have to suffer because of it, that's when we were like, "I wish I didn't have this buffer in my life," because buffers only provide temporary release from negative emotion, and always come back harder than they started. When you go out and buy yourself a brand new car that you can't afford, you have that one rush of pleasure about it and then you have the payment, and then you have the lack of money and then the stress about it.

When you overeat or you have all this food then you gain the weight,

and then you feel sick afterwards. There is always that equal and opposite consequence that makes it so it's never really worth it, and even though we tell ourselves that it is.

My hard sell is for you is this. You can trade all of the false pleasures in your life for well-being. Here's the other thing that I think is so important. When you do that, you gain confidence and that confidence begets more confidence, begets more confidence, begets more confidence. The more confidence you have, the more empowered you feel, the more well-being you have, the more you have to give and offer the world. I think that is the point, because I think that's when we're at our ultimate happiness is when we are able to be the best version of ourselves and contribute to the world.

When we are in a pleasure-seeking mode, we cannot give. We get into take, take, take, take, take, take, take mode. I want to eat. I want to drink. I want to buy. I want, I want, I want, I want. We're caught in a false desire spin that never gets satisfied. You can't get enough of something you don't really want. If you're trying to escape, you always have to be escaping.

Here's what I want to suggest to you. There's 3 things I want to take you to. First, I want you to imagine your life without the thing you buffer with. Immediately, you are going to feel fear and deprivation if it's really something that you used to buffer and survive. It is because you believe that you can't survive without it. I promise you that you can. I promise you that your life without it isn't just tolerable, it's actually way better without it, whatever it is, okay? I want you to imagine never having it again whether it's cake or M&Ms or Dutch Bros. or coffee or whatever it is that is causing you a negative consequence in your life. Imagine your life without it.

That's the easy part. The hard part is the feelings that you will be left with. What will you feel? You might feel a little bit of withdrawal at first. You might feel a little bit of deprivation at first because it's always been your go-to. Ultimately, what you will feel is whatever that emotion is you're trying so desperately trying to escape and that emotion has some important information for you. It's telling you what you're thinking. It's telling you what you're believing. It's telling you how you're going to act and show up in the world. If you're constantly

trying to avoid yourself, you're missing the authenticity of your life.

When you live in an authentic way, you get to offer the world your authentic-ness. It's ultimately what will give you the most confidence to go out there and show up, to go out there and fail, and to not have to pad yourself with buffers. Imagine your life without it. Imagine what are you so afraid of? What is the feeling that you're so afraid to feel? One of my students today told me, she said, "If I can give up my buffers and I can get to my weight and not drink and experience emotion and do my thought work, what else will I be capable of? That's what really scares me," is what she said. I'm really scared of ultimately what I'm capable of.

I think for most of us, it's not that we're afraid to make ourselves available to the world; it's not that we're afraid of showing up and being who we genuinely are; we just really don't know how. We don't know how to feel all of the emotions that are part of living an authentic life. Option number one is you believe that you should always be happy and you use buffers and pleasure to try and keep you on this side of the line. Option number two is you recognize that half of your life is going to be and should be negative emotion. Not negative emotion that should be escaped from, but negative emotion that should be paid attention to and used to manage yourself emotionally and also to manage yourself cognitively.

Your emotions are an indicator of what's going on for you. To be authentic, to have a true relationship with your life is to also be willing to experience negative emotion 50% of the time. If you are willing to do that without escape, you will remove all of the buffers in your life, and at the same time you will remove all the negative consequences that come with it. Here's what that means for those of you who overeat. You will get to your ideal weight if you never buffer with food. You will have the pleasure of being able to put on anything and it will fit and you will be at your ideal weight. Period. If you quit drinking, you'll be able to give up any hangover, any embarrassing moment, any way that you feel when you drink alcohol that you rather that you didn't.

If you give up the clutter in your life, the overbuying in your life, you will be left with only the best things in your life. You will only buy

things that you genuinely love. You'll be surrounded by things that are the very best things. Instead of having four spoons, you'll just have one best spoon. It will be the best spoon, the only spoon you need and you will love it instead of having four that aren't quite right. You will stir with that spoon and you will mean it. It will have a quality and an authenticity to your life that will feel different.

That is my invitation to you. My invitation to you is to give up the false pleasures so you can enjoy the full pleasure of well-being. The full pleasure of well-being does not mean that you don't experience negative emotion; it just means that you have no problem when it's there. You can handle it. You're not constantly being a victim of your own emotional life. You're willing and able to walk in to any negative emotion. When you're willing to do that, buffering will become unnecessary and all the negative consequences will go with it.

I know that was a hard sell. I'm trying to talk you into it only because it's the best feeling in the world. You cannot take someone who has eliminated all those false bufferings and shake their confidence, because don't you feel like I was able to figure out overeating. I was able to figure out overdrinking. I can't even tell you how impossible those things were for me to think about when I was in them. Now, on the other side of that, I'm like, "Bring it. What else do you got?" because those were the hardest things for me.

The last thing I'm going to say is sometimes people will ask me, "Well, is it buffering if I watch documentaries all day on a Saturday? Is it buffering if I watch Netflix all the time? Is it buffering if I'm constantly going to the movies?" Here's what I want to say about that. Does it give you a negative consequence on the backend and are you using it to avoid negative emotion? If the answer is yes to either one of those, then yes, it is buffering. If you're willing to feel your emotions and you're willing to go through those things and you go to movies or you watch Netflix and you don't experience a negative consequence on the other side of it, then rock it out.

Like not everything is buffering. You will know because it will have a negative impact on you. You will know because you will be creating it through negative emotion. All right, you guys, go out there and practice not buffering and see who you really are without it. What

does your body look like without buffering? What do you look like without buffering? How do you show up in the world without buffering? I want to see. Talk to you guys next week. 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 TheLifeCoachSchool.com/howtofeelbetteronline. It is there that I have a class that will take all of these to a deeper application where you'll 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.