

Ep #135: Why Growing Matters



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. Ooh, we got a good one today. We got a great topic. It's so interesting. As I was preparing for this topic today, I was only thinking, "I am getting more questions than I'm getting answers." This is one of those amazing podcasts where I actually wish that I could speak with you all. I wish we could be live on the phone, because I know that you all would have some great insight on this. I think it's interesting because I'm sitting in my car thinking about this concept and having some ideas about it that I want to tell you, and you're probably in your car right now listening to me on this podcast having some ideas about it that you'd like to share with me.

It's such an interesting relationship that we have. Today what I want to talk about is why growing matters. It's along the theme of these last five podcasts, and what I've been talking about with you guys about how it's a hard sell and how evolving ourselves and this pull that I have to teach you all that it's important to go after all the hard things. I keep asking myself the question, why? I need to answer that question, so I can sell you guys on it. For example, when I'm working with someone that's overdrinking...why bother not overdrinking? Why not just keep overdrinking for the rest of your life? A lot of people do. Why bother trying to lose weight? Why not just stay overweight? Why not just keep overeating? A lot of people do.

Why bother with trying to grow a business or make more money or learn a new skill or be less angry or be more loving or be more kind? Why bother doing any of these things? I think it's an important question, and something that maybe most of us don't ask. I think especially if you're listening to this podcast, you are probably a person that's interested in self-growth and self-development, in becoming better and better and better, but there's a lot of people that aren't like us, right? There's a lot of people that don't listen to podcasts like this and don't think about these things. You know who they are, right?

It doesn't mean they're unhappy. This is why I am asking this question. When you look at some of these people that you see them

10 years ago, and then you see them now, and they literally have not changed. They're doing the same thing every day. They look the same, just a little bit older. They're saying the same things. They have the same stories. They're living literally the same life, and they seem perfectly content with doing it. I'm always fascinated by that. I do not understand that. I am wired, it seems, a very different way. I've always asked myself, "is my way better?" Well, the answer for me is "it's better for me, right?" The way I live my life is better for me because I can't imagine living it the other way.

Those people can't imagine living their life my way. "Why am I bothering with all of this? Why do I care about making a contribution to the self-help industry? Why do I care about building a business? Why am I trying to figure out how to manage my emotions better? What is all of that about? What is the point of all of that?" I think those are really valid questions. I think they're easy to answer. Well, I just know that they are good. I just know that's how I choose to live my life, but why? How do we answer that question? I started just thinking about the idea of growing and what it is and what it means to grow for us, right?

Of course, when you look it up on Google, it's all about our physical growth and growing up as children and getting taller and getting bigger, right? One of the things that I wanted to differentiate between is, obviously physical growth is not what I'm talking about. We can't make an effort to grow more physically, although a lot of us are growing bigger physically because of what we were eating. That's not what I'm talking about. I want to differentiate between personal growth and self-growth for the sake of the evolving, versus personal growth for the sake of compensating.

What I mean by that is there's a way where people try to develop themselves and grow, because they think they're unacceptable the way they are. I think that's where a lot of the self-help addiction comes from. I think it's a right along the same topic where I've heard a lot of people say that they're addicted to self-help. When you're addicted to self-help, it's very similar to being addicted to any other type of quick-fix pleasure in your life. I really think there was a time in my life where I can say this is how I was coping. I was coping with reading self-help and going to self-help seminars and trying to escape

myself and trying to make myself more acceptable because I had so much self loathing.

That is different than thinking that you are acceptable and wonderful and you love yourself and then wanting to grow from that place. I think that's a very important distinction. I don't think that people need to grow because there's something wrong with them at all. I don't think that is the purpose of self-growth. I think that's why the question comes up for a lot of people. Why would you pursue growth if there's nothing wrong with you? Why would you want to learn new things if what you already know is enough? I want to make sure that that's really clear, because I don't think any of us should be wagging our fingers at anyone else and telling them that they should be growing and if they're not going to means there's something wrong with them - that the reason to grow is because there's something wrong with them.

That is not the case, and I don't think that you need self-growth and self-development in order to fix something that's wrong with you. Then what does it mean to already be complete in the sense that you love yourself, and you feel lovable, and you're taking care of yourself in a way that feels good? Why do we need to keep growing? A lot of people would say that the pursuit of additional growth is actually just a hassle, and it actually makes us tired and it's burning us out. It's doing the opposite of keeping us in the present moment. It's doing the opposite of acceptance. It's actually taking us out of those things, because we're constantly wanting to be better and better and better.

I think that's a valid point. I think that we need to address it. The first one is self-growth does not mean there something wrong with you, and you need to grow out of what's wrong with you. The other thing is I don't think that self-growth means that you're always trying to get more and more success and accomplishment at your own expense. In fact, I think it's the opposite. I'm going to differentiate it by telling you this: self-growth takes you deeper within yourself before it shows on the outside. True self-growth. That's different than chasing something outside of yourself to compensate for any kind of shortcoming.

They will feel very different. One will feel nourishing and caring, and

the other one will feel debilitating and exhausting. I want to make sure we have kind of a level playing ground before we start talking about this concept. We're talking about the concept of evolving, of growing from the inside out, not from accomplishing more success on the outside. Certainly not accumulating more on the outside. It's not changing at our own expense. It's the opposite of that. It's growing from an internal place that evolves us in a cognitive and emotional way. That is how I like to think about growth.

I did quite a bit of research, quite a bit of Googles on this, trying to find "is there a universal accepted definition of what it means to grow from within?" I really couldn't find one. I mean the definition that I found of growth is "a change in size or maturation." Maturity, right? I liked the part about maturity. Let's think about that. Do we want to continuously become more mature? For me the answer is yes, because of my association and the terminology that I use with emotional maturity. To me, emotional maturity means I take increasing responsibility for my emotional life. What that will mean is as I grow and learn how to do that even more, I get more and more empowered in my life.

I get more and more belief in my ability to do what is ever coming from within my intuition and my desire. I think that that matters. Here is my theory. This is what I came up with on this. I think there is an importance to growing and learning continuously, because I think the more we grow and learn, as it applies to psychological self-knowledge and self-growth, the more capacity we get to create in the world, the more capacity we get to fulfill our desires. For me, I have a belief that our desires, what it is we genuinely want to create in the world, matters, and we wouldn't have been given that desire if we weren't meant to bring it to fruition.

When I look at the people who overcome their own brains and their own emotional lives in order to make a contribution, I see how it's not just an individual evolution. It evolves us as a species, and I think that that may be the whole point of all of this. When I look at the contributions that have been made from so many people, through so much hardship, through so much kind of pounding the pavement in terms of getting over themselves, getting over their own nonsense, in order to bring their dreams into the world. I see how I have benefited

my species, my humanness has benefited from them choosing to grow instead of to stagnate.

When I look at it that way, I see that the more I grow, the more I have the ability to create. The more I grow, the more I will create. The more I create, maybe the more we all evolve and if we all contribute, and if we all are willing to get over ourselves and grow, then maybe we evolve even faster and better. That is my theory going into this. That is what I've come up with. I also believe that we have within us an innate desire. Desire may not feel like the right word, but like an innate push to grow and evolve. I think it is part of our humanness. I think we are nudged towards growth.

If you guys know about Abraham Maslow, he talks about our hierarchy of needs. I think in the beginning of our evolution, we were nudged to meet our physiological needs and our safety needs, right? At first, it was just about food, water, warmth, and rest. We were motivated to do that. We were motivated to go out and do those things as part of our evolution. We were motivated to take care of ourselves and be safe. Then we were motivated to belong and love. Something that comes from within us, this desire to feel love. This desire to feel like we belong. Then, once all of those needs are met, we start having this, what Maslow calls self-fulfillment needs.

I started thinking about this concept of self-fulfillment, especially as it relates to well-being. I think that we are invited to - I should say - I think that's a beautiful way of saying it. We are invited to fulfill ourselves in the deepest most ultimate way. Again, I'm not talking about fulfilling ourselves with false pleasures. I'm talking about the ultimate fulfillment. The way that he describes it is achieving one's full potential, including creative activities. I think just as we were pulled to take care of ourselves physically, just as we were pulled to belong, just as we were pulled into this idea feeling good about ourselves, we're also pulled into to fulfilling our potential, which aids and contributes to the evolution of the world.

Now, that doesn't mean that fulfilling our potential is going to look like thousands of people clapping. It doesn't mean that we're going to touch thousands of people's lives. It may mean that, but it may not mean that. It may mean you evolving touches one person's life, and

that because their life is different, you will evolve in a different way. I really do believe that. I believe if everyone's kind of on this planet together, and we all have this innate desire to move forward. Don't you guys get the sense of that? That we all have like this innate desire to move towards, to grow?

I think even all the natural things in the world, and everything kind of has an inclination to grow, right? At least for a portion of its life. To grow physically and to also grow in the sense that as human beings, we grow in terms of our psychological and emotional, cognitive, all of those needs. If I need to sell you on it, I have to tell you what it is first, and what it requires, and why you will benefit.

I'm going to start with why you will benefit. I think that you will experience, if you are committed to growing, you will experience an increased capacity for well-being. The more experience you have in the world, the more is required of you emotionally, the more that's required of you to get over, what I like to say, get over your own nonsense, to move beyond the primitive brain that once instant gratification, because growing requires us to be disciplined, requires us to fail and get over that failure. It requires us to get stronger. It requires us to build more neural pathways in our brain. It requires us to be aware and to be conscious and to pay attention.

I think when we are in a state of being more aware, being more conscious, paying more attention, we are more present in the world. We bring more energy to the present moment. When we do that, we make a contribution, whether we recognize it or not. When we decide not to grow, we require much less of ourselves. We can be very unconscious if we're not asking ourselves to grow. We have plenty of money. We don't need to work. We can drink all we want. We can eat all we want. We can just go into unconsciousness whenever we choose. We can pop some pills if we want. We can watch some porn. We can buy whatever we want.

There is no consciousness. We are not making a contribution to the consciousness of the planet. We're basically just plugging into the matrix, and when we don't make a contribution emotionally, cognitively to the planet, we do not aid in its evolution. I love when I'm reading about Maslow, one of the things that he talks about that I

think is really interesting is that there's a person, there's the type of person, that will try and go to the top of that hierarchy of needs, that will grow in the ultimate way and will pursue what he calls self-actualization. It refers to the person's desire for self-fulfillment, namely to the tendency for him to become actualized in his potential.

I think all of us have the desire to fulfill our potential. I do believe that. I think a lot of us don't listen to it, because it's like a lot of work, honestly. He says, "The specific form that these needs will take will, of course, vary from person-to-person. In one individual, it may take the form of the desire to be an ideal mother. In another, it may be expressed athletically. In still another, it may be expressed in painting pictures or in inventions." He says, "Here are the characteristics of people who actually continue to grow to the point of self-actualization, which means they're committed to continuously growing.

"They perceive reality efficiently and can tolerate uncertainty. They accept themselves and others for what they are. They're spontaneous in thought and action. They're problem centered, in terms of solving problems, not self-centered. They have an unusual sense of humor. They're able to look at life objectively. They're highly creative. They're resistant to inculturization." I hope I said that right. Inculturization, and what I think that means is that they are not just following along with the culture, but not purposefully unconventional. "They're concerned for the welfare of humanity. They're capable of deep appreciation of basic life experience.

"They established deep, satisfying interpersonal relationships with a few people. They have peak experiences. They have a need for privacy. They have democratic attitudes. They have strong moral and ethical standards." I think that makes sense. His description of that. I think where he came up with that is he did a lot of research in terms of who are the people he would define as self-actualized, and what did they have in common? Then he talks about the behavior leading to self-actualization. "Experience life like a child with full absorption and concentration, trying new things instead of sticking to safe paths, listening to your own feelings in evaluating experiences, instead of the voice of tradition, authority or the majority.

"Avoiding pretense and being honest, being prepared to be unpopular

if your views do not coincide with those of the majority, taking responsibility and working hard, trying to identify your defenses, and having the courage to give them up." He says, "The characteristics of self-actualizers and the behaviors leading to self-actualization are shown on the list above. Although people achieve self-actualization in their own unique way, they tend to share certain characteristics.

"Self-actualization is a matter of degree. There are no perfect human beings." Love, love, love that. One of the things that I find totally fascinating about this idea is that it's available for all of us. He looked at Abraham Lincoln. It says he studied 18 people he considered to be self-actualized, including Abraham Lincoln, Albert Einstein. If you look at yourself, and you look at your potential, so the way that we're defining being self-actualized is do you pursue your ultimate potential for yourself? That doesn't mean that your potential has to match someone else's, right?

Your potential, what you've been given. I'm always telling this to my son, Connor. I'm always saying to him, there's a reason why God gave you the ingredients that he gave you. The universe gave you. You were created the way were created, however you want to say. How you use those is completely unique to you. You are the only one that has that specific combo, and how you decide to use it in the world, will create something that nobody else could possibly have created in the same way. I do think that's important. I do think that matters in the world. I think that the opposite of self-growth is safe, avoidance, familiar, comfort, and effortless, not wanting to make an effort.

Although there is the theory, and I tend to believe it, because I see it happen to so many of my clients who have this underlying desire to be something bigger, more in their lives. They ignore it. They don't pay attention to it, and instead, they indulge in comforting activities, in the indulgent false pleasures. What they end up with is like a burning desire within them that is unfulfilled, and so what they feel is being unfulfilled. I think that comes from this place of knowing that you have this potential, knowing that you have this ability, knowing that you have this desire, and ignoring it.

It's almost like the quote. "If you take what's within you and use it and

create it in the world, all your dreams will come true, and it will save you. If you take what's within you, and you don't use it, and you keep it inside you, that very same thing can kill you.” I think that's a fascinating way of looking at self-growth, and I think that if you are one of those people that has that inkling that desire within you, I think it's really important to pay attention to it. I think, for sure, that self-growth will be your ticket to having an increased capacity for well-being.

I think well-being could be worth it. I don't know that that has to be such a hard-sell, that consistent sustained feeling of goodness, of acceptableness, of happiness, of being on the right path and not having anything have the ability to take that away. I think that's what the pursuit of self-growth earns us. I think it earns us well-being and I think it increases our capacity for well-being. I think it gives us vibrance. I think it gives us strength. I think it gives us presence. I think it opens up our attention and our consciousness, all of which puts us smack dab in the present moment and allows us to be more alive than if we weren't growing.

I hope I've given you kind of an inclination, kind of a “hmm,” something to consider that if you aren't growing and you've made excuses for why you aren't growing, that you'll reconsider. Some of the things that prevent self-growth are blame, being completely past-focused and stuck in your past, complaining, buffering, false pleasures, complicating where you don't need to complicate instead of simplifying, unconsciousness, poor health, and lying. Those things that prevent us from growth, prevent us from feeling that potential within us, being realized.

I used to say all of the time that the best feeling I know is the feeling of being proud of myself for having overcome something difficult, being proud of myself for doing the thing that I most wanted to do, even though it was hard. Even though is the harder thing to do, it was the right thing to do. I'm not talking about false self-pride. I'm talking about genuine pride. I think that's what this is referring to, right? Referring to what it is like to experience your potential, being realized by your own hand. I think this goes back to that idea. I used to talk a lot about money, and I used to coach a lot around money, and one of the things that we used to talk about, and I used to ask my clients is,

would you rather win a million dollars or earn a million dollars?

Most everyone said, I would rather earn it. Even though it would take a lot of hard work, I would rather earn it. I always found that so fascinating, and I think it's because the difference between feeling lucky and feeling your potential realized has no comparison. Having become the person that could earn a million dollars, having become the person that created that ability for themselves, would feel so much more amazing than having been a person that was able to pick the right ticket.

I think that is the promise of self-growth. I think that is the promise that we give ourselves when we answer that invitation towards it. Now, here's the thing. I just want to warn you before I let you go. When you answer that invitation, you are answering an invitation to hard work and a lot of negative emotion. You're also answering the invitation to a lot of positive emotion, and a lot of the fulfillment, and maybe the ultimate emotion that we can all feel is that feeling of truly being self-actualized and making a contribution with our life.

What is the biggest contribution that we can make with our lives? I think all of us make a contribution with our lives just by being here, so I think we all get the benefit of that, but I think the more we're willing to grow, the more we're willing to reach our potential, the more contribution that we make. We just basically take that innate fulfillment that is available to all of us, and we just increase it dramatically, exponentially, when we're willing to grow. I want you guys to think about this in your own personal life.

I want you to ask yourselves, “why should I grow? Why should I go to the next step and do the next thing and pursue the next goal? Why should I even bother trying to become self-actualized, or fulfill my potential, or learn something new? Why should I even listen to my own desires when I can just settle in here, and be comfortable?” See if the reasons I gave you resonate with you. If they do, I want to encourage you to not take a little step today toward self-growth, to take a huge step, to stop effing around, to stop comforting yourself with false pleasures, and to put a line in the sand and make a decision to grow.

To do it in a way that matters to you. Do it for you. All right you guys. Have an amazing week. I'll talk to you next week. Take care.

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 this 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 intellectually. It's another thing to truly apply it to your life. I will see you there. Thanks again for listening.