

Ep #156: Blame



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, and now, your host, Master Coach Instructor, Brooke Castillo.

Hello, hello, hello, my friends. How are you guys? My dogs just got totally excited when I did that. They love it when I talk to them like that. I know some of you guys do too. When I don't say "Hello my friends", I get emails, so hello my friends. Listen. I just taught the most amazing class within Self Coaching Scholars, so here's what I want to tell you. If you are not in that group yet, what the what? I am not just saying this. You have to get in that group.

Now, listen. I know for some of you, it's expensive. I know that. I'm totally aware of that, but I want you to look at where you're spending your money. Are you spending it on things that don't matter as much as your mental health, because I will tell you, there is nothing more important than your mental health.

I know that a lot of you are listening to this podcast and applying what I'm teaching you and that's your only option, but if you can, you need to get into Self Coaching Scholars because it is the best work by far I have ever done in my entire life, and it just keeps getting better in there. We have some amazing, amazing people in there and it's such an honor to work with all of you. Okay. Today, we're going to talk about blame. I've been working with a lot of people on this lately, and it's a tough one, and I work with this on myself all the time, but I will tell you that blame is one of the worst things you can do to yourself.

It's not about the other person. It's not about the person you're blaming. It's not about the thing you're blaming. Blame is a horrible thing to do to yourself. The definition of blame is to assign responsibility to someone else, and what most of us are doing is assigning responsibility for how we feel to someone else, so think about the person that you are applying responsibility to.

Is that the person you want to delegate your feelings to? Is that the person you want to be in charge of how you feel? I don't think so. I know that for me, the answer is usually no. I mean, I love this responsibility because I think it sums up blame so well assigning

responsibility to somebody else, delegating your emotional life to someone else.

Blame is always disempowering as it applies to our emotions. In episode 36, I talked about the difference between responsibility and blame. Make sure you listen to that episode if you haven't. Also, listen to episode 25 on emotional adulthood. One of the worst things about blaming is that it feels good in the instance. You're doing it to abdicate responsibility.

It feels good in the moment to be able to blame someone else and make them take responsibility for how you feel or for something that happens, but what I want to say is it's also just because it feels good, it's like tasting good. It's like abdicating responsibility for your own empowerment and it is completely disempowering. It's like someone else is in charge of me. You give all your power away when you do that, and I want you to resist the urge to do that for your own sake. Think of it this way...if someone else is responsible for how I feel, then I have to depend on them if I want to change how I feel.

How many of you want to depend on that person that you're blaming for how you feel? Think about it. Your ex-husband, your mother-in-law, your kids, your husband, your boss. Do you want to rely on them and their behavior for how you feel? Do you feel terrible? Do you want them to change what they're doing in order for you to feel good because they're so bad at it? Other people are so bad at making us feel good. Have you noticed that? They just don't behave. They just don't do what we want them to do. It's like I'm the manager of my own life handing out responsibility, and I've chosen the people I like the least to be responsible for when I feel upset, angry, and frustrated. I blame them or assign responsibility to them for my emotions. I watch a lot of people do this with what's going on in the world right now. Right? They give credit to people they don't respect for how they're feeling about the world. I promise you, you are the only one responsible for how you feel always and forever.

It's the best news I have for you. The best news that I have for you. If you blame someone else, if you blame a situation, you have no power. You have to change the person or the situation in order to feel better, and sometimes, that's not possible. Now sometimes, it might

be appropriate to assign responsibility to someone else for an action and it's important to distinguish this.

For example, the person hit me in the face, this person stole my money, this person didn't do their work on time, this person didn't take out the trash. This type of blame assigned someone else responsibility for their actions and this is very appropriate. Note that doing this does not cause us pain or any type of emotional discomfort. Most of us do not do this very well. We don't hold other people responsible for their actions.

We hold other people responsible for our emotions, so instead of saying, "You did this thing and you are responsible for doing this thing", we say, "You do this thing and you're responsible for how I feel", and the other person is never, and I mean ever, responsible for how you feel. That person is responsible for what they did and their action, but they're not responsible for how you feel. You are responsible for how you feel, so if somebody punches you in the face ... Goodness, I hope they don't, but if someone punches you in the face, they are responsible for punching you in the face. They are responsible for assault. They can go to jail for this. Right? They're responsible for that action. What you make that mean and how you feel about that emotionally is on you. Okay?

Huge distinction. Very important. The reason why I want you to make that distinction is not because I want you to release somebody from responsibility for hitting you in the face. What I want you to do is keep your power within yourself and not victimize yourself further by giving them power over your emotion. They've already punched you in the face. They've already physically hurt you. They've given you the sensation of pain physically. I do not want you to then assign them responsibility for how you're feeling. Okay?

It's a really big distinction, so if they punch you and you make it mean that they don't love you, that you're not important, that you're not safe in the world, that you're a horrible person, whatever you make it mean, and then you give them responsibility for, you will lose that much more power. You've already been hit in the face. You don't need to make it worse with the emotional story that you tell about it.

This is true for any of you who've had any experience with any kind of physical or a sexual abuse in your past. There is for sure that physical abuse, but most of us may get so much worse by what we make it mean and how we think about it. In fact, typically, that is the most painful part about it especially sexual abuse. What we make it mean about ourselves, what we make it mean about our worth, what we make it mean about shame and us being damaged goods and all of that is so much more destructive than the actual abuse.

What's even worse than that is then we give that person the blame for making us feel that way. We give them so much more power than we need to, and especially when we were children. If we were abused as children, many of us are still as adults giving those perpetrators power over our emotional lives as adults. Even though the abuse is long done, we've made it mean something that continues to victimize us daily, and I want to let you know that blaming someone gives them power.

Holding them responsible for their actions is different than blaming them. Other people are responsible for their actions. They are not responsible for how we feel now. Someone that abused you when you were a child is responsible for abusing you, for the action that they took. They are not responsible for how you feel about it now. They are not responsible for how you had it affect your life now. That's on you, and that's good news. You don't want that person to be responsible for your emotional life now. Of all the people you can imagine in the world being responsible for your emotional life, that is not who you want to have in charge. Take that power back.

Their lack of effort may be why they didn't complete the task. Their mistake is why the project didn't get done. "He was late picking me up, and that's why we didn't arrive on time". Those sorts of things are assigning responsibility to the person who was involved in the action. That is appropriate. Okay?

It's inappropriate to say, "I'm stressed out because you picked me up late. I'm angry because he picked me up late." That's very different, or "I am angry because they didn't complete the task on time". Your anger is on you. They're responsible for not completing it on time.

When blaming extends to how we feel or how we act, that's when we're very confused. No one else is responsible for how we feel. That's our thinking. No one else is responsible for how we act. That's a hundred percent up to us. Let me give you an example.

My son is doing this. My sons are teenagers and they like to beat the crap out of each other. I will say to one of them, "Hey, please don't hit your brother", and he'll say, "The reason I hit my brother was because of something that he said". I explained to them, "No. That is never the reason you can give for hitting your brother. It is never your brother's responsibility or your brother to blame for an action that you take."

"I'm mad because my brother did this, that, and the other thing". "No, you're mad because of what you're thinking about what your brother did. Do not give him that much power." It's a really tricky one for most of us because we think, "I wasn't mad. Then he did that, so now I'm mad, so it must be because he did that."

No. It's because of what you thought about what he did. That's why you feel mad. Again, when I'm talking to my kids, this is very good news because they don't want their brother to be more powerful. They'll say, "I hit him because he hit me", "I stole his money because he stole mine", "I yelled at him because he didn't finish his work on time", "I hate him because he never takes out the trash", yada, yada, yada.

These are never true. These are blaming other people and giving them much more power than they have. This is assigning responsibility inappropriately. We are always responsible for our own actions always. When my son tells me he's being mean because his brother was mean first, I always correct him. He's being mean because of his thoughts and feelings and his actions, not because of his brother. Even more difficult for most people to believe is that no one is ever responsible for how we feel. We always create our own feelings. It may not always seem this way, but it's always true. We can't have a feeling without a thought causing it.

This is good news my friends. Someone might say something to us and it won't bother us. Have you ever had this experience where

someone tries to put you down and you're amused? I told this story in Self Coaching Scholars where my son was saying, "I was so extra." He said, "Mom, you're so extra." I was like, "Totally. Agree". He's like, "That is not a compliment, mom". I was like, "What do you mean? I think it's a great compliment." He's like, "No. It's like someone telling you that you're ugly."

I'm like, "Why would anyone ever tell me I'm ugly? That's a terrible thing for someone to say. I'm not ugly." Right? It's like all of these things coming at me were not upsetting me, whereas someone else might take it very personally and make it mean something and use it as a reason to be upset. I didn't at all, which of course was not the intention of my son. He was very frustrated and I proceeded to tell everybody how extra I am.

You have to notice that how can someone say something to you one day and it's upsetting and they could say something else to you, and it's not upsetting? Is it that person's fault for saying it or is it your fault for getting upset? I would like you to take the responsibility for you getting upset because then, you have the power to change it. Here's the other thing. How do you explain it when somebody ridicules you and your friend, and your friend isn't upset and you are?

It's the same exact action. How come both of you don't feel the same way? Because of your own thinking. Okay? Other people are assigned responsibility for their actions and other people are assigned responsibility for their feelings.

This is the reverse of this. Right? A lot of times, we want to take responsibility for how other people feel. We want to say, "I don't want to not go to their house for dinner because then, they'll feel upset. I don't want to not eat what they serve me, because then, they'll feel upset." "I don't want to not go to their party because then they'll be mad at me." You're assigning responsibility for how they feel by what you're doing. Now, that is never the case. They're always responsible for how they feel, so people will say to me when I teach this, people will come up to me and say, "What you're saying is you don't have to take responsibility for your behavior and you can just treat people terribly and not have to take responsibility for them being upset." I said, "Nope. That's not what I teach."

"I always teach you take responsibility for your behavior, and if you're going to act in a mean, spiteful, terrible way, you're probably coming from a very negative emotion", and I always say "You have to take responsibility for your own emotions and your own actions". What I'm suggesting is that how that person interprets what you do, no matter what your intention is, is their responsibility.

I grew up taking responsibility for my mother's emotions because I was always feeling like I wanted to take care of her. I was always feeling like I wanted to make sure she was happy. My brother was a drug addict and my mom was very depressed when my parents got divorced, and as a small people-pleasing child, my role was to be a very good girl and to make sure my mom remained happy, and so I spent a lot of time trying to control her emotions and trying to create a situation where she would be happy, and I took that into my life and really tried to control everyone else's emotions, and I know a lot of you struggle with this as well.

You struggle with this idea of being responsible for other people's emotions and this people-pleasing so you can be in control of how they feel about you. That's why I'm always saying people-pleasers are liars because we're always lying so other people will feel better and we're taking responsibility for other people's feelings. Once we've realized that we are never responsible for how they feel, they are always responsible for how they feel, so even if we do something super nice for someone and they feel super happy about it, we are not the one making them happy. They are still the one making themselves happy by what they're thinking. That's a really important distinction because a lot of people spend a lot of time trying to make other people happy and get very frustrated that they're ineffective at it, and then we spend a lot of time waiting for other people to make us happy and we get upset that they're ineffective not doing it for us, and one of the best ways to go through your life is to just take responsibility for your own happiness and let other people take responsibility for theirs.

That would be a beautiful world, but instead, we yell and scream and cajole and try and make other people behave in a way that would make us happy. People we don't even know, people that we have no influence on how they act, we get very frustrated in the way they

behave and want them to behave in a different way so we can be happy. Other people are not assigned responsibility for our feelings or our actions, and this is actually really good news. No one is responsible for how we feel, therefore, we don't have to change their behavior in order to change how we feel. We're not responsible for how others feel, therefore, we don't have to change our behavior in attempt to change how others feel. This is very important when it comes to success, and mothers, and people who are upset by good choices we make.

I can't even tell you how many times I've coached people on not worrying about how other people will feel about their success. We hold ourselves back because we don't want other people to be upset by our success, and here's the truth. There will be people upset when we're successful, and that's okay. They're responsible for how they feel, and there will be people who will be thrilled by our success, and the same is true. As someone who's in this industry and I have a lot of people that give me really positive, wonderful, amazing feedback, and they think that I'm great and they put me on this pedestal and they tell me how amazing I am, and I try to explain to them that the way they feel towards me is because of how they're thinking, and the way that they think about me is so positive, and so they get to feel a lot of positive emotions. I mean, it's a win-win. I like it when people feel great than when they use me as an excuse to feel great. That's super fun, but then they also do the other thing. Right?

I have a lot of haters who hate on me and I think anyone in the public eye, people feel as if they are free to judge. I was laughing, Chris was telling me the other day that we have a program called 'Stop Overdrinking', and that's within Self Coaching Scholars. There's a picture of me for an ad for Stop Overdrinking and people were like making fun of the way I look and saying that I already looked drunk and they were just saying all these things about me. It was just nice to be in a place where I didn't have to take any of that on, and the same is true when people over exaggerate how amazing or beautiful or astounding I am. I know that that has nothing to do really with me. It has to do with people's thoughts about me, and so I want you guys to really notice when you're blaming other people for how you feel whether it's good or bad emotion.

When are you giving someone else credit? If you're in Self Coaching Scholars, you need to go to the podcast workbook and go to page 19, and I want you to go through these nine questions and we're going to go through the people in your life who you tend to blame for how you feel. This will be very powerful because most of us don't even realize that we're doing this, and when you can start taking that power back from the other people in your life and the other things in your life and own responsibility for how you feel, you can start feeling a lot better a lot more of the time. If you're not in Self Coaching Scholars yet, what are you crazy? Go to thelifecoachschool.com/join and make sure you join up so you can go through this process with this.

All right, everyone. Have a wonderful, amazing week, and I'll talk to you next week. Make sure you listen to the end of this podcast. I know I've gotten a lot of feedback recently. Carina was telling me that a lot of you are really thrilled to be hearing my coaches teach some of these concepts in their voice because you're able to hear them in a different way, so I want to introduce you guys to Melanie Shmois. She has recorded a really awesome segment for you and I'm really excited for you guys to learn her perspective and her approach to clean thinking. She's amazing. You're going to love her. Please enjoy. Bye-bye.

Hey, if you enjoy listening to this podcast, you have to come check out Self Coaching Scholars. It's my monthly coaching program where we take all this material and we apply it. We take it to the next level and we study it. Join me over at thelifecoachschool.com/join. Make sure you type in the thelifecoachschool.com/join. I'd love to have you join me in Self Coaching Scholars. See you there.

Podcast Feature: Melanie Shmois

Hello, everyone. I'm Melanie Shmois. I'm a therapist and a certified life and weight coach. We're doing this podcast segment here from sunny Cleveland, where the sun has shined on the city for the past few months, and even the coming winter seems a little more tolerable. Thanks for joining my podcast today.

For those of you not familiar with me, I'm the creator of Mind Your Strength Coaching. It's a coaching program designed to help women

who already dedicate a lot of time and effort to exercise and/or meditation, but still feel unfulfilled emotionally in some way. These women engage in many different forms of self-care. They're really good about exercising, eating healthy. They may even have a regular devotion to a spiritual practice, so they're doing a lot of things right, but they're still seeking help because they feel guilty or discouraged when stressors get the better of them.

The thought work I provide in my mind-body coaching program helps bridge this important gap between the self-care they're already providing themselves and the ability to change their emotional state. My motto is to train your mind as hard as you train your body. Just like with exercise for our bodies, I believe we need to exercise our minds just as much. I help my clients learn and implement tools to improve their mindset. Think of this just like an athlete would train in a gym to gain more physical strength.

My intent is to build up that mental muscle, and I'm going to help you do that today. As we know and as Brooke stresses in her work, the brain is the most important tool on the planet, so managing it is essential to creating the desired results we want in our lives. I've created a practice dedicated in making self-coaching just as routine as traditional exercise, and today, I want to talk about some routine examples that pop up daily that still end up negatively triggering us. These events often ruin what was a perfectly fine mood. I will provide you with a three-step mental routine I have my clients perform.

I call it the 'Clean Thinking Workout', and there's three steps to it. Let's dive in, and I want you to practice this at home. Step number one: write down an event or issue that bothers you. I have my clients complete what we call a 'Thought download', and it's where you just take time to write down anything and everything about this issue that's bugging you. The key here is to write without any sort of judgment. Judging the thoughts will just lead to beating yourself up, and we know that negative emotion does not produce positive outcomes, so no more beatings. When you put things on paper, it often creates more distance, so keep writing.

Step two: separate the facts from the situation that's bugging you from the opinions and thoughts about it. Facts can be proven with

factual evidence versus opinions, which are open to interpretation. We look at how that added opinion about the event is what actually causes the pain, not the event itself, so look at the evidence. Where's the truth? Is what you're thinking an absolute fact or is it an opinion, perhaps a biased one?

Step three: ask yourself a better question as it relates to this thing that's bothering you. We often get locked into one way of thinking about an event, and this technique can help offer you a different perspective. Some common ones I recommend you ask yourself before you enter the stressful situation are, "How can I make this fun, or how can I make this event more enjoyable?" Try to find some humor in it.

To review, create a thought download, separate facts from opinions, and then ask yourself better questions. I want you to try it. Let's plug it into a real-life example. Have you ever had an awesome workout where you're feeling that natural high and confidence that comes from pushing yourself during a class? You're driving home, you're blasting your favorite music in your car, you're dancing around your seat, or maybe you turn it all off to keep that meditative state, that Zen going, but the moment you walk into your house, your three-year old is naked, filthy, screaming, and running around refusing to take a bath, and then maybe your partner gives you that patented, "Hope you enjoyed your workout", and boom, just like that, all those feel good feelings are deflated?

You think, "Gees, what the heck did I just walk into? This sucks. Why couldn't my partner hold on the fort for an hour? Why is this a huge battle around bath time?" You flip your lid, you go off on everyone and everything and no one wins, and then you have time to reflect on the evening and more guilt and shame rush in. Sounds fun, right?

This was me week after week, and where many of my clients find themselves, and where the thought work and these routines that I'm telling you about can transform these situations. Let's plug in the three steps of the clean thinking workout.

One morning after a similar event walking into a mini battle zone at home, I completed the thought download and circled the opinions and

unhelpful questions I was asking myself over and over again when this would happen. The questions that I was asking myself for my thought download, "Why aren't the kids in bed already, or why don't they behave better, or why can't I stay calm and collected longer? I just worked out for heaven's sake." It was important to remind myself not to beat myself up for feeling this way and where many of my clients go down that rabbit hole of self-loathing.

I then looked at my thought download list, and I had to parse out what was fact from what was fiction. "Why aren't the kids in bed already?" Truth be told, it wasn't their bedtime, so it's not a fact. "Why don't they behave better?" They often behave well, so that's not a fact. It's not an absolute. "Why can't I stay calm?" Again, it's an opinion. Maybe I did, so I'm calm. "I just worked out for heaven's sake". Yeah. So what? I was trying to separate fact from opinion, and I noticed I was pushing my opinion on how things should be onto this situation, but the fact is you guys, bath time and bedtime is eventful.

I then asked myself better questions. Some examples that I prepared ahead of time for the next time this might happen was, "How can I make this playful instead of serious?" Back to my chaotic little scene here. This time, I'm coming back from an intense boxing class, feeling that high and I pulled into the driveway, and I noticed I was feeling a small sense of dread, maybe even a touch of anxiety, which was my reminder to try something different. I heard some bickering from inside between my two daughters, and I asked myself, "How can I make this funny?"

My brain quickly searched for the answer. I literally ran back into my car, put my boxing gloves on, and playfully started to box with the girls, who thought it was hilarious. This changed the course of the evening. We were laughing. We were having our own little playful boxing match in my living room.

Had I not remembered to ask this question that evening, it would have been a stressful one, so that simple change of saying, "How can I make this fun or funny?" led to a totally different outcome and less pain. This is just one lighthearted example of how the clean thinking workout can turn something that was bothersome into something fun, so give it a try. I know that some of you might face some more

serious issue, and the goal is to go from painful to tolerable, and that's okay too. Let's review.

For this particular clean thinking workout, remember to do the thought download, writing everything and anything you can remember thinking and feeling during that tough time. Be gentle and kind to yourself. Then, separate the facts from the story about the situation you're struggling with, noticing where you do have that extra opinion that leads to more suffering. Then, ask yourself a better question. It's best to practice as much of this ahead of time as you can so your responses in the moment are more automatic.

I like to use a negative emotion as my trigger or my reminder to utilize the coaching tool. When I was feeling that little bit of dread or anxiety. That was my reminder. Try the tool. Just like a personal trainer, as your coach, I have several different mental routines like this, designed to be plugged in when something gets the better of you. It really is transformative, but you have to practice it just like with anything.

If nothing else, I urge you listeners to consider mental training to be part of your life just like you do with movement. In order for me to do it consistently, I had to approach it like I do with exercise, making it a non-negotiable practice in my life. 10 to 20 minutes of mental training can make a huge difference. The clients that I've already worked with have told me because of this work, they were able to develop a healthy relationship with food. They report feeling more powerful and capable than ever. They view themselves as a survivor or better yet, as a thriver versus as a victim.

They are more readily able to accept responsibility for how they feel. They are able to take control of their life versus life controlling them. Finally, a dear client of mine from New York, Margarita, she told me that she was able to take action to change her bothersome situation while living at peace with her present moment, and it was such a beautiful thing. If any of this is resonating with you, I welcome you to join my Facebook group. It's called 'Mind Your Strength Coaching', and we celebrate successes, combat setbacks when it comes to life and weight issues.

I also have a fun, animated video on my website explaining a powerful weight loss tool that Brooke taught me called 'The Hunger Scale'. My site is Mindyourstrength.com. Wishing you all the best out there. Have a great day and keep training your mind as hard as you train your body.