

Ep #158: Beliefs



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.

Well, hello my friends. Today we're going to talk about beliefs. Telling you, we are in the middle of understanding our minds and exactly how they work, and a belief is just a thought you keep on thinking. Thank you very much, Abraham, for giving me that definition and it's so, so true. What happens when you have a thought you keep on thinking? What happens when you've thought a thought so many times you don't even recognize that it's a thought anymore? You hear what I'm saying? You think it's just real, you think it's just the world, you think it's just true. You don't recognize that it's a belief system. Belief systems are 100% optional.

One of the realizations I've had kind of in the past, I would say, six months...I understood how my thoughts created reality. I understood that our thinking created our feelings. I've understood all of that for probably the past 10 years, but I hadn't really understood that we can believe anything we want. There is no restriction to what we are allowed to believe. No one can tell us what we can or cannot think. I think this is ultimately the biggest freedom we have because there's so many things that people can do to us, but they can't tell us what we'll make it mean. They can't tell us how it will feel emotionally. That is 100% up to us.

I've seen this over and over and over again with my clients where people feel like they should feel a certain way, or they should think a certain way, or they have to think a certain way, or they have to believe a certain way. I've had clients that have suffered tremendous childhood abuse that make it mean very little about them, and I've had some clients that have had child abuse that wasn't as much as someone else and they made it mean that they were completely damaged and non-functioning. It's just because nobody told them that they could think whatever they want. You can think whatever you want. You can make whatever you want mean whatever you want it to mean.

With the example with child abuse we can make that mean something horrible about us, or we can make it mean something

horrible about them, or we can make it mean something that will serve us in our life. People say no, you have to think that child abuse was horrible. You have to recognize that you're a victim. You have to recognize that you're a survivor. What I say is if that serves you, do that, but if it doesn't, you don't have to think that at all. You get to think whatever you want to think about anything that happens or has happened to you in your life. You also get to think whatever you want about the future.

Now it will be easier for you to think and believe things that you've always thought and believed, that's going to be your default. Your brain will go to what it's already believed. There's a thing called cognitive dissonance, your brain wants to keep on believing what it's kept on believing, even when there's evidence to the contrary. I have been with clients who cannot recognize evidence because it doesn't go along with the belief system that they've had their whole life, even when the evidence is right there. We have to be willing to be wrong, but our brains are programmed to be right. Our brains are programmed for survival. We need to pay very close attention to the things that have kept us alive and we need to keep rethinking those.

That's how our brain is programmed, but the truth is we don't have to. We can think whatever we want. I've had a lot of questions where people will say well I don't want to think something that isn't true. I said, "Why, you're doing that all the time now." You have no reason to believe that you'll live through tomorrow. You could die tomorrow. You have no idea. You could die tomorrow, but you choose to believe that you're going to live through tomorrow. There's no guarantee but you choose to believe it anyway and nobody can tell you that you can't. Some people believe they will die tomorrow and they're allowed to believe that. You can love whoever you want no matter what. You don't have to justify it. You can like what you want and believe what you want about yourself. You can think you're fantastic no matter what anyone else says.

By the way, you can think you're horrible no matter what anyone else says. A lot of my clients choose to do that one instead. They'll say to me, "Well you don't want to be delusional about yourself. You don't want to just think 'oh I'm so great all the time' about yourself." I say,

"Really? You'd rather just think you're horrible all the time? Which one is more delusional and who gets to decide?"

Here's the thing. You get to decide to make your past mean whatever you want it to mean. You get to decide your current life means whatever you want it to mean, and you get to decide the future means whatever you want it to mean. You don't have to prove it. You don't have to justify it. You don't have to provide the evidence for it. Your brain will want to do that but you don't have to. You get to decide what you're going to think all of the time. I can't even tell you that I think knowing that is the most freedom I've ever felt in my life. Horrible things can happen in your life and you can make them mean whatever you want. You don't have to make them mean something terrible.

One of the things that has really helped me is to change my belief system from bad things are not supposed to happen to bad things are supposed to happen. How do I know? They happen all the time. That's what the world is like. That's the contrast we have in the world. Being able to embrace all parts of my life and all parts of the things that happen have created the most freedom. When I manage my mind and decide what to think I feel the most authority over my own life. I get to be in charge of what my mind thinks deliberately. I get to be in charge of how I feel, what I do, and the results I create in my life.

Remember, a belief is a thought you just keep on thinking. It's something you have thought so often you don't even realize you're thinking it. It's a really deep neural pathway in your brain. How you see yourself is what you believe about yourself. You think you're just conveying facts about yourself, but really you're just conveying beliefs about yourself. How you see the world is what you believe about the world and all those beliefs are optional. Most of our beliefs are such a part of us we don't even realize that they are all just thoughts, just sentences. A belief is a thought that we have without question. So many of our thoughts ...we haven't even thought to question them. We don't recognize them as thoughts so we don't even question them.

What I recommend is that you question all of your beliefs and then decide what to believe on purpose. We have collectively agreed on many, many things. We've collectively agreed that kindness is good and being mean is bad. We've collectively agreed that being happy is a good goal to have and that we should focus on it. We've collectively agreed that life should be fair and that people should be treated with fairness, and that people should have rights. We've collectively agreed in a country and in citizenship and in behavior and in rules, and we've individually chosen to believe things without even consciously choosing to believe them about ourselves, about what we're capable of and who we are.

You get to believe anything you want and there's no rules as to what you can believe or what you can decide not to believe, crazy. Even if your mother told you your whole life that you are a certain way, even if everybody in school told you that you were a certain way, even if you've agreed with them this whole time, you can change your mind now about yourself. You don't even have to ask anybody. You can be like, "I've just decided that I'm no longer a procrastinator." I've just decided that I'm no longer going to think that I'm unlovable. You can just do that. You can just decide that.

Your beliefs will determine your ongoing and consistent results so decide what they will be. Think about your beliefs by what they will make you feel, do, and create in your life. I want you to really think about what are your beliefs about yourself and your value? What are your beliefs about what you think you're supposed to say and do? What are your beliefs about the world? What are your beliefs about spirituality? What are your beliefs about money? What are your beliefs about contribution?

So many of our beliefs come from what we were taught by our parents and that's not just what they told us, but it's also what they did and how they showed up in the world and what we witnessed. It's strange to think that we learned what to think the same way we were taught how to add and read and do history. We learned our beliefs so well we don't even know to question them. This is not all bad news. Some of the things we may have been taught have been giving us great results in our lives. My mom told me I was bright and could do anything I wanted and I believed her. She told me that money would

never be a problem, it's easy. She told me I should always depend on myself and she told me I would go to college. She also told me that I would always struggle with my weight and it was normal to obsess about it. She told me that you should never buy a boat. She told me I was responsible for others feelings.

I learned that politics weren't important, that houses should always be clean and organized, that sedans don't make sense if you have children. Some of these beliefs were conscious and some were just below the surface, managing my actions without me even noticing. These things were repeated verbally and reaffirmed by the actions of the people around me. Now this wasn't something that my mother necessarily went out to teach me on purpose. These were things that I just learned by being around her, being with her. She did say some of these things to me, but I never questioned them because I was being taught. We don't normally question what our teachers teach us. We aren't raised as small children to be critical thinkers, we're raised to learn and then repeat what we have learned inside of our brains and on tests and verbally to people. "Say thank you, say please, be polite." We were taught all of those things without questioning them.

When I opened myself up to the awareness of thought work, I started questioning all my beliefs. Some of them were very obvious immediately and some of them took more time for me to discover. The best way to start uncovering what you believe is by looking at how you feel and act. Look at the results in your life and question the beliefs that have created it. Here's what I want you guys to think about. I want you to think about how the results in your life come from your belief systems and don't come from your life. Here's what I mean. I want you to think about the house you live in and how you created that with your mind. The person that you spend time with and how you created that in your mind, the job that you have and how you created that in your mind.

Think about the belief systems that support the life that you currently have. The way that you feel about yourself, your life, and the people in it are all based upon your belief systems. The amount of money you have, whether you are married or not, the car you drive, how you show up in the world, all of it depends on what you believe about yourself and what you believe is possible for you and what you

believe is worth doing. If you believe that you are not worthy, which unfortunately many of us believe, we were taught that inadvertently as children, that we were not worthy of time or attention...we have brought that into our adult lives. If you believe that you cannot live your life without the pleasure of extra food that is the life you're living. If you believe that you will never be able to lose weight, that you will never be able to stop drinking, that is your reality.

You can choose to believe something different. You can choose to create a new belief in your life. You can choose to question any belief that isn't serving you. For example, the amount of money you make is based on what you believe. You might think the amount you make is normal or expected. Think about it now. What do you believe about how much money you make? Increase the amount 10 times and question why you don't make that much money. The answer will come down to a belief. Now that belief may be something or may not be something you want to change and that's okay, but understand that it's always a belief creating it. What are the thoughts you keep on thinking? What are your beliefs?

If you are in Self Coaching Scholars make sure you go through this process completely and uncover the beliefs that are creating your current life. What do you believe that you don't even know is a belief? One of the things that I started to question that kind of made my mind get all bendy was the idea of human rights, and we have this belief that humans have rights. I never questioned that. That was just a thought system that we've all kind of agreed to. I thought a human was born with human rights, that human rights were just there but they're not. Human rights are just a thought and not a thought that everybody has and that everyone agrees with. I was like, "what?"

The other time that I really had a shocking revelation was I had this thought that life should be fair. We were doing some work, a colleague and I were doing some work with one of our clients and we asked her to tell us how life isn't fair and why that was a good thing. She went through and brainstormed and basically said, one of the things that really stood out for me from what she said was if life were fair, I probably wouldn't have clean drinking water. If life were fair, I probably wouldn't live in the house that I live in. I probably wouldn't have a coach and a car and silk sheets, beautiful kitchen. If life were

fair, we would all be the same. We'd all get the same amount of pain and the same amount of joy. We'd all have the exact same life, the exact same amount of money. What's great about life not being fair? Maybe for some people, they want to believe that life is fair.

Here's the problem. When you believe life is fair and life isn't fair, it causes a lot of pain and drama because you can't control that world that isn't fair. We're grown up and we're taught that life should be fair. What are other beliefs that you haven't questioned? What have you just accepted as being true in your life about you? Most importantly about your future, what do you believe about your future and have you really decided to draw from your imagination, to believe something about your future that makes you feel amazing or are you just defaulting to beliefs that are already in your brain, already grooved in there.

If you could believe anything you want about yourself what would you believe? It's an amazing question. For those of you in Self Coaching Scholars turn to page 44 and do those questions. Decide what do you want to believe about you? You know what? You don't have to ask anyone permission. You don't have to ask your mom, you don't have to ask your second grade teacher, you don't have to ask your spouse, your best friend. They can all disagree with you and you can believe anything you want. Best news ever.

All right you guys, hang on until after the intro and listen to one of my Master Coaches, Suzy. She is going to talk to you about how to regret proof your life, such good stuff. Please enjoy, take care, bye bye.

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 the, T-H-E, lifecoachschool.com/join. I'd love to have you join me in Self Coaching Scholars, see you there.

Podcast Feature: Suzy Rosenstein

Hi there, my name's Suzy Rosenstein and I'm so happy to be here with you today. I'm a Master Certified Life Coach trained at the Life Coach School. I'm also proud and honored to have been given the opportunity to teach new students at Brooke's In-Person coach training in California. It is truly one of the most rewarding experiences of my life.

My niche is focused on midlife regret proofing. Specifically, I help working women who are afraid of having regrets about what they didn't do with their lives. My clients have often been in long-term jobs and are struggling with the feeling that they're just wasting time because they're no longer content. They sense they have more to give and are not making the most of their lives, but they crave the stability and security of their comfortable long-term job and just don't know how to figure it all out. The bottom line is that they feel stuck and confused but they're fearful that if they don't make a change, they'll have big time regrets.

Today I want to talk to you about the amazing lessons that I learned from my own layoff and how you can apply these lessons to your life and rediscover what's important to you too. Earlier this year I had my three year anniversary since I lost my job. Not all anniversaries are created equal though, and this anniversary was nothing like a wedding anniversary for example, but it was definitely time for reflection. Here's what happened that fateful day back in May 2013. I was sitting in my office in downtown Toronto, working away deep in thought when I got a loud knock at my door. It was about 10:00 in the morning and it startled me. My manager leaned in and said in an unusual tone of voice, "I need you for a meeting."

We'd known each other long enough that I knew something was off. We'd worked together for about 15 years as colleagues and he'd only been promoted to management a few weeks earlier so I just knew something was wrong. There was a weird vibe. I looked up at him and said without skipping a beat, "Shit, I'm getting laid off." Now he couldn't reply, crazy, awkward, corporate protocol and all, so we started our walk to the meeting, which of course was at the complete other side of the building and it was such a long, anxiety filled walk

with an elevator ride and everything. I asked him who would be at this meeting knowing full well what he would say and he said, "HR, union reps." Now I was positive about what the meeting was for.

We continued our weird silent walk. I only wish I would have had the wherewithal to break into a Montey Python silly walk at that precise moment. It would have broken the tension and then my kids would have been so proud of me. I couldn't do it. I was just too overwhelmed. I had so many feelings, so many thoughts. I had fear, overwhelm, stress, and of course confusion and anger about what I'd been led to believe about the organizational changes going on. I'd worked part-time for 18 of my 19 years there and I always knew that working part-time made me vulnerable. We used to call it low hanging fruit. I did notice two more emotions but they were really, really faint. I noticed a slight glimmer of glee and a teeny, tiny bit of relief. Very faint, very hard to identify through the extremely loud pounding of my heart and blood rushing to my head, but they were there and that confused me because I felt so shocked and so sad.

Anyway, we got to the room and we sat down, and then my manager who was my friend for so long, he did the most compassionate thing right after the HR rep told me that I was being laid off. He leaned in, looked at me straight in the eye, and made a point of telling me that this had nothing to do with my performance. I was so grateful for that. I just felt so vulnerable and alone, it really meant something.

What followed next was a lot of blah, blah, blah, and specifics about the details of my layoff and my choices for how to proceed because I was in a union. It was really hard for me to focus. I almost laughed when they offered to pay for a taxi to get home in case I couldn't handle it emotionally. As stressed as I was, I was not going to let them get the better of me. I was going to take my own car and get home. As the meeting went on though, I did feel that teeny, tiny glimmer of glee and relief again. It was like a little voice from Whoville far, far away. I actually had a thought that I might be a bit happy, but it just didn't seem to fit with what was going on and all the other thoughts and feelings but it was there.

On my drive home, it hit me. This gross meeting had just taken place in the exact same room that I was interviewed in back in 1994. It

wasn't an HR room. It was just a random room, a meeting room in a giant building. I had come full circle with this job. I started and finished in the same room with 19 years of life in between including getting married, having three kids. I mean two of my kids are in university now. I was also turning 50 that same year and I just had to ask myself, "did the universe just unfold as it should?" It was at this moment in my car, driving home that I decided to change my thoughts. I had been given a gift. The employer, who had just let me down big time, had just opened up my world in a way that I wasn't ready to do for myself. I had been given the gift to dream, how perfect. It was just what I needed. I'd definitely forgotten how to dream. I don't think I had thought about my future in decades, probably 25 or 30 years.

I wasn't even content in this job for at least five years. I had just started to explore other opportunities to start figuring out what else I could do like baby steps. I looked at going back to school. I was just dipping my toe in, but I'd forgotten how to dream and it was so difficult to make progress without doing that work. My employer had taken something away but had also given me something huge. How poetic, how profound, how sad that I couldn't do it for myself. I had let fear completely get in my way. I had allowed five years to go by, five years that I would never get back. It was hard to figure out why I was afraid. I see now that the problem was my thinking. My thought was that my long-term employment was a disadvantage, that my skills were outdated. For years I had convinced myself that it was an asset to have been employed in one place for so long, that seniority was valued. Now I see that that wasn't what I really thought. My honest thought was creating fear, and fear kept me frozen and stuck.

I also had a thought that it was self indulgent to make a big change if I wasn't really sure what I wanted to do. It was a catch 22. My practical self couldn't loosen up on this one. In my mind, things had to be done in a certain order. I couldn't focus on what I wanted to do, and because of that I was too fearful to do anything except waste time. I knew how to waste time. The big question is why wasn't I afraid to waste time? I was so surprised by myself. It was really hard for me to leave my job that was fine on paper. I had great benefits. I had five weeks vacation time. I thought I couldn't leave without an amazing plan, but I couldn't figure out an amazing plan. Has that ever

happened to you? Are you able to be really clear about what you want, especially if you've been at a job for a long time? What thoughts do you have about why you're there?

It's so important to do this as the first step in your awareness about what's going on. Once you're clear about this you can ask yourself are your thoughts serving you? Hindsight's 20/20 though, right? My thoughts were not serving me at all. I created a result that proved my thought that my long-term employment was a disadvantage. It kept me from the personal development that I was craving. It also kept me from helping the women I care so much about, those working mid-life women who are afraid of having regrets about what they didn't do with their lives. That's why I now celebrate what I call, don't laugh, my dream-aversary - the anniversary of me becoming myself, me beginning to dream again, me finding the path to becoming a coach. To make new goals, to accomplish new things, to start living again in sync with who I am today and doing what I get excited about going forward. I couldn't be happier.

Now that I've had time to reflect I'd like to share the three big lessons that I learned from being laid off. Lesson number one: it's critical to figure out the most important things you want out of your career. You can't keep drifting. You owe it to yourself to ask yourself these important questions. Why do you want to do what you do? How do you want to spend your time in your career? What is most important to you at work? Now of course your 'why' is personal, there's no right or wrong answer but you have to figure it out. Give yourself time to think about it. For me, I want to help people directly, which is not what my role was at my last job. I want a flexible work environment. I now work from home and I'm so happy to be able to be there for my family, more than I could have ever imagined actually. I'm thrilled with the life coach skills I have now to help people so quickly, makes me really, really happy.

Lesson number two: change is good. Ask yourself questions about what you honestly think about change. Do you typically embrace change or run from change? What does change mean to you? How do your thoughts about change make you feel? There were so many solid reasons I chose to stay in my job as long as I did, but now that I have hindsight I realize that fear of the unknown was one of them. I

was quite surprised when I realized this. I was afraid of the new job not being as good as my old job. I was afraid of rejection. I was afraid that staying in this job as long as I did was a detriment to my job search. When I was forced to move on, I moved on with gusto, with motivation, with excitement. Sure there was a bit of fear, but I did it anyway. I've tried many new things. I've met tons of new people. I've challenged myself in ways that make me proud. I see how amazing change can be in your life.

Lesson number three: the only thing that holds you back in your life is your thinking. This is the biggest lesson. When I'm really honest with myself, I see that I had a thought that my stagnant job was the problem, that my bad bosses over the years were the problem, that something would have to change at my job for me to be happy. These thoughts were the real problem. Our lives are full of circumstances. These are black and white facts. The thing that creates problems for us is the way we think about our circumstances. These thoughts create feelings, feelings produce action, action creates results, results prove your thoughts every time. When I think about my old job as a circumstance, it's clear what was going on with me.

The fact was that I'd been there for 19 years. My thought about being at my job for such a long time was being at my job for 19 years has made me stale and less desirable in the current job market. This thought made me feel less competent and fearful of change and rejection. When I felt fear at work, I froze and I didn't make a huge effort to try anything new. The results I created I stayed at my job and I didn't grow. Do you see how that proved my thought that I was stale and I had less to offer? This is exactly the kind of thing my clients talk about. My clients feel like they may have regrets about what they didn't do in their lives. Now that they're older they know something has to change but they just aren't sure where to start. They feel like they're drifting and wasting time.

I teach them how to get clear about what they want, how to start taking action, how to create a life that they can get excited about. It starts with their thinking, and it will start with your thinking too. The great news is that thoughts are optional and you have more power than you think. I wish I had found someone to help me when I felt so

stuck and confused. I would love to have those five years back. It would have been awesome to have wasted less time. Life is so short. I know I don't have to tell you that.

If my story about my layoff and self-discovery resonated with you it's probably the perfect time for you to take a look at your own thinking about what you want and if you need to make a change yourself. I don't want anyone to waste their valuable time on this planet bumbling around feeling stuck for five years like I did. My mission is to help you regret proof your life with joy, with confidence, and with abandon. That's why I'd like to tell you about two things. First I have a free Facebook group called Regret Proofing 101. I'd love for you to join my warm community of women who are super interested in regret proofing themselves. You can find it at www.Facebook.com/groups/regretproofing101. Can't wait to see you there.

Second, if you'd like to see what coaching with me is all about, I offer a free 20 minute mini session on the phone. You can go to my website at www.suzyrosenstein.com, that's S-U-Z-Y, Rosenstein.com and get the link there. While you're on my website check out my coaching packages too. I've got an awesome offer for Brooke's podcast listeners. Anyone who ends up booking a six or 12 week coaching package with me will get a big bonus, two extra one-hour sessions for free. When you book just mention that you heard this podcast and they are yours. Signing off, I'm Suzy Rosenstein, Master Certified Life Coach dedicated to helping you regret proof your life. Take good care and thanks so much for listening.