

Ep #165: How to Be a Good Mate



Full Episode Transcript

With Your Host
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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. Yay! Such a gorgeous day today. It's May. I love today. I love my life. I love everyone and I'm just in a lovefest mood. I love you. Do you guys know how much I love you? So great. I think about you all of the time. I think about you as my students, as my colleagues, as my friends, as my clients. I love you, guys. I really genuinely do. Huge squeeze. Okay?

Today, we are talking about how to be a good mate. Now, when I prepare for these podcasts, I've changed the way I prepare for them ever since I started Scholars because one of the things that I include in Scholars is the podcast study guide, so when you're in Self Coaching Scholars, you get my notes that I use to prepare the podcast, and then you also get questions so you can apply what I'm teaching in the podcast. I used to prepare the podcast right before I recorded it, but now because I have to create that book a month ahead of time, I create the content ahead of time, and then I send it over to my COO, Milena, and she looks at everything, and then sends it over to the designer. When I was creating the notes for this one, she was like, "It seems incomplete. It just doesn't seem like there's as much content in the notes as there is in some of the other ones", and I said, "No. It's completely complete", and in fact, I wrote down in my notes of how to be a good mate, 20 ideas about how to be a good mate, that I could have left it just to one thing.

I could have left it to number one, and I want you guys to stick with me on this. We have so many expectations when it comes to our mate, and our number one expectation is usually that they complete us, that they make us happy. "I'm going to get married, and then my mate will make me happy". By the way, we don't want them to just make us happy. They also have to make us attracted. They need to make us turned on. They need to make us in love with them. They need to make us happy to be around them, happy to be alive. The expectation that we put on our mates is ridiculous. "Hi, do you want to get married and take responsibility for every feeling I have for the rest of my life? That would be great."

That's what our vows should be. It's no wonder so many of us are unhappy in our relationships. They just don't do it right. They just don't make us happy. They just don't make us feel loved. They just don't make us feel sexy, and wanted, and beautiful, and everything we want someone else to do for us. It's our job by the way, but we want our mate to do it, and then we are so mad when they don't do it right. Now, I'm saying this in first person because then, that is right where I am and have been, and I've gotten better in some areas and not in others. I would like Chris to solve everything before I even think about it. I would like Chris to provide me with all of the happiness in the world, and when he falls short because it's an impossible task for him to even provide me with one drop of happiness because that's my job, I will blame him.

I will tell him that he's inadequate at making me happy because you know what? He is inadequate at making me happy because it's impossible for him to make me happy because that's his job. It's impossible for him to make me happy because it's not his job. He can't possibly do it, even if he had the ability to do it. He couldn't do it.

It's not about him what causes my happiness or my feelings, my thoughts. Me. It's the only thing that could make me happy. It's the only thing that could make me feel sexy, wanted, loved, all of it. It's all an inside job. Number one on how to be a good mate, and this is the only one you need: drop all expectations, accept that they'd be there for you to love.

If you can do that, you will change your entire relationship. Can you imagine? "Listen, honey. The only thing I expect of you is that you'd let me love you, and you don't even have to do that. There's no letting. I'm just going to no matter what." "Your only job is just to be there for me to love you, and you don't even have to be here in my physical presence. You just have to be. I'm just going to love you. Your job in our relationship is being loved by me." Now, some of you are mad at me for even suggesting this.

I know a lot of you listen with your significant other, and depending on who you think I'm speaking to, you're like, "Hell yeah. That's a good idea", but let me just tell you both, that's what I'm expecting of both of you, so if you're sitting there with your mate, look at your mate, and

their only job is for them to be there so you can love them, and your only job is to love them. That's it. How do you have a good marriage? You drop all expectations of your mate other than they'd be loved by you. It's a beautiful thing.

Now, here. Let me tell you something. When you're in a relationship with someone, and the most important thing to them is that they get to love you, that is a really fun relationship. That is a really, really good time. When their main goal is to love you and they spend a lot of energy loving you on purpose unconditionally, that's when you know, "Dang, I have a blessed life", when you're the one. Now, a lot of people will say, "I'll do that for my husband, but he won't do that for me".

It only takes one of you, my friends. "But that's not fair." Who cares? You get to feel love all of the time. All of the time. Your husband is lovable all of the time. Why? Because you're choosing to love him all of the time even when he's human, even when he's a total jerk, even when he shows up late, even when he leaves all of his stuff all over the floor. Even when he doesn't do it right, you get to love him. That's always an option available to you. Okay.

You guys still with me? Anyone deleted my app yet? How to be a good mate. Drop all expectations, accept that they'd be there for you to love.

Number two: brainstorm love every day. Brainstorm "How can I love this person? What do I love about them?" Can you think of a worse idea? Yeah. I can too. Loving someone is the best idea. Brainstorming how to love them, practicing loving them, thinking about everything that you love about them. My husband, I love it that he has like a buzzed haircut so I don't have to see any kind of receding hair, anything like that.

I just love the way he chooses to always shave his head. I think he's so handsome. I love the feel of his head. He has the most beautiful blue eyes with the greatest little crinkles on the side. You guys know what I'm talking about? Those little squint lines? So, so sexy. The most amazing lips, always saying the kindest things to me and to everyone he meets. I love his shoulders. I love how big and strong he

is. I love the way he always wants to squeeze me all the time. I love how he loves his body and walks around like he's got the best body in the whole world, like nothing ever could compare, is my favorite thing about him. I remember when we first started dating and he was walking around naked like he owned the place. I was like, "Dang, people just walk around naked and feel good about their bodies?" He taught me so much about that. Right? So good.

He has the best butt. I'll go up against anyone's butt with my husband's butt. Not my butt, but I got his butt, and he's got the most amazing legs that are like strong and amazing, and wonderful, and I love how well he takes care of his hands, and his nails, and his toenails. Nothing is ever gross and skanky about that. He has very good hygiene. He's always clean and notices that I'm out of gas and goes and gets gas for me.

Now, whenever I do this kind of rampage of love, someone will say to me, "Obviously you love your husband, listen to how amazing he is, listen to all the lovable things about him. It's so easy for you to love him", and I always think that's so amusing because I'm focusing on all the good things about him. Now, I could sit here and tell you all the things that would be easy not to love about him. I could criticize him and judge him and tell you all sorts of terrible things and make the case for not loving him, and then you'd be like, "Woah. Yeah, I can understand why you don't love him."

What is the case you're making for your mate? Are you making a case for love? Are you brainstorming love, or are you brainstorming something very different than love? When I sit there and tell you everything I love about my husband, when I tell you he's the best man I know, when I tell you he's the kindest person I know, always gives everyone the benefit of the doubt, doesn't ever walk by me in the house without grabbing me and giving me a squeeze, when I tell you all of those things, how do you think I feel? Amazing, luckiest girl in the world, best husband in the world by a long shot in my opinion, but I want you to feel that way about your husband.

I don't want you to think my husband is the best husband in the world. Stay away from him. I want you to think your husband is the best husband in the world. You start at the top of his head and look for

everything you love. Everything you love. Brainstorm love about his physical appearance, about the little things that he does, about the funny things he does. I mean, when Chris gets laughing, there's nothing better. Everyone in my family agrees. Chris has a loud laugh. When he loses it, it's the best. The best. So funny, so do that with your husband, with your wife.

Now, for some of you, it may be really challenging because you may have been really focused on everything you don't like, so you have to practice. You have to brainstorm. Look for things to love and make them even better in your mind, so look for something to love, and then increase your love about it. I was thinking about ... This is funny. I was thinking about this today in the car. I was thinking about how people don't like flies, but we love ladybugs and butterflies. The reason we love ladybugs and butterflies is because they're so pretty, but they're all kind of icky, buzzing insects if we're going to be honest, but I thought, "I should write a story about a little girl who was a fly, and I should write a story about this little fly girl and how when she was born, she had a hard time and she didn't get enough love from her parents, and one of her wings wasn't quite right, and she had her feelings hurt sometimes, but she was a really dedicated, hard-working fly", and I could tell this whole story about this little fly and I could make you love this fly. I know I could. I could talk you into loving this fly and her hard life that she had, and how she was going to stand up to all the other big flies that were buzzing louder than her, and she was going to be a super fly. I could have you rooting for this fly. I could have you cry if this little girl fly got hit with a fly swatter. How could I do that? By giving you reasons, by telling you stories and thoughts about this fly, and giving meaning to this little girl super fly.

You can do that with flies. You can do that with butterflies. You can do that with bugs. You can do that with husbands. You can do that with wives. You can do that with boyfriends, lovers, dates. You can fall in love with the fly, my friends by the story you tell yourself about that fly, about that husband.

The story I tell about my husband is a love story on purpose. The story I tell about my husband is that he is the best man I know on purpose, and when I look at my husband, that is what I see. I see his kindness. I see his carefulness. I see his detail. I see the way he

supports me and loves me, and encourages me. That's what I see because that's the story I tell. If I told you this story about my little super fly girl, that's what you would see too. If I told you a story about how flies are disgusting and they throw up on you, and then they eat their throw up, and now how they carry all sorts of disease and how disgusting they are and how they buzz and how they like to land on dog poo, and then land on your face, you would not love that fly anymore. The story you tell, the thought you think about that thing will determine how you feel about that thing. That thing is your mate to tell yourself a good story, and then make it even better.

Now, I hear some of you, "Oh, really? You just want me to be delusional?" My friends, you already are delusional. You're telling yourself a story already. You might as well make it a good one.

If you think you're horrible, you're delusional. You're just telling yourself a story about you being horrible. If you think your mate is horrible, you're delusional. You're just telling yourself a story about how they're horrible. I don't care how much evidence you have, my friends. Look for evidence the other way and see what you can find.

Number four: for the love of goodness gracious, stop trying to change them. Stop it. Here's why. First, it will not work. I tried to change my mom. I tried to change my husband. I'm still trying to change my kids. It's not working. I am not good at changing other people, and here's what I've noticed. They really don't like it when you try and change them. Have you guys noticed that like when you try and change other people, they're not like, "Yay, this will be fun. I can't wait for you to try and change me."

People do not want you to try and change them. You know what people want you to do? Love them, accept them for who they are. They do not want you to change them. You are trying to change your mate because you think that if they were different, you would be happier.

First of all, you cannot change them. Second, if you did change them, you would not be happier because you changed them. You would be happier because you changed your thinking. Stop trying to change your mate. There's so much perfection and goodness and loveliness

in just exactly the way they are. Stop trying to make them different than who they are. You're missing who they are by trying to change them.

Number five: stop trying to control them. It feels terrible to try and control someone. You try and manipulate, and control them, and change them, and fix them, and have them act in a way that you want them to act. Stop doing that. It feels terrible for you and it feels terrible for them. What if you'd let go of controlling them? What if you just let them behave the way they behave? What if you let a human being, an adult just be who they are? What would that be like?

Here's what I'm going to tell you. A lot less exhausting. I mean, I don't know from personal experience, but I'm sure you do. Allow adults to be and do. Now, I used the word 'allow', but I always laugh when I say it because you don't really have a choice. It's not like you have the authority to allow another adult behave the way they do, but when you give yourself that pep talk, "Oh, I'm going to allow them to do it", it feels better somehow, but here's the thing. You don't really have that ability to allow them, but in your own mind, it'll help you release control. Love to feel good. You can read that two ways. Love to feel good or love to feel good.

I want you to love your face off. I want you to love when it's so hard to love, you don't think you can love. I want you to love on purpose, out loud, as often as you can. Find that person you don't think you can love and love the heck out of them. When your husband or your wife or your partner does something you don't think you can tolerate, challenge yourself to love them anyway. It's super fun, by the way, when they don't expect it. Like they make a mistake and you just love on them. They're like, "What is happening?" Just tell them Self Coaching Scholars. Just say "I'm in this program".

Number eight: this one is so important. Be the mate you want to be. How many of you are the mate you want to be? How many of you feel proud about how you're showing up as a wife, or as a husband, or as a lover, or as a boyfriend, or as a girlfriend? Are you being the wife you want to be? Have you even asked yourself who that is? Ask yourself, "How do you want to be as a wife?", and then challenge yourself to be that person. Stop blaming your mate for how you're

showing up in the relationship. You're the one. You get to behave how you want to behave and you are 100% responsible for how you behave.

You're not responsible for their behavior. You're responsible for yours always. When I ask the kids, "Hey, why did you do that?", their reason is always because of what someone else did. Nope. Your reason is because you chose to do that thing.

Decide who you want to be as a mate, and then be that person. If you really think about how you want to be, like if I think about this now, I'm like, "Oh, I want to do so many more things that I'm doing. I want to say so many more things that I'm saying. I want to tell Chris so many things that I haven't told him." I decided one day that I wanted to be a wife that dressed up because Chris loves it when I dress up and wear heels, and look nice.

He's like every time I do that, he's like, "What?" He's like, "I love you when you're just chilling". He's like, "But I really love to see you dressed up", and so what I've decided to do is every day for work, even though I work from home to dress up. I put on a suit or an outfit with heels. He loves those heels, and do my hair and do my make-up, and so now he has a wife.

He's like, "Wouldn't it be great to have a wife that dressed up all the time?" Now, he has a wife that dresses up all the time. I love doing that. It's so fun. I do it for myself too. It feels great, but it's also fun to be a wife that I want to be like, that takes care of her appearance too. Who do you want to be as a wife? You want to be kinder, I mean nicer, more giving, more loving? What? Decide and do that.

Number nine: let it go. Pick no battles. There's that saying, "Pick your battles". What if you picked no battles? What if you just let it go? I mean, who really cares about that thing? Does it really matter in the big picture the stupid things that we get angry about, that we miss an opportunity to love about? I mean I can't even tell you how many things that I have used as an excuse not to love Chris. Stupid ass things.

Number 10: tell the truth. It's so hard sometimes. Holy cow! When I say tell the truth, I don't mean tell the truth in an unnecessary way. Don't be like, "You know, I really don't like the way you're..."

This is what just popped into my head. My husband, Chris, he likes to play soccer and we always laugh. I'm like, "The most dangerous sport in the world is 50-year old men playing soccer". Somebody for sure is going to the hospital. My husband was playing goalie, and the ball jammed right into his finger and shattered his finger, and so he went and got surgery, and now he has a permanently crooked finger. The guy that fixed it, I'm like "for sure, we're suing him for malpractice" because my husband has like a hook fingernail, so whenever you see him, make sure you point it out. It's a total hook finger.

Anyway, for me to be like, "Excuse me. I do not like your hook finger", that is not what I'm talking about telling the truth. Even if I do feel that way, that's not appropriate, not necessary. Don't tell the truth about stuff like that. Tell the truth about what you're insecure about. Tell the truth about what you really want. Tell the truth about how you are living your life. Don't keep secrets. Tell the truth. That is where true intimacy is. Intimacy can only be found in the truth, not in a bunch of lies, not in a bunch of pretending. Right?

Don't tell inappropriate truths that are unnecessary, but tell truths that matter especially to your husband. I coach a lot of people that keep a lot of secrets from their mates, and I'll tell you what. The main issue with keeping secrets is all the shame it puts between you two.

Secrets create so much shame, and I'm talking about eating, overeating shame. I'm talking about overdrinking shame. I'm talking about having affairs shame. I'm talking about all of it. Nobody deserves to feel that kind of shame. The truth solves it immediately.

Number 11: make your own happiness and meet your own needs. Hello, adulthood. Your happiness is your responsibility. Please do not try and delegate it to your mate. Meet your own needs.

Figure out what all your own needs are and meet them yourself. That's a good time. True intimacy isn't "I have all these needs, and I need you to take care of them". That's obligation, and nobody enjoys

it. I'm going to tell you the truth about that. Way too many therapists teach this stuff and I think it is such a load of crap. They have couples therapy and they say, "Tell your husband what your needs are. Tell your wife what your needs are. Okay. Now, you guys need to step up and meet each others' needs."

It's like prison. It's like, "No. Do you know what would be so much better? I mean, all of a sudden, if I have to meet my own needs, I have a lot less of them. Have you noticed that? This is what we do to our mate. Right? We're like, "Listen. I'm having a hard time being happy myself, so it would be great if you would just make me happy. I can't do it, but if you could do it, that would be great and I'll stop being mad at you as soon as you make me happy." "I want you to accept my body the way it is and love it the way it is. I can't do that. I can't love my own body, but I want you to do it." Right? Stop with the expectations of how other people should behave in order to make us happy. You take care of you.

Number 12: never hurt your feelings. You hear what I'm saying there, friends? Whenever you think your mate has hurt your feelings, you've hurt your feelings. Don't do that. Don't use your mate as an excuse to hurt your own feelings.

Number 13: my friends, stop complaining. Stop it. Sometimes I say that to the clients and scholars. I'm like "Stop doing that". They're like, "I need a little bit more direction". I'm like, "No. It's pretty clear." That's the direction I have for you. Stop it. Stop complaining. No upside. Nobody wants to hear you complaining. Complaining gets nothing done. Nobody is like, "Oh, fantastic. You complained", really enjoying fixing your complaint. Complaining doesn't serve you. It doesn't serve your relationship. There are many more productive ways.

Number 14: stop justifying. Notice how we want to justify being angry. We want to justify complaining. We want to justify our excuses. We always want to justify things that hurt us. Listen. You don't want to feel the way you're feeling. Why would you spend time justifying it?

Number 15: question everything. People are afraid to question their relationships because they're afraid they'll leave. One of my friends one time came to me and was thinking about her relationship and

thinking about how unhappy she was in her relationship. One of the things she said to me is, "Divorce isn't an option". I said, "There's your problem". I said, "If divorce isn't an option, you have no motivation to make that relationship better. You're just going to suffer silently.

When divorce is an option, you have much more motivation to make it better or leave", and so Chris and I always say, "Man, that door is always open for both of us. That's freedom", and you get to re-question everything, question the way you show up for each other, question your routines, question where you live, question what you do, question how you parent, question everything. Re-decide all of the time. Re-decide on your relationship on each other. Chris and I are always like, "I would marry you again in a hot second. Done and done", but we question, "Do we want to do this anymore?" "Do we want to show up in this way? Are we still loving this business? Are we still loving working together? Are we still loving..." All of it. Question everything. Re-decide. That's so fun. Don't ever feel like you're at the effective of previous decision. Re-decide all of the time.

Number 16: remember they could die today. That's uplifting. Thank you, life coach, Brooke Castillo. No, really. I think about this a lot like if someone were to die today, would I even care about any of this? Does this even matter? If they were to die today, what would I be thinking about? Would I be thinking about the fact that they forgot to grab that thing at the store? What has gone unsaid? What would I be feeling? What would I miss?

Oh my God. Every time I think about that, it immediately chokes up my throat, and the things that I would miss about Chris are not the big things. They're all the little things that make up the big thing. Right? All those little things that I miss just when he's not home for a while.

What are the things you would miss if they were to die? Think about that. We take such for granted. Right? Remember the contrast matters. Those of you all who are on Facebook, forget about this one because isn't it all perfection all of the time? Isn't everyone smiling or at least making some ridiculous kissy face in their photos? Isn't everyone look like their life is perfect all of the time? Listen. You're

supposed to have arguments. You're supposed to get mad sometimes.

Contrast matters. It's not always supposed to be perfect all the time. We're going to aim for unconditional love. We're going to aim for taking care of ourselves, but we are going to make a mess of it a lot of the time. It's part of the deal.

They're allowed to be in a bad mood. They're allowed to make mistakes. They're allowed to completely mess it up and ruin in. Right? Contrast is part of the human experience. Let it matter in your relationship. Don't try to eliminate it. Create soft landings. I love to do this for my clients, for my friends, for my husband, for my kids.

Whenever they're really upset about something, I love to be like, "None of this matters at all." If they're really upset because they did something that they think will disappoint me, I love being like, "None of it matters. You know what matters? You." Create a soft landing for someone when they're upset, when they make a mistake, they know you're the one. You're the one they can land on because at the end of the day, we all screw it up.

We all make a mess of it, and isn't it great to know that there's that person that you can go to that will create a soft landing for you? Celebrate their greatness. Listen. Everyone without exception has greatness within them.

I will tell you without my husband, Chris, I would be a lot less outwardly great. I would have expressed a lot less of my greatness. One of the things my husband does for me is celebrate me with me, and I celebrate him with him. Think about your mate and what is great about them. They have greatness, and you know it. Celebrate it with them for them. When they can't, you celebrate it.

Finally, number 20: greet them like a puppy.

I'll talk to you guys next week. Hey, if you enjoyed 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

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