

Ep #173: Future Focus



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With Your Host

Brooke Castillo

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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 my friends. How are you guys? Oh my goodness, I'm good. I'm so good. It's ridiculous how good I am, I'm just doing great.

Here's the deal, I am in the middle of revamping my team. My business has grown so fast and so excitingly, that we're having a little bit of growing pain in terms of needing to hire a lot of people quickly, and I have been able to hire people right out of Self-Coaching Scholars, which is super exciting. We've added two - actually three members to our team from Scholars to work with us, and I am just thrilled that we were able to - actually announce it one of our calls in Scholars and got a bunch of people interested, and was able to bring some people on board and so now it's just getting everyone trained and everyone organized.

And we're building a building, we're building The Life Coach School building here, very excited about that, and in the meantime we're leasing some office space. Some really cool hip office space downtown here, so we can hire two more people and put them in there with Chris and then have the kids of course be doing all the logistics. So it's just a lot, and it's so exciting and it's so fun and everything is great.

So speaking of great, have you ever had the feeling like this, where you look at your life; let's use my life for example. I'm here living in Dallas, right outside of Dallas in a town called Allen, and I have a very, very successful life coach school, and we bought this beautiful house and my kids are doing great, and my husband and I are doing great, and we've kind of landed in this place where five years ago I wanted to be, right?

So when I think about myself five years ago and the things that I was worried about and the things that I was thinking about and the dreams that I was having, it's really interesting to think about that in terms of where I am now. And if I could go back and have a conversation with myself, what would I tell myself? I'd be like, "Listen, okay, here's what the next five years

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is going to be, here's what you do not need to worry about, here's what you should look out for, you shouldn't do that, you should do this." Right? Like what would you say to your past self?

Every time I've done this exercise, every single time, I tell myself, you should not have doubted yourself for one second, and you shouldn't have worried for one second. So whenever I find myself doubting or worrying now, I think about that a lot. I think about, okay, remember that there's my future self five years from today, and I'm going to want to tell myself that.

So the way that I teach this exercise, and I've talked about it a lot before, but I'm going to talk about it here, is think about yourself five years ago, ten years ago, and the letter you would write yourself if you could like, send a message back in time, and you would believe it, what would you say, and what would it be like for you to read it five years ago?

And I actually recommend that you do this exercise. You don't just think about it, like you actually do it. And then, I want you to consider your dream self, five years from now, ten years from now, where do you want to be? What do you want to create? Do you believe that you will be there? And then you identify what you would say to yourself now. If you already were at your goal weight, if you already had quit drinking, if you already had made a million dollars, what would you tell yourself now?

I will tell you, I have received more great advice from my own future self than anyone else. Ever. I've always been very future focused, I've always been dreaming about the future and wanting to grow, and I've always made my future better than my past. My life has continuously gotten better every single year of my life. I am never one of those people who live in regret and wishes I could go back to the good old days, ever. And part of it is because I'm always thinking about a better future.

Now, your mind likes to make decisions from its past. Why? Let's think about this. Why does it like to make decisions? Why do our brains automatically like to be past focused? Because it's predictable and it's safe, and remember, the brain's job is to learn how to be safe and how to survive

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and then to rise and repeat. That's how we've evolved, right? Don't eat that berry, eat this berry, don't jump off that thing, hide in this cave, right? We learn from our experience what works and what doesn't, and so the brain wants to go back and remember those things and think about those things and make decisions based on what we already know.

So what is it like to make a decision from your future? It sounds crazy, right? What does future focus mean? What is it like to take advice from your future self? And what does it require of your brain? What is the skill that it requires of your brain? It requires imagination.

Now, your imagination requires creativity. It asks you to live from your possibility, from your inspiration, from your future. Think about that. Instead of living from what you have already done, you live from your possibility. So, so often a client will say to me, "I can't lose weight," and I'll say, "Really? How do you know?" And they'll say, "I never have before. I can't take that job, I can't make that money, I can't stop drinking, I can't meet a man because I never have before."

When you think about it, it's almost asinine. It's almost ridiculous that we use that as an excuse, because how does anyone every do anything new if it's based on only having done it before? Can you imagine if we're little kids, like can't walk, why not? Never done it before. We'd be totally hosed, right?

So living from your past is very predictable and it's very safe, it's very comfortable. We know how to do it, it's very familiar, and it makes you stagnate, and for most of you, it will require you to buffer to survive, to stay happy enough to stay there, because we are inclined to grow against our brain's desire to stay the same. There's something within us pushing us towards the risk of changing. And you know because you feel it, and when you don't respond to it, it usually requires buffering.

Now, remember evolvement depends on you thinking new and inspired thoughts. Recycling old thoughts is what your brain wants to do because it's easier, more efficient and feels safe and believable. But the future is a

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creation in your mind that requires creativity, fear, the possibility of failure, the possibility of new things that could kill us, and most likely will if you ask your brain.

It's a higher level of thinking. Remembering and repeating your past does not require as much of you as thinking from your future. I love the concept of thinking from our future. What would the you, that is already achieved, that has already become, that has already where you want to be, how would they make these decisions?

Now, here's how you have to think about this. I'm going to use the example of weight loss, because we're doing an intensive weight loss in Scholars, so I'm going to give this to you all. Imagine yourself at your ideal weight, and you don't have an over desire for food, and you weigh yourself everyday with no drama. And what I want you to imagine is what it would be like to go to a party where there's a bunch of food. What would it be like to gain a pound or lose a pound if you're already where you want to be with food and with your weight? What are you thinking about? What questions are you asking? What are you focused on? What are you doing?

So I have a client, I was talking to her, she's one of my students in Scholars, I was talking to her, and I said to her, do you think you would be asking all these questions if you were already there? And if you were asking these questions, how would you answer them for you? And all of a sudden, there's this huge sense of clarity, because when you're living from that place, you're not thinking about food all of the time.

You're not thinking about your weight all of the time. You're not obsessing, you're at peace. Your desires are for different things besides false pleasures, and it's very awkward because when you start thinking about yourself in that place, it's awkward to think well, what would I be thinking about if I wasn't thinking about food? I've been thinking about food and how much fat content it has and whether it will make me fat for my entire life. What would it be like not to do that?

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And when I was wanting to not want alcohol, I started imagining that, and I had a really hard time imagining it. Like what would - like really? Like going into a bar and not wanting a glass of Chardonnay? Like what is that like? And I started having to identify myself from that place. Now, most of us think the way the world works is we achieve that result and then we learn how to be that person that lives with that result.

But if you think about the model, that's not how it works, and in fact, the easiest way to create any result is to become the person that creates that result to identify in yourself in the model of the thought that would create the feeling, the action and that result. You don't wait for the result in order to identify that way.

So I go into a bar, what am I thinking about if I'm someone that doesn't drink? I'll tell you what I'm not thinking about. Chardonnay, I'm not thinking about how long it's going to take the waiter to come over and take my order, I'm not thinking about how long it's going to take him to bring that drink back. I'm not thinking about how fast everyone else is drinking, I'm not thinking about when I can get another glass.

You know what I'm thinking about? Something completely different. So when people want to ask me, I want to change my thought. Right now the thought is I want something delicious to eat, what should I change it to? I don't want something delicious to eat. Now I want you to imagine that you're someone that doesn't struggle with their weight, that doesn't over desire food.

You do not walk into a restaurant and think the thought, I don't want something delicious to eat. You're not even really thinking about it. You're thinking about who am I meeting here, who are these people, it's a totally - it's not even the opposite of that thought. It's something totally different. You're thinking about the atmosphere, you're thinking about the company, you're thinking about what you're going to create in terms of a memory at that restaurant. You are not constantly just thinking about the food.

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Now, you might be thinking about what you're going to order, but you're not thinking about it in a way that's desperate and graspy. And so that's why I want you to spend as much of your time being as future focused as you can be, so you can start being that person now.

You can start writing, and this is a really cool thing to do, you can start writing your journal as if you are there already. I don't think about alcohol. Here's what I think about instead. I don't think about what I'm going to eat all the time, here's what I think about instead. I used to like think it was so fabulous when people were thin and they didn't struggle with their weight.

So I remember thinking like, shouldn't we just be talking about how thin you are, like aren't you just obsessed with how thin you are? Aren't you just excited with being skinny? Don't you just think about what clothes you're going to buy all of the time? And the truth was no. Naturally thin people don't think about being thin all of the time. That's why they're thin.

You know who thinks about being thin all the time? Overweight people. Overweight people think about being thin all of the time, wanting to be thin. How do we get thin? People that are already thin, they're thinking about something completely different.

So that is how you learn to be your future self, as you start imagining if you already had these things, what would you be thinking about all day? If you already had a million dollars, you wouldn't be thinking about getting a million dollars all the time. You know who thinks about getting a million dollars all the time? Someone that doesn't have a million dollars already. It's wild to really think about.

So I want you to start identifying as your future self and thinking about what advice would you get but also, how would you be thinking? Now as you guys know, in my book, *If I'm So Smart, Why Can't I Lose Weight*, I had a whole chapter on future focus, and I want to share that with you here.

You have a lot of time left.

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Think of your life as a horizontal straight line. At the beginning of the line, put a 0 to represent the day you were born. At the end of the line, put the number 100. Now, tick on the appropriate area in between these two numbers your age now. As you look at this diagram, see the space that represents the time you have already lived, then look at how much time you possibly have left to live.

I call this tool the future diagram to help you consider how much of your life you might have left. If you are planning on living until you are one hundred years old (which is not unrealistic when you consider the advances that will be made in science over the next twenty years), how many years do you have left to live? For some of you, you have more life to live than you have already lived. When you further consider that the first fifteen years of your life you were living according to the demands of school and the wishes of your parents, you have a much more self-defined life to live in your future than you might have already experienced.

When we are young, we are typically very future-focused; this makes our life exciting and compelling. We look forward to graduation, college, jobs, marriage, children, and then what-maybe retirement? It's at this point that many of us become past-focused. We start looking at where we have been instead of where we are going.

Now, you have the tools to really make something happen. You have been developing some important wisdom during your past so that you can now use it in your life to make things happen. Don't just look forward to retiring and sitting. Step up! Now is the time to plan and make some great outcomes happen. IT'S NEVER TOO LATE.

Where are you going? This is a fantastic question to consider. Where will you be in five years if you keep living this way? Where will you be in ten, twenty, or thirty years? What exactly is it that you want to have many years down the road? Are you on the path you need to be on? What can you change to put yourself on the path to achieving what you most want from your life?

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I love the imagery of the rudder on a boat. If you move it just slightly today, you will end up in a completely different location five years from now than if you just left it alone. It's not as if we have to make a massive change in our current lives to create the future we desire. If you are on your way to where you want to go, then congratulations and hold steady. But, if you want to be somewhere different in ten years, the time to change is now. How much money do you want to have? Where do you want to be living? What kind of work do you want to do? How fit do you want to be? Lay your foundation. Go and get what you want.

One of my most memorable clients came to me when she was seventy years old wanting to lose some weight. After a very short amount of time, I realized that the reason she had gained the weight and was continuing to pack it on was because her life was stagnant. She was retired from her job and her dear husband had passed a few years earlier. With further inquiry, I was able to discover that she was literally waiting to die. She saw this "last chapter" of her life as a waiting game. She was a bystander, watching her kids live their lives, but she didn't feel as if she had one of her own. She talked a lot about the past and how great her life had been and how old she was now. When we did this exercise and explored the idea that she could have thirty more years to live, she was dumbfounded. I offered the idea that they could be the best thirty years of her life so far.

This was a huge turning point for her. The thought of living the next thirty years lonely and overweight with no excitement or accomplishments seemed like a sentence. She kicked her life into gear. She quit drinking, lost all the weight, started exercising regularly, and got involved in activities that she truly enjoyed. She met a nice man to share her life with. She is an inspiration to any of us who think it is too late.

I love the concept that if we ran at full-focused speed our entire life, courageously seeking and fulfilling our dreams, we would come close to fulfilling our potential. With belief in this truth, there is no time in our life that we can disregard as a time not to be growing or becoming. No matter how

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old or how busy we are, we have potential to tap and dreams to consider. At the end of our lives, we will not have fulfilled our full level of potential, but it would be nice to know we died trying.

Once you become future-focused, you can start visualizing your future self. Your future self is already at the top of the mountain; she is at her natural weight and she is, undoubtedly, more accomplished than you are now. She is you, just further along the path. She is who you are without the fat, without the struggle, with a sense of peace and fulfillment and accomplishment. She is who you already are without the negative belief systems that hold you back.

One of the best tools I use on a daily basis is to use my future self as a mentor. She is my ticket to the life I want. I am always asking myself what my future self would do in certain situations. I imagine her free from the negative belief systems I currently have. She has the confidence of completion that I can borrow when I am feeling anything but confident. She is at the top, with a clear view, telling me what to be careful of and what I need to steer clear of. She shows me that achievement is possible. By believing in her, I believe in myself.

Now, I want to interrupt reading this to tell you guys something truly profound. As I'm reading this into the microphone, this is text that I wrote ten years ago, almost to the month. Ten years ago I wrote the book, *If I'm So Smart, Why Can't I Lose Weight?* I'm currently re-writing that book, so it should be coming out soon, so please don't go buy the old version, I want you to get the new version, it's going to be way better. But here's the thing. I am right now that future person that I was writing about then. I am the person, so when I say she's at the top with a clear view, telling me what to be careful of and what I need to steer clear of, she shows me that achievement is possible.

So I am showing myself that achievement is possible, and I am literally living that vision that I had for myself then. I have not just stepped into - it's almost like my life's caught up to that vision now. It's like I kind of got chills

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reading that because it was ten years ago that I wrote those words, and here I am now the person that I was visualizing then. Crazy.

As a mentor now, I would love to have been able to give my past self some advice. I am her future self and I would go back and tell her not to worry so much. I would tell her how loved she was. I would tell her that I was proud of her for surviving her loneliness and desperation. I would remind her to keep working hard and to trust herself and follow her intuition. I would tell her that the view is beautiful and worth every step and obstacle along the way.

For some of you, this might seem a little strange and uncomfortable. Talking to yourself and accessing your own wisdom may seem foreign to you. I promise you this is a skill worth developing. All the guidance you will ever need is within you now. You can lead yourself to the right books and the right people to help you along your journey, but no one else has all the answers for you. It doesn't matter if you hire the best coach in the universe; they will only be able to guide you to yourself for your own answers. There is no coach that knows your dreams and the path you need to follow to achieve them. You are your own coach, your own guide, and your own wisdom; you and the infinite wisdom that flows through you at this very moment.

See yourself at the bottom, at the top, and in between. See yourself at your current weight and your ideal weight. Visualize the journey. Visualize the entire process of losing the weight. You need to anticipate the times when you will struggle and plan for them. You need to think about the times when your weight loss will plateau and have a plan for how to handle the inevitable struggle that you'll have to recognize having the desire to give up. If you can come to expect that this will happen, you won't be so caught off-guard and willing to throw in the towel if it happens.

I find it helpful to have my clients write out a story of how they think it will happen. You can try this technique as well. Write the journey before it actually happens. Include all the ups and downs. Anticipate people

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complimenting you on your weight loss. Anticipate the first time you put on a size ten or the first time the scale reads 167 when it read 165 the day before. What will that feel like? How will you handle it? Anticipate feeling fearful and wanting to sabotage your success in favour of a belief system that didn't work. See yourself facing a stressful situation in your life and wanting to give up on your dreams because you can't handle it. See your future self, peaceful and supportive and knowing, as if she realizes each setback is a perfect part of this process.

I promise you will be challenged. You may get sick or injured. Your husband might leave you or a friend might die. How will you remain connected to yourself? How will you stay committed to your dreams when you find such a good reason to give it up and just survive? You will do it by looking up and seeing your future self. You will do it by knowing, in the deepest sense, who you are and that no matter what happens, you can and will have what it is you truly desire. This is when your strength will be tested and increased. This is when you can set an example and become more of who you really are. Plan for greatness despite the circumstances and you will find it.

So I really want you all to think about this concept that in a way that you may not have before. I want you to see what my teacher Dan Sullivan says is, "Your future is your property. You get to create any version you want of it in your mind, and you can choose to believe it or not."

When I think about myself ten years ago, visualizing a future that I'm not living, it makes my heart explode a little bit because it would have been very easy to just live my life on default. I would still be a one-on-one coach and I would probably be pretty happy doing it.

I was successful, I had written a book, I would be coaching one-to-one, but I had this bigger vision for my life, and I believed that it was possible and now my life is what I always dreamed it could be, and now of course I'm thinking about myself five years from now, ten years from now, and where I want to be and where I am and what I'm telling myself.

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And when I feel like it's all a lot and I can't do it and I can't grow and I can't be more and I can't evolve, I think about that future, I think about that future self, and I know what she would say. Don't worry, stop doubting yourself so much, you're totally going to be fine, and it's all just an adventure.

And one of the other things that I noticed my future self consistently saying whether I'm talking to my past self or I'm imagining my future self, it's always like all those things that you think are so important aren't. And you do find your way, and you will find your way and it's probably not the way that you think, so don't be so obsessed with the how.

So many of us don't want to believe in our dreams because we have to understand the exact path to get there. We have to see it on the GPS before we get there. And what our future looks like for most of us is we pin it on the map and we know where we are and we don't know how we're going to get there. We don't get to see the route exactly. We know how we think we make it there, but what I've seen more and more times is that you can't anticipate the amazing journey that will get you there, but you can be that person that gets there by being identified with your future self.

So I really hope that you'll take the time to do this work and do these exercises, especially if you're in Scholars, pull out your workbook and really do this. Who is your future self? What has she accomplished and how is she or he different than you are now? And then become that person literally now, and that's when you manifest the result. It's not the other way around. Have a gorgeous, beautiful week, I'll talk to you next week. Bye, bye.

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