

Ep #174: Questions and Answers



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With Your Host

Brooke Castillo

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Hey, it's Brooke Castillo, and before we get started, I just wanted to let you know that I've opened up Scholars again for enrollment. It's for a limited time, so make sure you go to TheLifeCoachSchool.com/join.

Just today, I was in Scholars, answering questions from my students, and here is one of the posts. The question title is, "My husband asked me if I'm having an affair. Hilarious. First off, I'm in my late 60s, an affair? I can't imagine it. He said he can't figure out what's going on with me. I'm happy, cheerful, easy to get along with, et cetera, et cetera, et cetera. Very different. Not typical of me at all. Me, the grumpy one, unhappy, complaining, wishing he would change so I could be happy. I joined SES in May because it was about relationships. I thought I was married to a difficult man. Now, that difficult man is smiling, telling me how much he loves me, and for some reason, is suddenly so easy to get along with. When I think of all the money we spent in counseling over the years, I was concerned about the cost of your program. That is laughable now. No question here, just thanks."

I read that, and I tell you guys, I got so excited, so many chills. Your successes I think are even more riveting to me than my own. So that is just one of many, many, many messages that I get daily about the work that we're doing in Scholars. So please join me, TheLifeCoachSchool.com/join. Don't miss out!

You are listening to The Life Coach School podcast with Brooke Castillo, episode number 174.

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? What's happening? What's new? Isn't summer amazing? I love summer. You know what I love in Texas? Summer rain. Summer rain is the best. We didn't have summer rain in California. Let's talk about Q&A.

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So here's the deal. I don't get to hear from you all, all the time, right? So I mean, if you're in my Scholars I hear from you all the time, we get to talk and connect and coach, but there are so many of you that aren't in Scholars. The heck, come join Scholars, that get to listen to me talk at you all the time, and some of you have questions and I am going to answer them all today. Today's a Q&A.

And so I'm going to answer questions from all of you, and one of the assignments, if you're in Scholars that I've given you to do, is I'd like you to answer the question the way you would answer it before you listed to this podcast. So - and you guys can do that too if you're Scholar outside of Scholars, if you're studying this material, if you really want to master the model, what you can do is pause the podcast after I read the question and do a model on it. Try to figure it out, right? So you want to like diagnose their model, and then turn it back on and I will walk you through it, okay?

So I want you to start using other people's problems because sometimes they're easier to identify the model within their problem than it is in your own. And by the way, this is what we do in Scholars all the time. Someone will present a problem and I will model it and then we will coach them on it, and that's what I'm going to do here today. So hopefully some of you will get your questions answered. These have been over the past couple months, questions that you guys have posted in the comments on my podcast, and for those of you who want to study this material deeper, hopefully, this will give you an opportunity to do that.

The first one is from Kimberly. "Hi Brooke, thanks for the podcast. You give great advice for people who are already in a committed relationship. How about those of us who aren't married yet? With all thoughts about the object of your affection are subjective and the things we think we want in an ideal partner are all figments of our imagination? What criteria do we use to choose a partner? In your philosophy, any person can be your ideal partner as long as they are a warm body."

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Yes, warm is probably good. I was going to say they just have to be a body, but a warm body is probably good - "and you create loving thoughts about that person. Values are not absolute. They are fictional and changeable as everything else in our mind. So how do we evaluate who is the best person for us to create a story in our head about loving? Thanks."

Kimberly, this is such a well-worded question, and I feel like it really addresses what I teach in a way that doesn't oversimplify it. It is really what I teach. So let's just review. What I teach is that our relationships with other people are really are stories about them in our head. People are like, "That's not true; I love that person." And the reason you love them is because of the story in your head about them. Sorry, but it's true.

This is why you can have the most amazing, gratifying, loving relationship with someone you believe is in love with you, and they have a double life. They're not really in love with you, and they're really cheating on you. But if you don't know about that, you're just living in this loving relationship, how could that be possible? Do you have a good relationship or not? Is it just a figment of your imagination or not?

Now, usually, someone will ask me a question and they'll say, "Well, whatever Brooke Castillo is teaching you, she's teaching you to be delusional." And here's what I want to offer. We are all delusional regardless. It's whatever we're choosing to believe. So when people say that, they're acting as if there's an absolute reality that is true regardless of judgment. And that is true, but it requires judgment to feel a certain way.

Here's what I mean by that. When you look at the model, when you take a circumstance, it's always neutral. So if you tell yourself, "This is the best thing that's ever happened to me", you're being delusional, right? If you say, "This is the worst thing that's ever happened to me", you're being delusional. Either way, you're deluding yourself to believe something.

Now, is there - now, when people say they're delusional, what they're inferring is that the thing in and of itself is one or the other. So for example, you just won the lottery, and you tell yourself, "That's the worst thing that's

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ever happened to anyone. I don't like money." That's delusional or, you could say, "It's the best thing that's ever happened to me." That's delusional, right? It's assuming that winning the lottery is in and of itself good or bad, which is not the case until we make it so.

I know for many people this is a really hard concept to wrap their mind around, and I'm always trying to think of ways to teach it better because I really - you know, people are like, "Oh, you're just so pollyanna, you're just thinking positive no matter what", and saying as if the alternative of thinking negative is better no matter what, right? Either way is a choice.

So the point is, you can pick anyone to have a relationship with, and you can decide to tell a good story about them, and you will have a good relationship with them if you believe that story. That is exactly what Kimberly's asking. So she's saying, "Well, how do you decide who you want to be with?"

Now, the way that I want to answer this is this: you choose someone who it's easy to tell a good story about. But here's what I've noticed after coaching thousands of people, is they marry people who they thought had a really easy story because they thought that person was so amazing, and then three years in that story is not so easy to tell.

So they decide to stop telling a good story about that person and then they get a divorce, but they blame it on the person, right? And so they get into trouble. So the question is, "How do you decide?" And, of course, when you say values are fictional and changeable, as in everything in our mind, values are not fictional. Values are choices. So what you value is what you choose to value. And one of the things that I'm encouraging all of you to value is your ability to choose how happy you will be.

Now, I want you to back up here Kimberly, because, in your question, you're alluding to the idea that choosing your mate will determine your happiness or not, and choosing the right mate will increase or decrease your happiness or not. And what I'm suggesting is that you're always responsible, always responsible for how you feel. And if you take full

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responsibility, then the way you choose your mate is simply whoever you want to be with. Not because you think they'll do a good job of making you happy, but just because you want to be with them. And you don't want to necessarily be with them because they will make you happier or not happier. You just have a desire to be with them.

And I know that it's like a mind twister for a lot of people because we are taught like, you will meet someone and live happily ever after. And it's so challenging, right? Because when you meet someone, you're usually pretty darn happy with them, and then you get married and then somewhere along the line, you're like, "Wait a minute, you're not making me as happy as you used to, did I marry the wrong person?" But I'll tell you what, when you marry someone and you take responsibility for all your own happiness and you just appreciate them for the human that they are, it's a really, really good time.

So your question is, "How do we evaluate who is the best person for us to create a story in our head about loving?" The one you most want to be with. And make sure you like your reason for why you want to be with them. If the reason is because you think they'll make you happy, you're setting yourself up for unhappiness, because that is your job. I know for some of you, that's a pretty unsatisfying answer, but it is the truth, and it will make your relationships much more satisfying.

RB: "Hi Brooke, I loved this podcast. It was filled with such truth. I sent it onto many of my family members all of your podcasts are great. I'm trying to apply some of the things you have taught, like when I feel a negative emotion, I look back to see what thought was creating it. But there's one issue I hope that I get your input on. I have children from a previous marriage that I don't get to see much, who are definitely in a loyalty conflict. I keep putting myself out there to connect with them (now teenagers), and the frequent rejections hurt. Everybody says they'll figure it out when they're older, and that I shouldn't give up. So over and over, I go through the pattern, hoping that some day they'll be free to want a relationship with me. You see, my dad had children from a previous marriage and he gave

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up and they amounted to only pictures on the wall and I don't want that, so how do I keep going and not getting discouraged? Any thoughts?"

Yes RB, first of all, I love the question. Second of all, Scholars, I hope you caught this. The main thought that he's in trouble with is "the frequent rejections hurt". That is the thought I would put in your model. So the circumstance is you call them, and say, "Hey, let's get together", and they say no. And then you say, "I'm being rejected" and then you feel rejected. And then how do you act, RB, when you feel rejected? You stop reaching out as much, right? You hold back, you try to protect yourself. And the result is you're less connected, right? Which further proves that you're being rejected.

So here's what I want you to do. I want you to change that thought. What if you never took it personally or made it about you at all? What if your only job was to love those teenagers and not expect anything back from them? They don't want to spend time with you. That's okay. You can do what you do to love them. You can think the thoughts you want to think to love them. And when you think a thought, "I'm being rejected" or you think a thought, "They are rejecting me" or you think a thought, "It hurts to be rejected", you do the opposite of loving and reaching out and staying open with them.

So all you need to do is change that thought. They get to behave how they want, they're teenagers, trust me on this. It doesn't matter if they live in your home it doesn't matter if you share the same room, it doesn't matter if they live with your ex, it doesn't matter if they're at college. You have the opportunity to feel rejected by teenagers often, but it's never true. They're never rejecting you, you're never being hurt by their rejection. You're being hurt by your thought about it.

So your thought is, "I love my" - I'm offering you some new thoughts here. "I love my teenagers no matter what", "I'm always there, they will always know that I am here for them", "I will reach out to them, I will show them that I love them, and there's nothing they can do about it."

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And if you move forward and you don't feel sorry for yourself and you don't feel upset and you don't feel like you're a victim of something terrible, and you stop thinking about your dad and how he did it and you start thinking about how you're doing it and how you're loving them and you go round and all you do is talk about how much you love those teenagers and you talk about them in really positive ways and you show them that you love them and there is going to be no doubt that you love them, they will know that you love them regardless of how they respond. Then that's when you will feel the love.

Don't wait for them to do something in order to feel love. Don't blame them for you not feeling as much love as you could. They get to behave how they want. Great question. I hope you guys, Scholars got that one right. That was a good one.

Jenny: "Thank you for your wonderful podcast, Brooke. I began listening in July when I decided to find a new way to look at weight loss as I prepared for my brother's wedding. I heard about you through your appearance on Jess Lively's podcast. Thank you for the mental shifts around my relationship with food that I gained through your podcast. I successfully lost the weight that I wanted to and continue to lose more afterward, blowing my own mind. My goal was to lose 15 pounds and today I've lost 27 pounds and weigh less than I did at 19 years old. I'm very grateful for the help that you share so generously. Since losing the weight, being in the body I've desired to have, I've been left with as many questions as I thought I would have answers, by being at this weight. I have this strange feeling of, "What now?" that I can't help shake and I'm in this strange mental state of not being sure what to do next. I've read a great deal by authors like Brene Brown, Glennon, Elizabeth Gilbert, who promote an attitude of radical self-acceptance. I wish to embody that love for myself and the body that I inhabit, but the desire to lose weight and maintain weight loss seems to contrast that message, or perhaps I'm just not seeing it clearly. I want to love my body but wanting to control its size and shape seems to be at odds with acceptance of it. I'm hoping that you can help me find the missing piece of the puzzle that ties this together. I've lost weight

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with a couple of friends and we have been discussing that we all have found ourselves in this strange mental space after losing all of the weight we were so enthusiastic to lose. Thank you again, Brooke, for your wisdom, motivation, honesty, and generosity."

Alright, you guys, Scholars, pause, how would you answer? How do you think I'm going to answer? Let me tell you this. When you are solving any problem in your life, you have to consider the cause of the problem. So when you're a whole identity has been around wanting to lose weight and trying to lose weight and then you lose it, you feel at this space of like, it's like an identity challenge. It's like, "Who am I now?" And this is a huge question for so many of us women who consider, "Should we lose weight? Should we even bother with losing weight? If I love myself, shouldn't I just love myself overweight?"

Here's my answer. It depends on why you're overweight. It depends on the body that you're in. So do I think that you should radically accept your body when you are overeating all the time and putting it into a space of not being at your natural weight? Absolutely not. I do not think that you should radically accept overeating, I do not think you should radically accept buffering. I think that's the opposite of radically accepting yourself.

When you are overeating and when you are buffering and when you are escaping through food, you are by definition, not accepting yourself. And here's what I mean by that. When you feel lonely and bored or deprived or upset and you eat to avoid that emotion; that is denying not accepting yourself. That is the opposite.

Do I think that you should force yourself to be in a body that is not natural for you? Absolutely not. But I think that you should be in a body that is comfortable for you, and here is what I want to offer. Comfortable means you are at your right size, which means you are going to spend a lot of time uncomfortable when you'd rather be eating.

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Now, your question is, "I'm in this weird mental space where I'm focusing now on keeping this weight off. Now, when I was overweight I was focused on getting it on and now I'm focused on keeping it off, and that doesn't feel like radical self-acceptance." And here's what I want to offer because this happens to a lot of my clients.

We're so used to having so much of our brain space taken up by overeating, and then trying to lose it, overeating and then trying to lose it, that when we lose it, we don't really know what to do with that brain space. And we think, "Oh, maybe this is not right. Maybe this isn't what I should be focused on. I feel good and thin, but I also feel off because I don't have buffering, I'm not overeating, I don't have my escape, and the mental energy that I'm spending on trying to maintain my weight now feels off too because I'm not used to it."

And what I want to offer you is that the answer is to fill that space in your brain with something new. To stop thinking about your body so darn much. Just stop thinking about food so darn much. You eat according to your protocol, and you forget about the rest. Now, you may feel like you can't live a normal life because normal life is about overeating all the time, right? So you're having to constantly think about not overeating all the time. What I want to suggest is you take your life to the whole next level.

So instead of thinking about overeating, is what you used to do and act on, now you're thinking about not overeating, I want you to go to the next level. What if you weren't thinking about it at all? What if you just accepted the weight you're in right now, you maintained it based on your protocol, what would you then spend all your mental energy on? And that's what I want to invite you to do.

That's the reason weight loss is so awesome. You figure out why were you buffering in the first place, all that emotion, all of those things that were in the way, and what do you have left with, right? What do you have left with which to work on? And that I hope is not related to your body, and not related to food, but something way more interesting. Great question... Alright, you guys, ready for the next one?

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Jackie: "I just started listening to your podcast about a month ago, and one thing I've been hearing you say a few times through different episodes is that you can choose to react, or not react to an emotion. I'm not fully sure I understand how you can choose not to respond, and what that actually looks or feels like. For example, with a recent break up that I've gone through, there are times when someone asks me how I'm doing, or if someone brings up my ex, the tears just flow, even if I don't want them to. How can I choose not to react this way, when sometimes the tears just come, even when I've been trying not to have it happen?"

Okay, good question. Scholars, pause, how would you answer? Here's what you need to know, is that when someone asks you about your ex, you have a thought. It doesn't feel like you're having a thought, it feels like you're just reacting. But someone says, "Hey, how's your ex?" and you have a thought, "I miss him terribly", or you have a thought, "I can't believe we broke up, I want to be with him" or you have a thought, "I can't believe that I can't love him anymore." I don't know what your thought is because you didn't put it here, but you do have a thought, and then the tears come, okay?

Now, the tears are not a reaction. I would put the tears as part of the emotion. So I think you're putting crying or tears as part of the A-line, and I would include those in the F-line, for the feelings. So you have a thought, "I miss him", you have a feeling, which is sad, and it included tears, and then how do you react to the sadness and the tears?

Now, your reaction may be to reach out to him and call him. Your reaction may be to change the subject or to start obsessing about him or just - whatever is in the A-line is something you can choose not to act on or react to. That's what I'm referring to. I'm referring to the A-line. Crying and tears are your feelings, caused from your thought, and that is not something that I would recommend you even try not to do. If you're feeling emotional, if you're feeling that feeling, allow yourself to experience that emotion, process that emotion all the way through.

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Recognize that you're the one causing it with your thought, and then whatever reaction you would have in the A-line, you can decide on purpose which one you want to have. Good question. Alright, ready?

Next one, Lance. "Hi Brooke, this is an old podcast, but I've just started your podcast series, so I hope you will see this question. Briefly, how do you find the balance between living every moment of your life with gratitude through enduring happiness, while also doing the hard and gritty work of working towards your goals? For me, it's often the discontent and the tension between where I am and where I want to be that drives change. When I spend too much time thinking about where I want to be, I start to feel discontent and frustrated with my current circumstances. Yet, when I try to be thankful and content with all the wonderful things that are there to be thankful for, I feel like I'm not working hard enough at enacting the change I want, and the cycle continues. So to state my question as more of an exaggeration, why work to change our situation if at all, if all we need to do is change the way we think about it and supervise our thoughts? Theoretically, I should just be as happy as a janitor as I would be as an entrepreneur if I followed these principles. As you said, one life can be experienced as miserable for one, and yet happy and wonderful for another. Have you wrestled with this in your own life? How do you coach people through this tension? Thank you so much."

Great question, Lance. How would you guys answer, Scholars? How would you answer? What am I going to say? Here's what I'm going to say. This pre-supposes that the reason why you're going to accomplish something in your life, the reason why you're going to go get what you want, the reason why you're not a janitor, the reason you are an entrepreneur is to make yourself happy. That's what we're taught, that's what we believe.

I don't want to be a janitor because I can't be happy as a janitor, so I might as well be an entrepreneur, and then I'll be happier as an entrepreneur. That would be the only reason to do that, right? And what you're saying is if I can be as happy as a janitor, why would I be an entrepreneur? Well, that's

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only a valid question if the only reason to be an entrepreneur would be to be happy, and that's what you've suggested here.

What you're saying is, if I can be as happy as a janitor as I can be as an entrepreneur, why would I be an entrepreneur? Because the only reason to be an entrepreneur would be to be happier, to be happier than I am as a janitor. And that's where I think you're wrong.

We don't pursue things in our life to make us happy. We don't become entrepreneurs to make us happy. That's where everyone gets into trouble, because we try to use the tension and the misery to motivate ourselves to do something that would make us happy, and it doesn't work. Why doesn't it work? Because doing things doesn't make us happy. Thinking makes us happy.

So the question is, why become an entrepreneur at all? And my answer to that would be, because happiness drives me to create something amazing. Not the other way around. We become an entrepreneur, we get married, we do things in our life because we want to from a place of abundance and happiness. Not because we think those things will give us abundance and happiness.

So there's been a consistent theme, right, throughout these questions. It's like, "Why get married if it won't make you happy?" "Why get another job if it won't make you happy?" "Why do this if it won't make me happy?"

We don't do things to make ourselves happy. We do things because we are happy. So you say here, "Why do the hard and gritty work?" You're saying the reason why you do it, it's often the discontent and the tension between where I am and where I want to be, and what I want to suggest is that's not good motivation, and it makes it so much less enjoyable.

So what you're doing is you're trading this moment for some future moment where you're going to be happier, and you're saying that's what motivates you to work hard. What I want you to try Lance, is to be happy where you are, and use that energy to create something amazing. To use that energy

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to do the hard and gritty work of showing up in your life and expressing your happiness and expressing your life in a different way; not to make yourself happier.

If there is better than here - think about that - we have to be uncomfortable here, unhappy here, before we'll ever take action. And what I want to suggest is that you allow yourself to feel positive emotion to create anything.

"Why would I leave my husband if I can find a way to love him?" Because you want to. "Why would I be an entrepreneur if I can be happy being a janitor?" Because you want to. "Why would I make more money when I could be perfectly happy with this money?" Because you want to. Not because you think you'll be happier. You do it because you're already happier, and you want to be able to explore different things and different adventures and different ways of living, just for the sake of being alive. Not because you want to make yourself happier by doing those things. Great, great question. Did you guys get that right, Scholars? And when I say right, I just mean according to the model.

Kate: "Hi Brooke, this is an interesting perspective. I do have a question in regard to once you come to a place of understanding, that you cannot place your wants on a significant other. How do you figure out if you want to stay, while disliking certain habits or if you don't want to stay because of the habits you dislike? How do you figure out if the things that you dislike about the other person are the things you can live with or not?"

Here's my suggestion Kate, find a way to be happy. Find a way to recognize that it's not their habits that cause you to feel the way you're feeling. It's not what they do or don't do that causes you the way you're feeling. You could be happy either way. And then, and only then decide whether you want to stay or not.

Leave from a place of liking, leave from a place of loving, leave from a place because you just want to; not because you think someone else's habits will be so much better than this person's habits. Seen it time and

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time again with so many different clients. There's always something to be unhappy about. Until you understand that you are the cause of your own happiness, you will find a way to be unhappy about someone else. Promise you that.

Alright, next one. Anonymous: "Hi Brooke, I love your work and I'm having great success applying it to my life. Changing my thinking has changed my life very quickly and in extraordinary ways. My question is how do I know if I'm using positive behaviors as buffering? I really enjoy exercise, eating intentionally and keeping a clean house. Sounds positive, maybe controlling, but I've started to worry that my enjoyment comes from the business these activities bring. Many times, I'll be very conscious of my feelings while I'm participating in these activities. Therefore, I'm able to be the watcher because my body is busy, so my mind is more clear. I feel like I need this every day, and I don't have another way to work through my negative thinking. I literally don't want to go a single day without a workout. I get very anxious, and sometimes angry. Is this a sign that I'm using a positive behavior as buffering? I'm struggling to figure out when a seemingly positive behavior becomes a negative force in my life."

This is such a great question, Anonymous. Buffering always has a net negative consequence to it. Now, you're saying that these are all very positive activities and that they have positive benefits, but I'm going to argue that you do have a net negative consequence here because you get very anxious and angry when you can't do it.

So my suggestion is not that you stop working out, but that you evaluate your reasoning for working out, and you figure out how to manage your anxiety and your anger when you don't. When you're dependent on something, and so when you don't have it, you get angry and anxious, that is a net negative consequence. So you want to make sure that you have the ability - I don't think that working out is necessarily a buffer and a way of buffering. It could be if the net negative consequence is significant on a regular basis.

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It doesn't sound that way from your message, but one of the things I want you to really get clear on is how to manage your anxiety and your anger and your emotions without working out. If you're escaping your emotions through the work out because you don't have the skill set to do it, then you could be using it as a buffer. And because it's a positive thing and you're getting a positive result from it, it's great, but your net negative is that you don't know how to process the anxiety and anger without it.

So I just want to make sure that you pursue this work and that you're having a lot of success applying it, I want to make sure that you do have days where you don't work out, where you're not dependent on it and that you can process your anxiety and your anger without it. Then you'll be all set, my friend.

Alright, next one, here we go. Christina: "Thank you for this great podcast. I was recently at our elementary school for a lecture by a Harvard professor on how kids and parents are too focused on achievement versus being kind and caring. It hit me in the middle of the lecture that I didn't agree with his approach, and I wondered why we're all sitting there nodding our heads and worried solely about raising kind kids versus teaching our kids to have goals and try to achieve them, that life is a balancing act and that these things don't have to be mutually exclusive. Group think and belief systems are so ingrained in activities like parenting. While in the above case I could recognize that I didn't need to agree with his belief system and could opt out, I'm more challenged on the home front. Are there any tips you can share for parenting with a spouse who brings his or her different belief systems to parenting? For me, this is a struggle and while I believe in throwing out the manual for my spouse and that I can only control my own thoughts and feelings, how do you suggest one deals with situations where their spouse or partner says things you may not fundamentally agree with to your children, or wants to focus on the kids efforts in a direction that is more in line with their belief system versus yours? I'm in a good long marriage, I'm not going to leave due to this dissonance, but now that our kids are getting older heading towards tween-ville, issues seem to be coming up where we differ on how we want to handle them. Many thanks."

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Great question, how would I answer? What do you guys think? Okay, so here's the deal. You and your husband are raising those kids. And here's something I figured out. He gets to teach them what he teaches them, and I get to teach them what I teach them, and they get both of those lessons, and they get to decide who they're going to be in the world.

In your message, I get the impression that you would like to be the one teaching what you believe to those kids. Who of us wouldn't? And that your kids would then ingrain those beliefs and those ideas, right? And head in the direction that you want them to, which gives us the sense that we can somehow control the outcome.

So I want to give you a huge sense of relief, which is giving your kids two differing approaches is a beautiful thing. Letting your husband teach them something that contradicts what you might teach them can be a beautiful thing, if you guys can figure out a way to incorporate it into your parenting and not create an argument between each other about it.

And the other thing is to let go of the fact that trying to control what you teach your kids will somehow affect how they turn out. It may work, it might work, but at the very best, all you can do is teach them everything you've got. But I get the sense that you want to somehow try to control that outcome because you want to focus the kid's effort in a direction that's more in line with your belief system.

And here's what you have to know, is your kids will focus their efforts in the direction that they choose ultimately, and the younger the kid is when you figure this out, the better. My husband taught my kids to listen to hard rock music. This was not my choice, I get in the car with them and they want to listen to hard rock music. I like silence in the car but they like hard rock music.

They like 80s funk music that I don't like. My son, Connor wants to buy a Dodge Challenger for his first car. What? How did that even happen? My husband has had so much influence on these kids that I thought were mine. But it's a beautiful thing, right? We teach them very different things.

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Chris and I differ on a lot of opinions on what it means to be a human, right? And we teach both of our opinions and those differing opinions to our kids, and we hope that they'll focus their efforts in the direction that feels most in line with who they want to be.

And I'll tell you that my oldest son comes home with thoughts and ideas that are very different than mine, and I'd like to refocus his efforts in a different direction, but I've also recognized that he's going to grow up and be who he's going to be, and that has really set me free. So I don't want you to worry so much about your husband having differing opinions or trying to find a compromise. I think it's powerful to let your husband offer what he has to teach, and you offer what you have to teach and both of you make an effort to be as much on the same page as you can, but also allow for those differences.

Alright, next one. Taylor: "I have a friend who has a very negative mindset. I've recommended your podcast to him, and I've tried to steer conversations away from such negativity, but I still feel like I'm a negative person when I'm around him. I feel that I'm doing what I can, and I don't want to lose them as a friend. Do you have any recommendations?"

Yes, Taylor, you got to let your friend be your friend. Maybe you should stop interpreting your friend being negative because you know what you end up being? Negative. Because you're being negative about your negative friend. Now you're both negative. So I would suggest that you try and be positive about your negative friend. You might have to drop the negative part in front of the friend today, right? Stop looking for the negative even though they're being negative in your mind.

Their negativity doesn't affect you at all until you start judging it. I've actually been working on a lot of Scholars on this kind of stuff. They're like, "I understand that everything's a thought, but what if someone's just a total jerk?" Someone being a total jerk is just a thought, my friends.

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So just notice when you're being negative about someone being negative. It's kind of funny right? So my suggesting is, don't try and get them to listen to my podcast, try and practice not being negative about your friend. Try being really positive about your friend.

Alright, Tracy. "I have a question, unrelated to this specific episode, but something that I hope Brooke can address some time in the future. Brooke has talked many times about deciding ahead of time, making a commitment and then honoring yourself by following through on that commitment. She makes it sound so simple. But for me, honoring my commitments to myself is the absolute hardest part. I'm good at honoring my commitments to others, and I don't think it's a self-esteem issue. I think I'm pretty awesome. But I will make all sorts of plans and then in the moment I just can't bring myself to follow through on my plans. How do you get yourself to a place where you always follow through and honor what you decided ahead of time to do? I hope that makes sense and I'd love to hear your thoughts."

Okay Tracy, I just want you to know that people who have really high self-esteem don't treat themselves terribly. They don't make promises that they don't keep. They don't dishonor commitments. They don't give up on things that they've committed to do. So I do think it's an esteem problem. You're saying you would never do that to someone else because you care and love about them so much, why would you do it to yourself?

It really is as simple as drawing a line in the sand and saying, "I will not make a commitment to myself that I will not keep. Period." So you need to make a lot less commitments to yourself, and the commitments that you do make to yourself, you follow through no matter what. You do not dishonor yourself and the commitments that you've made to yourself.

I promise you your self-esteem will go through the roof when you start honoring your commitments to each other. You do to each other, right? And here's what I want you to say to yourself. "I will not make a commitment ever again that I'm not 100% willing to follow through on. Period." That will change your life, and it really is as simple as that. not easy, but simple.

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Alright, Lindel. "Oh my god, I love this one, Brooke. I'm someone who's trying hard to move on from being a people pleaser, and I'm worried about what other people think of me. I just have a quick question. If I choose to do something because I think it's best for me, and it impacts others, and their thought is that I'm being selfish or that I should do what's best for them and they voice that thought, I tend to instantly want to follow on to the pattern of changing to make them happy. Any ideas for what thought I can replace for, "I'm being selfish" with to ensure my own needs are met? Thank you."

Yes, "I'm not being selfish." Or the one that I use is, "Heck yes, I'm being selfish, and?" Other people expecting you to do things for them comes from you having done things for them at your own expense and they've gotten used to it. So they will be upset in the beginning, but I promise you, they'll get used to it really quickly. So be willing to be selfish. Be willing. Because you are taking care of you, and if you see that at someone else's expense, you're missing the point. You hear what I'm saying?

So when someone says you're being selfish - listen to this. Someone says "You're being selfish; you should take care of me." They, in that sentence, are being very selfish, right? They're saying you shouldn't take care of you, you should take care of me. Who's being selfish now? Right? So if you're trying to recover from people pleasing, just know that the people you've been pleasing will be upset by it, and that's okay.

Alright, Becky. "So I'm wondering, I confronted someone on something they were saying to other people about me. After listening to your podcast, I realized I should have handled it differently. But the reality is, what's done is done. The person admitted that she indeed had been spreading these rumors about me, but rather than apologizing or wanting to work it out or anything else expected, they went ballistic. I have two questions. What happens when you know that someone's been spreading rumors about you but when you go to them and say, "Hey, I understand that you've been saying these things, is it true?" and they deny it, what then? Also in my case, they admitted it and went ballistic. What then?"

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Here's what I let people do, my friend. And you're going to think I'm crazy. I let people spread rumors about me. I let people be wrong about me. I do, Becky, because here's the thing. What do I care if someone's spreading rumors about me? Anyone I care about won't believe those rumors. Anyone that really, truly matters to me will verify that with me before they believe it.

I can't control the world. This person can spread rumors about you, you're trying to control this person, right? So this person is spreading rumors about you and you're going up to them, and the only reason you're addressing it is so they'll stop, yes? What were you hoping was going to happen? That they would stop spreading rumors, yes? Why? Because you think them spreading rumors about you is hurting you. Is it really hurting you? No, it's not.

Other people's actions don't hurt you. So the question is, why did she go ballistic? She admitted it, she busted herself, maybe she didn't know how to handle it. Maybe she didn't know what to do. Why was she spreading rumors in the first place? Sounds to me like she's coming from a really negative space.

But here's the thing. When someone denies it or someone admits it, it doesn't matter. I still can't control their behavior. I can ask them nicely, I could be like, "Hey, dude, can you stop spreading rumors about me? That would be awesome." But don't count on them doing it, and just know that it's okay if they don't. They can keep spreading rumors about you and you can still be happy.

People spread rumors about me all the time. I'm trying to think of one. A lot of people think I'm snobby. Really, I'm just an introvert. I really am an introvert. I know it trips people out, but like, when I get in social situations, I feel so depleted that I just want to run to my room and like, plug myself back in. People think it's because I'm so snobby that I can't bother to be with people. People talk about that and say that rumor, but I allow people to be wrong about me. That's okay. I need to take care of me. Spread rumors, do it, I double dare you.

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Christa: "I have been listening to your podcast since October 2016, and it has given me really valuable tools and insight. I found the podcast at a time when my emotional eating was getting out of control. I tried many diets and always failed. I was starting to lose hope with how helpless I felt. After listening to your podcast, my eyes were open to the fact that emotions can't hurt me and I need to start experiencing them. I still have a lot of work to do, but I finally feel like I have tools that will help me. Another area that I struggle in is relationships. I'm perpetually single. I used to think thoughts like, "All the good guys are taken" and "Who would want to be with me?" and the only guys who show interest in me are the deadbeat losers. I've changed my inner mantra about men and have started to see some positive changes. I still have a lot of work to do on myself though. My question is, do I need to focus on myself and truly love myself before I'm ready to be in a healthy relationship? I've read about every self-help book on this subject and they always emphasize you must love yourself before anyone else can love you. Part of me thinks I'm using that mindset as an excuse not to put myself out there and actively pursue a relationship. While I truly want to be in a healthy, loving relationship, being single is easy for me and in my comfort zone. I find myself saying, "Work on yourself first, then you'll be ready for a relationship." Am I just making excuses so I can stay in my comfort zone?"

Alright, Christa, I have no idea. Only you know, but here's the thing. You don't have to only love yourself first so someone else will love you. Don't get in a relationship so someone else will love you. Listen to my podcast on relationships. Get into a relationship so you can love someone, and start practicing now.

Get into a relationship, go on a date - don't even get into a relationship, just go on a date and practice loving someone. You need to get better at loving, right? You're getting better at loving yourself, getting better at loving other people. You said to me, "The only guys who show interest in me are deadbeat losers." Who do you show interest in? Who do you love?

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Do you love the deadbeat losers? Can you love everyone? That's what you need to practice. You need to practice loving. So I don't think you need to wait to be in a relationship to practice that. I don't think you need to get into a relationship to practice that. I think you can start practicing that right now, on yourself and every date that you go on.

Mary: "Loving the podcast" - thank you. "I really like the concrete suggestions given in this episode and wondered how they can be applied to goals like losing weight and not yelling at my kids. I can schedule time for working out, meal planning, reading books to my kids, but I can't really schedule time not to eat." Sure you can, you schedule time of when you're going to eat, and then you eat only then. Everything else is scheduled time not to eat. "Yell at my kids. Would love your thoughts on this if there are any episodes on don't goals."

Here's the thing, you have to understand why you're yelling at your kids, you need to make sure you do a model where you put yell at kids in the A-line, and what are the thoughts that cause you to yell at your kids. So I wouldn't make not yelling at your kids a goal with do goals, but I would definitely try to understand the cause of that and really practice creating a new model where the A-line is not yelling at the kids, which is talking kindly to the kids no matter what, and the way that you do that is by managing the thought that causes it in the first place.

Anonymous: "Question in response to this quote: "You get to decide how to want to interpret everything in your life, and you might as well interpret it in a way that serves you." I believe this, however, what happens when you choose to interpret a loving relationship and at the end it was not?"

Wow, great question. How do you determine whether a relationship was loving or not? Whether the person loved you, or you loved them? If you loved them, then the relationship was loving, and you get to keep believing that it was because you are in charge of the loving. If they ended up not loving you at the end, that doesn't take away that you loved them, and my suggestion is you don't allow yourself to interpret it any other way.

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Daisy: "I just heard your podcast on hope. If you believe the bible, then you know that it says, "Love, hope, and peace will last forever." How do you reconcile that?"

Well, it depends on how you interpret it, right? So when you read the bible, there are so many different interpretations of the bible. And here's one thing that I want to offer, is, you can find a way to reconcile anything, but you have to ask yourself why are you doing it.

So she's referring to the podcast that I did on hope, where I talk about how hope can prevent taking action. And so the Bible says, "Love, hope, and peace will last forever", and they will, because they're emotions, right? They will last forever. But what is the point of agreeing with that or reconciling it with my work? If it serves us, then we want to do that in a way that serves us, okay? So I think it's an easy thing to reconcile, but my question is why do you want me to? Can we find a way that will make it work for you in your life? If hope is working for you in your life, it will last forever, but is it something that you want to focus on, or do you want to focus more on love and peace?

Vicky: "Hi Brooke, I'm your big fan, and this is the first time I'm leaving a comment. In this episode, you've mentioned that there are two emotions you don't find serve you at all and you've decided not to feel them. Worried and insecurity. I wanted to say these are the emotions I feel all of the time, and I've decided to work on it. I was going to learn from you and direct my thoughts on not to feel these emotions as if only they do not serve me, but will also cause negative thoughts and then unwanted behavior will follow."

Okay, so I just want to interrupt you there Vicky. Emotions don't cause negative thoughts. Negative thoughts cause the emotions. "However, when I re-listen to you and how you feel, you taught us how to embrace the feelings so we're not afraid of feeling it so that if we manage it. I have a hard time understanding how to manage my worries and insecurity. Should I allow myself to feel it and accept it, or should I redirect it? I was wondering if you could provide some clarifications."

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Oh, this is a good question, Becky. So here's - I think you got it confused because you're thinking emotions cause thoughts. Thoughts cause emotions. So what I teach is that you need to process emotion, you need to feel your emotion so you can find the thought causing it, and then when you find the thought causing it, then and only then can you decide to change it. But in order to find the thought causing it, you have to be willing to process the emotion.

Now listen, I don't like to indulge in emotions that don't serve me. So if I notice, like for example, worried, I've decided not to feel worried. I went on a worried diet because I didn't see that emotion as being useful, and I saw myself causing myself to feel it with my thinking all of the time. So I made a deliberate choice to think thoughts that cause different emotions because of that, and you can do that exact same thing. But you first have to recognize that you're feeling it so that you can process it and find the thought causing it, and then you go ahead and change it. Good question.

Carol's next. "I'm three years late, but I've just recently started listening to your podcast, and they're helping me work through difficult situations in my life. I have always been called a pushover for most of my life, and I can attest to that. I'm working through it and I'm voicing my opinion in a respectful way, and I'm learning to remove myself from situations that don't benefit me. But here is where it gets difficult for me. I still live with my parents, and the hardest thing for me is to set boundaries with my mom. I just recently started dating this guy, I brought it up to her because I didn't want to lie about where I've been. Since then, she's not stopped asking about his last name and his address, and I assume it's because she wants to run a background check on him. I tried as best I could to tell her I'm not ready to share it with her, and she replies, "There you go again, always protecting the guy you're dating. Always choosing him before your family, what are you so afraid of? I deserve to know his name. I'm your mother. Just because you're 24 you think you can do whatever you want, you still live in my house" you get the idea. And this doesn't just happen with my personal relationships. She speaks this way when I forget to rinse the coffee maker or when I leave a plate unwashed in the sink. I honestly feel

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so depressed when I come home, I'm trying to work through my feelings but I need your advice. Am I not allowed to keep things to myself? I feel so guilty all the time that I throw myself back into this cycle of binge eating. Thank you so much for all that you're doing."

Of course Carol, you're allowed to keep things to yourself, and of course, your mother is allowed to ask you about your boyfriend's information. She can ask, and ask, and ask, and you never have to tell her anything. But don't be upset because of her asking. That's where you're getting into trouble. You're making her asking mean something that you should feel guilty about, and that's the work that you need to do. And if she makes comments when you don't rinse out the coffee pot, what do you make that mean?

Whatever you're making her behavior mean is what's causing you to feel upset and frustrated, and that is the thinking work you need to do. Your mother has not really crossed any boundaries here because you have those boundaries set up and she's unable to cross them. Now, if she followed you on a date and stole his wallet and got his address, that would be a boundary violation. But you've set up some nice boundaries, you've not replied to her requests, and she's honoring those boundaries as far as you've explained here, everything's beautiful in the world.

The only problem is, you're not managing your emotions very well. So you want to manage your emotions by managing your thinking. And you're thinking that is causing you to feel guilty and then that guilt is an emotion you're not willing to process, that's why you're binge eating. So make sure that you allow your mom to be who she is, especially if you're living with her, you allow yourself to set proper boundaries, and then you sit and process your emotion. That is how you'll get through it.

B: "Hi Brooke, I'm a really big fan of your podcast, which I've been listening to for the past year. I have two questions, which I'd love your thoughts on. Firstly, in your podcast, you talk about happiness being a choice and coming from within, rather than being determined by external circumstances like your job, relationship, et cetera, which I completely

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agree with. However, in the light of this, I wonder how you can ever know when you should change a particular circumstance in your life such as your job or relationship. If you don't like your job, how do you know whether you just need to change your attitude to your job or find a new or better job?"

Okay B, you say you understand that you wouldn't change your job in order to be happier, but then you ask me why would you change your job? And so you haven't really released the idea that the only reason to change your job would be happier. So you're like, "Well if it wouldn't make you happier why would you do it? The only reason I can ever see for changing a job is that it would make you happier."

That's not the case. You change your job because you want to, not because you think it'll make you happier, but because you're already happy and you want to do something else. You don't have to make choices from scarcity, you don't have to make choices because the grass is greener; you get to make choices simply because you want to.

"Secondly, I'm a big fan of setting goals, and I'm generally successful at following through and achieving them, but I often find that my goals are contradictory. For example, when I'm working full-time, I wish I had more time to pursue my hobbies and personal projects. I would love to train to be a yoga teacher. However, I've recently found myself unemployed and have all the time in the world, but now I don't have the finances to fund my hobbies or project without a full-time job to pay for them. I often find myself in this situation, especially when trying to balance career, finances, work life balance and relationships. Do you have any advice on this, and how would you suggest people prioritize which goals to pursue and which areas to compromise? Many thanks."

So you, my friend, need to join Scholars. Maybe you have since you posted this because that's exactly what I teach you. But here's what you do. You pick one area to focus on at a time, and you pursue it like crazy. And if you need the money from the full-time job to pursue your dreams then get a full-time job and take that money and pursue your dreams.

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It really doesn't have to be complicated. So many of you guys ask this question because you want the answer to be complicated, and sometimes the answer not being complicated means that you have to take action. So I think you should train to be a yoga teacher immediately, and if you have to get a - because that's what you want to do. And if you have to get a full-time job to fund that, rock it out, do it.

Ashley: "I've been trying to gain this lesson on living in the moment and have done pretty well and doing it with most areas of my life, except one, my job. No matter how hard I try to be grateful and thankful that I have this job and that I'm working here, I cannot shake the discontentment. Any advice?"

Yes, quit. Immediately. The fact that you haven't quit already, makes me think there's a part of you that is content with the job. The part of you that is content, that's preventing you from quitting is the part I want you to focus on.

And that, my friends, is a wrap. Holy cow, great questions you guys. Super. I hope that you all answered those questions right and were able to identify - especially those of you that are coaches are able to identify some of the thoughts. Maybe there were some areas that you would have coached differently, handled differently, done differently, all roads lead to Rome, my friends.

Any kind of insight, any kind of awareness, any kind of approaching our mind and our feeling and our actions from a place of consciousness is a good use of time as far as I'm concerned. Have a gorgeous week everybody, take great, great care of yourselves. Find happiness in this moment and pursue more just for the fun of it, just because you want to, not because you'll be any happier. You're going to be just as happy as you are right now, and that can be a lot. Alright, take care, everyone, talk to you soon. Bye.

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