

Ep #179: Productivity



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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? I'm so good. So, so good. I'm excited to talk to you guys today about productivity because I have had the most productive year of my life this year.

I have created more content, I have created more tools and done more coaching that I have probably combined through the rest of my life, and there are two reasons why that happened for me, and one of them is implementing the process to get it done, which I'm teaching in Scholars right now and following it to the tee has made a huge change in my life, understanding the concept of do goals which I talk about in the podcast and actually following through on that.

My productivity is through the roof, and I'll tell you what. Let me just tell you a little bit about how wonderful that is to be on the receiving end of your own productivity. It is so gratifying to have so much gratitude towards yourself for getting something done.

I know that you guys can relate to doing this in your life, when you get a project done you're just so happy that it's done, you're so happy that you completed it, you're so glad it's turned in, in any way that that is, that sense of - hopefully you have a sense of gratitude towards yourself when you have completed something like that. I think it's an important piece of doing work for the world is also having gratitude to yourself for having done it.

That sense of accomplishment, that sense of completion is I think one of the wonderful experiences of being human, and I love feeling proud of myself. I think that's the best - it's like, you went and you got it. I'm so proud of you.

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I have a couple really distinct moments of feeling proud of myself that I've talked about on the podcast. One of which is when I set a boundary with my mom. If you listen, it's been about two years ago now I think since I really started doing that boundary work, and I shared on the podcast, and it was so difficult for me to have that conversation and set that boundary with my mom because of my fear of abandonment and all the issues that went around that.

But I will tell you that I high fived myself on the way out of that conversation because I approached it with so much love and so much care for myself and my mom, and I feel like, since that time, my relationship with my mom is so amazing. I mean, genuinely so amazing, and I feel that that is a gift that I gave myself, but not just myself, but to my relationship with my mom and with my kids and with everyone in my life that experiences my relationship with my mom because it's such an important relationship in my life.

Another area where I feel super proud of myself for having done the work is not drinking. I really dug deep to do that work, to discover what was that over desire for alcohol and Chardonnay and I didn't have to be pressured into making that change. I didn't have to get to the point where I was really struggling with non-functioning, where I was constantly drunk or dealing with alcoholism.

I feel like I kind of was really proactive with dealing with that issue so it never really became an issue for me in terms of a problematic issue that I couldn't function with, and I'm so grateful to myself for giving myself that gift. The fact that I can go throughout my day and not once think about alcohol, not once want alcohol is truly genius.

I seriously am so, so proud of myself for finding that solution. My father died of alcoholism, I mean, genuine sclerosis. The whole bit, like really genuinely killed himself with drinking alcohol. And my brother, his son died from a cocaine overdose. So it's in our family, if there are genetic predispositions to it. I have it for sure, and I have eliminated that as a possibility in my life and I'm seriously proud of myself for that.

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The last thing I really am proud of myself for and I think this all relates to productivity because you have to do the work, and you have to produce the results in order to reap the benefits of your accomplishment, right?

And I remember a lot of times, looking at my kind of line of women that came before me, my grandmother, my mom, and how they really suffered unnecessarily around so many things, and I remember thinking to myself, "This is going to stop with my generation. This is not going to continue. I am going to draw a line in the sand and make a difference in terms of the amount of suffering that we have all experienced as Christensen's - that's my mother's maiden name - and Bolangers and Castillos, and it will stop here with me."

And I really genuinely made that promise to myself and I feel like I've kept it. I have changed that trajectory that my family was heading into, and I feel super proud about that too. So as I sit here today, I am excited to teach you about productivity because it's about what you produce. And that's how I'm going to start talking about the concept because I know that when people talk about productivity, it sounds like some boring corporate term that applies to like manufacturing.

The way that I want you to think about it is not necessarily that way. When you look up the definition of productivity, it says it's measured in terms of rate of output per unit. So even though that sounds like a manufacturing term, like what is the rate of output per unit, how many are you producing basically. I think it can apply to anything that you are trying to produce in your life.

So when you think about being productive - now, this applies to anyone. This applies to if you are at home with little kids, I think that's when it's the most important to be productive, holy cow. I was home with my kids for the first five years, and I think that's the hardest job I've ever had. My kids are 14 months apart and they were crazy boys, and so any of you that are home with your kids, this applies to you for sure.

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This applies to you if you are working in a business, this applies to you if you are an employee or if you have your own business. I've learned a lot about productivity from myself and my own ability to produce, but I've also most recently learned a lot about productivity from my employees. It's very interesting to see my different employees and how they produce at different rates and how it completely directly correlates to their mindset and the way that they think about their position and their job and their abilities. It's really fascinating.

So here's what I want to start with. The definition of productivity does not refer to how much or how long you work. It doesn't refer to how busy you are and it doesn't refer to how stressed you are. I've had lots of students and employees tell me how hard they work. That's not relevant. How many hours you work is not relevant, genuinely.

I tell this to my employees and like, if you can get your job done in three hours a day, God bless you. If you can get your job done in ten hours a day, that's up to you. I don't care how many hours you work, I care what you produce. And the same is true for me and my expectations of myself.

I recently had someone in Scholars post me a message. We have an area in Scholars where you can ask me questions, and one of my students told me that she has been very successful in her coaching business. She just built her coaching business, she's been very successful, she's making really good money, but she's working ten hours a day. And she feels like she's getting burned out, she doesn't have enough balance and she doesn't really know how to proceed with feeling so unbalanced.

And what I told her was that she was giving herself too many hours to get her job done. She was giving herself ten hours to get the job done, and she needed to do the same amount of work in eight or six. That's what the expectation needs to be. So if you have to get the same amount of work done in a shorter amount of time, you're going to have to be more productive, and the way to be more productive is to manage your mind.

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There's so much time that we waste thinking and stressing and worrying and confusing ourselves. When I'm doing the planning work with my students, when I'm helping them figure out how to get something done and I'm forcing them to put everything on the calendar and to schedule it, I get a lot of resistance. They come back to me and say, "Well, I don't know how long this will take." And that is the wrong question because it will take as long as you give yourself to get it done.

If you give yourself two years to write a book, it will take you two years. If you give yourself two months to write a book, it will take you two months. People think that the book written over two years will be better. Not necessarily. It may be the exact same number of hours, just spread over a longer period of time, that may or may not make that book better.

So instead of saying, "I don't know how long this will take me" and then watching yourself work at the rate that you naturally work, you have to turn it around. You have to say, "I have two hours to get this done." It's just like when you're in school, right? You have two weeks to get a paper done, you have two weeks to get the book read. How do you know how long it's going to take you to get that book read?

When is it due? That's how long it's going to take you. If you have four weeks, I promise you it'll take four weeks. So the most important thing to remember is that productivity is only measured by what you produce. What is the end result at the end of it? How long it took you to get it done - I want you to think about this in terms of when you buy a product at the store, it doesn't say, "We worked on this for five years." It doesn't say, "It took us 45 minutes to produce this." Like, you don't care about any of that.

You don't care how long it took, you don't care how hard they worked on it, you don't care how much stress was involved, you want to know does the product work, should you buy it, right? They have produced something and all you care about is that end product. That's what productivity is about. It's about production. It's about producing something.

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Now, there's a huge mental shift when you stop thinking about things in terms of your effort or the amount of stress or the amount of time you put into something and you start focusing on your productivity and what you've actually produced. So when I have a coach, a brand new coach come to me and say, "I've been working on my business for a year", that means nothing to me.

I don't know how many hours within that year were productive hours, I don't know what were you thinking about your business for a year, were you making offers for a year, what I want to know is what did you produce in that year. What did you produce in terms of content, what did you produce in terms of clients, what did you produce in terms of money. That reveals your productivity.

You want to be highly productive. You don't want to just be putting in a lot of effort. And this is true for anybody that I hire in my organization. I want to make sure they're super efficient and highly productive because what will happen is when someone's highly productive, first of all, they don't have to work as many hours, they will feel more refreshed, and you are energized by what you produce.

So back to what I was talking about the first part of the podcast here, when you are producing content, when you're producing results in your life, that's motivating and perpetuates momentum and it's energizing. If all you're doing is putting tons of effort and stress and busy time in and you're not producing anything, you're not being productive, that effort and energy will wear you down and make you tired.

It's the opposite effect. So I want productive people around me because I know they're going to be high energy. I know that they're going to be able to produce and that production will energize them to make more production. So it doesn't matter how long you have been at something. It doesn't matter how much energy you have put into something. What matters is how much you've actually produced and what your results are. That determines your productivity.

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One of the things that I want you to think about is something that you do on a daily basis that takes up time. So maybe it's - let's say, you're home with the kids, right, so let's say making the meals and cleaning them up, and let's say bathing the kids and taking them to the park and cleaning up their toys. And feeding them again and getting them a snack and changing their diapers and then putting them down for a nap and then feeding them again. All of those things that you do that take up your time.

Now, if you were to change that perspective of your day and to think about it in terms of productivity, and what are you trying to produce in your life and in the lives of your children, you may be able to produce at a much higher level when you give yourself the goal of productivity instead of just trying to burn the hours away.

And I see this with people who have applied to work with me. I can tell in the way that they talk to me how they're focused on the amount of hours and how many hours they have to work to get paid. And for me, it's all about the result that you're producing. It's not about the number of hours. It's about are you efficient, are you productive.

When you are working on being more productive, it's very important that you don't create a to-do list that has you spend time doing something. That is not useful. You don't want to just spend activity time if you are trying to create a result. Be focused on what you're going to produce, not just on spending that time.

When you're calendaring your time to produce something, you need to have a result when you're done. Not just time spent. So think about this you guys. When I put something on my calendar, for example, I need to create a podcast. I need to get it recorded and I'm giving myself one hour to record the podcast.

Now, how long does it take to record a podcast? People say, "I don't know how long it's going to take me." I know exactly how long it's going to take me. It's going to take me exactly as long as I give myself to get it done.

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Would I like to have three hours to record the podcast? Sure, that would be great. I like to have four days to record it. If I give myself four days, that's how long it's going to take. But I will tell you, when you give yourself a short amount of time to produce a result, it's much more energizing and enjoyable.

You do not indulge in stress, you do not indulge in confusion, you do not check your Facebook, you do not turn on the TV, you do not have time to do any of that stuff. You have one hour, sit down and get the podcast done, so you sit down and you get it done. And you're very focused because there's that timer going. It changes everything. It takes me exactly one hour to produce one podcast every single time.

Well, how can that be? Some podcasts are longer, some podcasts are shorter. I always give myself the same amount of time to produce the result that I want to produce. And you can do that in your life. Now, people will say, "I like to be more spontaneous, I like to flow, I like to let myself be creative."

When I hear people say that and I ask them what their production is like, it's always very low, because when you rely on your brain, it's going to seek comfort and pleasure and avoid pain. But when you give yourself a time frame, your alertness goes up, your focus goes up, your productivity goes up.

So here are the best emotions that you need to generate in order to be productive. You want to feel efficient. I love this as an emotion. People use it as a quality to describe someone else, but it's a feeling too. Have you ever been in a situation where you feel efficient? You're getting so much done in such a short amount of time.

There's minimum wasted effort, and if you think about what you are asking yourself to produce, when it takes an extra long time, it's because there's a lot of wasted effort. Most wasted effort comes from allowing yourself to indulge in worry and confusion. I'm telling you, that is the biggest time suck.

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You want to feel focused. You're paying particular attention to one thing and you're super constrained on it, and you want to feel clear. Feeling clear doesn't mean that the material is clear. It doesn't mean that the goal is perfectly clear exactly how you're supposed to get something done. But you feel clear, and every time something comes up that's a challenge, instead of indulging in confusion, you stay in clarity. Focus on the solution.

So I'm going to give you some action steps that make productivity easier. I want to promise you that most of you can do twice as much as you're already doing. I've had people join Scholars that say, "But I have so many kids. I have so many issues. I have so many things. I'm in debt, I have all these things I'm working on." And what I say to them is, "You could do twice as much if you were more productive, and I want to help you be more productive", and the reason I know that they're not productive is the way that they're describing what they have to do is in a poor me, self-pity kind of attitude.

They're trying to generate some empathy from me by focusing on how much they have to do, and what I want to help them focus on is what is it you're trying to create and how can you be more productive so you can create everything it is you want in your life.

You know, I want to be able to walk my dogs every day, I want to be able to go to the florist and pick out fresh flowers for right next to my bed. I want to be able to go out to dinner with Chris and have a long leisurely dinner and not worry about anything. I want to have a couple days off, and I also want to produce a multimillion dollar corporation with nine employees, and the only way I'll ever be able to do that is if I'm productive, if I'm really utilizing the time when I'm sitting at my desk to produce something and not just sit around thinking about things and stressing about things.

So here are the action steps to make productivity easier. Number one, plan. Plan, plan, plan. Plan before you take action. Starting faster doesn't get it done faster if you don't have a plan. If you're in Scholars, you'll see the video of me planning my entire result of having a book funnel and what went into doing that. It was tedious and it was time-consuming but it made

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the rest of it so much more productive. So make sure you have a very specific plan.

What are the exact steps that are going to get you to the result that you want? What are all the piece parts that have to happen in order for you to create that result? You do not get to say, "I don't know". If there's a part of you that feels like you don't know how to do something, then the plan includes figuring out how to do it, and the time frame for doing that.

The second thing is you have to give yourself a time limit. There's no room for perfectionists. You cannot produce at a high level, you cannot have a high level of productivity if you want to be a perfectionist. Perfectionism is for scared people. Perfectionism means that it has to be perfect so no one can judge you, so no one can reject you, so no one can point out something that you did wrong.

Well, let me tell you, if you want to live in a world of perfectionism, you're going to live in a world of non-productivity. You need to be willing to put your rough drafts out into the world. You need to be willing to do B- work. That is where the most productivity will come from. Give yourself a time limit to produce the result, and then honor it no matter what. It's just like school. The paper is due, turn in what you have. Pencils down, turn it in.

When you give yourself a time limit and you know that you will honor that time limit, meaning your work will be done at the end of that time limit and that's what you will put out in the world, you will become much more efficient. You will become much more motivated to get the work done in a quicker amount of time so you're able to double check it before you send it out into the world.

Stop perfecting ahead of time. Do not try and perfect something on the first round of results. This slows you down. You want to go back and revisit once you've produced it, once you've published it, you want to go back and try to perfect it. That is fine, as long as it's not taking away from other work that you could be producing. Done is better than perfect, is my favorite

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quote. I don't even know who said it, but I just think it's fantastic. Get it done, right?

Now, you can't put D and F work out into the world. That's not going to work. So you can't be sloppy and non-attentive without a plan. That's not going to work, but you also can't be constantly striving for A+ work and perfectionism because you won't be able to produce at that level. The aim is B-. You got to get it done, you got to be efficient, you got to be productive, it's got to be high quality, it's got to be passable. It's not just passable mediocre, it's at a C, you got B-, it's good stuff.

And the last thing you must do is clean up your thinking first. Take five to ten minutes at the beginning of each day to clean up your negative thinking about the productivity, about what you're going to produce. Here's what happens to me. Every time I have something to do, every time I have something to complete, every time there's something on my calendar that I need to focus on to get done, my brain tells me it's a horrible idea. My brain tells me to procrastinate. My brain tells me not to do it, my brain tells me I don't have to and offers me an out, a way to avoid it.

Every single freaking time. And as soon as I figured this out, I was like, oh, and then I just planned on it. So I know that it's going to happen every time I want to go work out, every time I want to go to yoga, every time - anything I want to do that I know will produce a great result for myself, my brain tells me not to do it.

It's almost like this built in bot error, but when you plan on it and you know that it's coming, you can override it and get to producing. Okay, it doesn't matter how much time you have, it matters how much you produce within that time. That's what matters. If you only have a half an hour, you got to produce it in half hour. If you have three days, you got to produce it in three days. And I want you to know that when you follow this process, when you plan ahead of time, when you give yourself a time limit, when you stop perfecting and when you clean up your thinking first, your productivity will soar.

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Here's why productivity is so important. Everything you produce is not going to be a win. I'm going to say one out of ten are wins. So if you're not producing, you're probably not having a lot of wins. A lot of production is going to end in what we would call failure, but that's okay because the more you're producing the more chance you have at wins is what I tell all my students, all my employees, all my moms that are home with their kids.

What is it you're wanting to produce in your life? Produce as much as you can in an energizing way that fuels you instead of wearing you out. You want to switch from consuming all the time, that's what makes us tired, to producing. And not from a pressured last minute state, but from a planned and energized state. It will change everything.

If you're in Scholars, make sure that you do the exercise portion of this podcast in your podcast book because I'm going to tell you that stepping back and taking a look at your own productivity and what it is you are wanting to produce, it doesn't have to be some big, huge thing in the world. It can just be, "I want to produce a clean house", "I want to produce an organized life." It doesn't have to be, "I'm going to produce a business." Anything like that, or "I'm going to produce to a million dollars."

Nothing like that. It doesn't need to be. It can be, but it doesn't need to be. What is it you want to be creating in your life? What is it you want to be producing in your life? Switch from a consuming to a productive mindset, it makes the biggest difference in how much energy you have to live your life. Have a beautiful week you guys, I'll talk to you next week Bye-bye.

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