

Ep #29: How to Feel



Full Episode Transcript

With Your Host

Brooke Castillo

Welcome to The Life Coach School Podcast where it's all about real clients, real problems and real coaching. Now, your host, Master Coach Instructor Brooke Castillo.

Oh, my goodness! What is happening? What is going on with you, guys? I'm so thrilled to be here. I've been traveling a lot this month and it feels like I haven't been able to be here and just focus on you all. So, I'm really excited to be back and to be sitting down to talk to you about how to feel. This is something that's been coming up a lot, a lot, a lot.

So, before I jump into it, I want to mention something. I offer at www.thelifecoachschool.com a free coaching call every other week. You can jump on that call. You can request to be coached. You can listen to me coach other people and you will learn a lot through that as well. You can also request to be coached personally.

I love it when you guys leave comments on the site and I can coach you there as well but there's something I think really powerful about being coached live. It's really an opportunity for you to get a taste of what we do at the school. We adjusted our schedule for next year and it's going to be amazing. We're doing in-person trainings six-day trainings here in California for people who want to become coaches and people who just want to learn how to massively coach themselves.

So, I want to invite you all to check that out, to come on to California. So many of you have written me beautiful e-mails about how you much love this podcast. It's nothing compared to you and me live and in-person. Anyway, if you're thinking about doing something really awesome for yourself in 2015, check it out. If you want to see and get a little bit more of a taste, you can go ahead and opt in for free for that free coaching call.

Also when you opt in, you can get a copy of the recording. So go over there and check it out. Hurry up! Right now, do it unless you're driving. It would be a horrible idea. Put your phone down.

All right. Let's get started. How to feel? Let's talk about feeling and what it means to feel your feelings. So often people will ask me about

the model and we've talked about the model on previous podcast. If you're just trying to jump in and start listening to this podcast here, you're probably going to be like, "What the what is she talking about?" You definitely want to go back and listen to a couple of the first podcasts where I talked about the model and get a sense of what self-coaching is.

Once you have that sense and once you start using the model, one of the things people want to do immediately is once they recognized that their feelings are caused by their thinking, they want to immediately change their thinking. It's like I call it a thought swapping. Like, "Oh, this feeling is making me feel horrible. I need a better thought." I've had three people in the last three days ask me, "What are the steps to feel better? What are the steps for the better feeling thought?"

I'm always having to say, "Slow it down, tigers. Just dial back a bit." You can't just try on a new thought, right? You can't just go to the place where you start thinking and you thought and then you feel better immediately. In some instances, that does work sometimes. If you just notice that you've been thinking something negative and you can just switch it around real quick. Most of the time, it doesn't happen that way.

Most of the time what happens is you become aware. That's always the first step, right? This increase of awareness is the first step and you start noticing how you're feeling. Most people are like, "What the heck is going on? Why am I feeling this way?" Then immediately they want to change their thinking once they get a hold of it. What I want to increase and what I want to teach you to increase is your awareness and your ability to feel.

Now, that may sound kind of funny. Everybody has the same ability to feel. Everyone has the same emotions but that's not true. It actually is an ability that you learn, learning how to feel, learning how to feel your emotions and being willing to feel your emotions. That is some badassery doing that. I'm not talking about always being crying. I'm not talking about emoting. I'm not talking about reacting and displaying your feelings and always being in a state of negative emotion or always yelling or anything like that. I'm not talking about display of emotion.

I'm talking about your ability to feel what you are feeling instead of avoiding or reacting to it. For example, your ability to feel anxiety is very different than suffering from anxiety, right? We talked about this in the anxiety podcast, right? If you resist your anxiety and increases it and it causes a lot of problems. When you allow anxiety, when you feel the emotion, when you feel the fear, when you feel the pain, it has much less of an impact on you than when you try to resist it, push it away, tuck it away for it to fester.

One of the things that happens is some people try to use the self-coaching 101 model to escape their feelings. It's so funny. It's like I create these tools. It's like I created the hunger scale for weight schoolers and they want to use the hunger scale as a diet. They want to use it as an external diet, which of course is not what it's meant for. Then they want to use the self-coaching as a way to escape their feelings when actually the self-coaching model is designed for you to feel your feelings, to be willing to feel.

When you say, "Okay, yes. Now, I recognize that I'm feeling blank. I'm feeling frustrated. I'm feeling judgmental. I'm feeling critical. I'm feeling anxious." The next question maybe, "How do I stop feeling this way now that I've noticed it?" I say don't try to stop feeling that way because if you stop feeling that way, you don't get stronger. You don't get the ability to feel to embrace your suffering.

Now, I hear you. Who the heck would want to embrace their suffering? The reason why you want to embrace it, the reason you want to move towards it is so you can own it. Once you own something then you have authority over it and then you can manage it. Think about that word manage. You have to be in a superior position. You have to have the ability to manage it and that's what we're talking about when it comes to our emotional lives.

Remember, feelings need to be felt. They are vibrations in our body. When we resist those vibrations, we cause ourselves problems. It does not make them go away. Avoiding them, pretending they're not there does not make them go away. It doesn't stop you from feeling them. It just pushes them down and creates all sorts of avoidance patterns and reacting issues.

Now, here's something that I've been talking about a lot lately with my colleagues as some of us work on growing our business and developing new programs and working with new students. Whenever you set new goals for yourself and have new opportunities, you're going to feel emotion, typically doubt and self-doubt. We've talked about this before like when you set a goal for yourself, you wanted to feel wonderful and lovely but really what it ends up feeling like is doubt.

I tell you guys, that's a good sign because if you're feeling doubtful that means that you have to overcome that doubt in order to achieve that goal. As you overcome that doubt, that's how you evolve. That's how you grow. That's how you become stronger. If you avoid the doubt, if you pretend like it isn't there, you do not overcome and in fact, you end up letting it determine your action with very little awareness.

Think about this for a minute. If you set a new goal for yourself and you know that probably if it's stretching you, if it's asking a lot of you then you're probably going to have some doubt come up. You're probably going to have some fear come up. Instead of running away from it or changing your goal or deciding that you don't like goal setting because it brings up that negative emotion for you, what I want to suggest is that you be willing to feel it.

So let's talk about doubt. What does doubt feel like? Now, it's got to feel pretty bad because we all spend a lot of time avoiding it. We spend a lot of time avoiding stretching ourselves and putting ourselves in situations where we're not certain, where we're not sure, we're not going to be 100% successful.

When you feel doubt, what does it feel like? If somebody like an alien, just picture any alien you want in your mind. My alien is like a cute little dude. So, you picture an alien coming down from some planet and the alien doesn't understand emotion. It doesn't know what emotion is and it wants to know what doubt is. So, you're trying to explain it, the emotion of doubt when this alien doesn't even know what you mean. So, how would you describe it? You'd have to

describe it through how it feels in your body, where you feel it. How it feels different than another emotion?

Now, when I ask that to you, would you be able to do that? Would you be able to describe doubt in such detail that they would be able to mimic it, that they would then be able to experience it if they did what you told them, if when you described it they could then do that thing within their body? Would they be able to experience doubt?

Most of you probably would say no because you're like, "It's just doubt. What do you mean? It doesn't feel like anything. It's just doubt," but if you can really take the time and describe it and really think about doubt and what it feels like in your body and you can describe it in detail, what you will realize is that the worst part of doubt is resisting it.

When you have just pure doubt, when you're really just allowing that to be there and you're really experiencing it, the actual emotion, the feeling of it is really not that unpleasant. I feel it a little bit in my solar plexus just like a little buzz in my solar plexus and a clenching but not a really intense one but just a clenching in my stomach. That's what doubt is and I spend a lot of time avoiding that little feeling in my solar plexus and that clench in my stomach. I spend a lot of time running away from it.

"What the heck for? Really think about it. Why am I running? It's not even like a punch in the stomach. It's just like a little clench. I'm not going after my dreams because I don't want to feel that. You got to be kidding me," but that's what we do. The way that we feel an emotion is by sitting with it, breathing into it and describing it is one of the best ways I know of how to feel it. Not explaining why you're feeling it yet but just feeling it.

As you feel it, you can tell yourself, "I can do doubt. I can do humiliation. I can do frustration." Think about whatever emotion it is that you are avoiding, rejection. What's so horrible about the feeling of rejection? I was thinking about this one. I got an e-mail from someone who had said that her boyfriend had broken up with her and started dating someone else and she was feeling rejection and it was the worst thing she'd ever experienced.

I started thinking about, "What is it about rejection that's so hard for us?" It's because we feel rejection which is for me, it's like a clenching in my throat a little bit. I mean really, when you describe it, it's just a little clenching in your throat. It's a little bit of a clenching for me in my solar plexus. Now, usually when we're rejected, we have other thoughts that bring on shame and that feels more of like for me, shame feels like a heating in my face and all over my body and a tingling that's rapid and unpleasant but it's all over my body. That's what shame feels like for me and it also clenches my throat a little bit.

Now, think about if you would be willing to feel any emotion on purpose. Think about that. If you would be willing to feel rejection, if you would be willing to feel doubt, shame. Not tolerate it but really feel it, really allow it. Think of all the things you would be more willing to do. Think of all the relationships you would be willing to hold the space for. Think about all the things that you might say that you want to say that go left unsaid because you're afraid of maybe being rejected or you're feeling doubt or you're feeling fear.

Think about it. "I don't want to do my dreams because I don't want to feel the fear. I don't want to feel the self-doubt. I don't want to feel the disappointment." If you can be willing, your entire life will open up in ways that you can't even imagine. I have so many of you talking to me and telling me that you're hiding. You're hiding in your houses. You're hiding in your lives because you don't want to experience negative emotion. You don't want to have the conversations. You don't want to put yourself out in the world because you don't want to feel those emotions that come up for you.

I just want to ask you, you have every right to hide if you want to hide. I'm not going to tell you shouldn't be hiding. It's up to you but what are you hiding from? You're hiding from the emotions that you're creating that really aren't that big of a deal. I mean, I think the worst feeling is panic, terror, humiliation.

A panic attack is a pretty unpleasant experience but panic attacks come from the resistance of emotion building upon each other. The anxiety building on the anxiety and then the anxiety causing more anxiety which then turns into panic which then turns into terror which is a full on panic attack. It's certainly not pleasant. You think you're

going to have a heart attack but the worst part about that is thinking that you're going to die. You're not really going to die.

So, here's how you do it. How do you feel? This is how you do it. You name the feeling. Now, there's some contradiction here. Some coaches or some teachers teach not to label the feeling. That's not what I'm teaching here. I think labeling it is so powerful because then it's not this big generalized thing. You name it, "I feel sad. I feel humiliated. I feel frustrated." Then relax into it.

Now, if you're trying to pay attention to exactly how it feels, that will come naturally because what you will do is you will go into the watcher in order to observe your body feeling. I will tell you, that is the way to do it. Instead of being really at the effect and the resistance of the emotion, when you go into the watcher to describe the emotion, you get a little bit of relief from that emotion. Notice as many things as you can. What does it feel like? Where do you feel it in your body? What exactly? Like you're describing it to the alien exactly how would you describe it.

Is there a certain color associated with it? What adjectives would you use? Is it hard? Is it soft? Is it fast? Is it slow? What is the worst part about the emotion? Like I think with shame, it's the heat. I feel like the heat in my face and down my neck and on my chest, like the heat of it. Really when you think about physically, the physical heat of shame, it's not like it's burning. It's just unpleasant.

Now, when you're feeling any emotion that feels unfeeling, one of the best sentences, one of the best thoughts that I've ever had is, "I'm feeling this emotion," whatever the emotion is, "I'm feeling shame because of a sentence in my mind." Now remember, our thoughts cause our emotions. So any emotion that you're having is caused from a sentence in your mind. Now again, it doesn't we don't want to be having the emotion. I always use the example of grief. A lot of times we want to be feeling an emotion like grief but it's still caused from a sentence in our mind thinking, "I'm going to miss this person. I'd loved this person so much," et cetera, et cetera.

So let's say you're feeling rejection. Allow yourself to feel rejection. What does it feel like? Then say to yourself, "I'm feeling rejection

because of a sentence in my mind. This is rejection. This is what rejection feels like. I'm feeling rejection because of a sentence in my mind."

I tell a story often about a recent trip I had to Mexico where I was having what I call the complete shame attack. I was feeling so much shame. Shame comes from a thought, a version of a thought, "I have done something bad." or "I am bad," or "I am wrong," or "There's something wrong with me." I couldn't really identify exactly why I was feeling it or what the exact sentence was but what I did know is that it was shame and that I could name it and that I could say it and that it was caused by a sentence in my mind.

I went through the day and allowed myself to experience it. I reminded myself that the reason I was experiencing it was because it was a sentence in my mind and it took all the power away from anybody else that I might be blaming or anything that I was believing was wrong or bad about me. It reminded me that the sentence in my brain that was firing over and over and over again was causing this emotion of shame. "This is shame. This is shame." That was my mantra as I was vacationing in Mexico with my family. "This is shame. I am feeling this because of a sentence in my mind."

The other thing that really helps when you're feeling an emotion, when you're really feeling it is to focus on your exhale. A long, slow exhale will really help to increase the inhale and the air breathing will allow you to feel on a much deeper level. It will allow the feeling to really be there.

Now, I want to sell you on why feeling matters. I gave you a couple of reasons already. When you resist it, you make it stronger and worse, that's one reason. The second reason is if you're willing to feel any emotion, you will be willing to show up in the world in a way that most people are unwilling to do which means you probably have a life that most people are unwilling to create for themselves which is super awesome.

The last reason why I want to say be willing to feel is because it will give you access to your brain. It will give you access. If you're willing to stop and feel, you will get access to the thoughts that are causing

that emotion. Some of those thoughts are oftentimes out of our awareness. We don't even know that we're having a thought that there's something wrong with us, that we're bad, that we're unworthy, that there's something that we need to prove to the world or there's a reason why we need to hide.

Those are all just thoughts. We don't recognize them as thoughts when we're in it. We think that's just our reality but really, it's because of something that's going on in our brain. It's the best news ever. So, if you're willing to stay in that feeling and notice the thought causing it and don't try and change anything. Don't try and swap the thought to get out of the feeling. Allow it to be there until you have felt it through. Feel that feeling all the way through because why not? It's just a little bit unpleasant when you allow it. It doesn't usually last very long when you allow it.

When you are willing to walk into your own suffering and not resist it, that is how you release it because when you are willing to feel it, that's when you claim ownership of it. Don't be in a hurry to do this. If you're in a hurry, it means you're believing that the feeling is so awful that you got to get out of it. What I want to teach you is that the worst thing that can happen is a feeling emotionally and if there is no feeling that you're unwilling to feel, there's no reason to be in a hurry.

About half of your life is going to be negative emotion. You're going to have a negative emotion. It's part of the human experience. If you allow it to be there, you will create an intimacy with yourself, a trust with yourself and ability to know that there's nothing you can't handle. There are no thoughts that you can't handle. Then and only then will you be able to then release that thinking and then you can adopt a new thinking.

When you truly understand the current thinking and then it's not working for you, that's when you can release it and start anew and pick a new thought that will ultimately stay with you, that will ultimately change your life, that will become that new pattern. You can't rush your way through it. You can't pretend it's not there but you don't need to because remember, there is no feeling that you can't feel if you're willing to experience it.

I would love to hear from you in the comments. What feeling did you allow yourself to feel this week? What was it? Now, I know some of you have never commented on the podcast. You've never gone there. You're just one of those people that doesn't do it but I want to challenge you to do it, to go there and say, "Today, I felt ..." whatever the feeling was and talk about exactly what it felt like in your body and share that with other people who are practicing this work as well. It will blow your ever living mind.

Then while you're there making a comment, make sure you opt in to hear our free call coming up on Wednesday. We're going to do them every Wednesday. Once you opt in then we'll always send you a reminder about the call and you can join us or listen to the recording or grab one of our replay webinars. We'll also give you access to that when we give you the replay.

All right, everybody. Have a wonderful, beautiful week and I'll talk to you all next week. Bye for now.

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