

Ep #37: How You Hurt Your Feelings



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. And now your host, Master Coach Instructor. Brooke Castillo.

Hi everybody, it's Brooke Castillo. Today we are going to talk about how you hurt your feelings. I know that we've talked a lot about feelings before, and we've talked a lot about how our thoughts create our feelings. It doesn't matter how many times we talk about it, I always want to talk about it in a new way, so someone can hear it in a new way, and get it in a new way.

This past weekend I was down in San Diego working with my business coach and a couple of new people were in our small group. We went and got drinks after the coaching session. It was really exciting. What's really fun is to meet all sorts of new people in all different industries and talk about their businesses, and talk about their lives and what they do.

It's really fun for me to be hanging out with people that aren't necessarily coaches. I usually tend to spend most of my time with coaches. Obviously we all work together, we're colleagues. We're very like-minded, and we enjoy each other's company.

I was talking to two men who were there. We were chatting afterwards and talking about success and our goals for the year, and what we were planning on doing. One who was talking to me, First of all I have to tell you, this is a little side note, he looked exactly like Prince. I told him that he looked exactly like Prince, and he did not know who I was talking about. I was very confused. I thought maybe it was because he was from Pakistan that he didn't know about Prince, but he had been here way too long not to know. What I realized, and what my friend Todd explained to me was that I'm old. He said, "These guys are 25 years old. They were born in the 90's, and Prince was in the 80's. I cannot even tell you what a profound moment that was for me.

First of all, it's very confusing to me that people who were born in the 90's can drink alcohol. It just seems strange that I'm that old. It also seems really strange that I'm talking about artists that I listened to growing up that younger people have no idea who I'm talking about.

Those of you who are in your 40's, like I am will totally relate to that. Because I think like most people, we think we're all the same age. When I hang out with a 25 year old man, I think that we're the same age. Clearly we are not the same age. Clearly I am a lot older, and not everyone knows who Prince is, so there's that.

Okay, anyway I was talking to him and we were talking about his goals for his life. He was telling me that he was so driven and that he was so ambitious. Being the coach that I am, I of course asked him why. Why is he so driven?

I think that it's an interesting question. "Why?" seems like such a simple question. It's one of the questions that I tell all of my students is the most powerful question you can ask in all of coaching. Whether you're coaching yourself, or you're coaching someone else. Asking them "Why?" is that pondering question that brings so much awareness. I had asked him why he was so driven, and so ambitious. If you are driven and ambitious, ask yourself, "Why?" It's fascinating to see the reasons behind it.

What he said, I think without thinking too much about it was that he didn't want to end up like his dad. I said, "It sounds like you're driven by fear of not wanting something. You want to not end up like someone else." Of course I asked him what the reasons were, and we talked a lot about it. It was really fascinating. I think it was equally as fascinating to him because he didn't have a lot of exposure to the coaching world and our type of causal coaching until he was able to see some things in new way. Which of course is really fun for me and for him to see it.

He's really smart. He caught on really quick to the concept of what I was trying to show him. One of the things that he was really struggling with was wanting his father's approval, and really wanting to have a relationship with his dad that was peaceful.

I said to him, "Listen, I think that you get to have that relationship if you want it. That is completely up to you, and there is nothing that your father can do to change that, if that's the kind of relationship that

you want to have with him." He was really confused. He kept saying, "Okay now wait, explain that to me again?"

I think the most important piece, and of course what I meant by that is the feeling of peace comes from how we think. How we think about people is how we're going to feel about people. When he thought of his dad, he loves his dad very much, but was thinking it in a very fearful way. He was driven to seek his dad's approval in a very fear driven scared way that wasn't serving his relationship with his father. Certainly not creating a sense of peace with his father.

What I explained to him was that however he wants to feel about his relationship with his dad, that it's completely up to him. What he offered was that, "My father has really hurt me. He's really hurt my feelings." He gave me some examples about how his father had hurt his feelings. I explained to him, I said, "Nobody can hurt your feelings but you." He was, "What? What do you mean no one can hurt my feelings?" I said, "Yes, it's something that I teach all the time. I just wanted to tell you that no matter what your father said to you, he can't hurt your feelings unless you have a feeling about it that hurts your own feelings."

In fact, that's what we do. We hurt our own feelings with our own thinking. If we believe what someone says to us, if it's really negative, then it's going to hurt. If we don't believe what they say to us, it's not going to hurt.

I said to him, "What if I said to you that I didn't approve of you. Would that hurt your feelings?" He said, "Not really." We had just recently met and I said, "It's the same thing, right? Your dad saying he doesn't approve of you, me saying I don't approve of you. Why is it different for you? The only difference is it's the same words, only a different person saying them. It's what you make it mean. When I say it, you don't make it mean much. When your father says it, you make it mean something really powerful for you, and that's very painful.

If you can recognize that you're there one hurting you, when you interpret what someone says in a certain way, then you really understand how much power you have in your relationships, and your relationship with yourself. That if you want even if your father was to say something like that to you, you could still have peace with him.

Your desire for getting his approval is because you believe once you have it, then you'll be able to have a better relationship with him, and you believe you'll be able to have a better relationship with yourself. What I want you to see is that whatever relationship you want is available to you now. Because you are the one that controls how you think about the relationship and the feelings that you have towards it."

I know that this is a tricky concept for people. Because I talk about it a lot with my students and we really work on it. Still when we go to talk about different issues the same exact thing comes up. I go. "Oh, I thought I got that." It's one of those concepts that when you're in your relationships, it's much harder to remember then when you're looking at someone else's relationship.

As we went on in the conversation, he kept saying, "Then this person hurt my feelings. This person made me feel this way. This is what my father made me feel." I kept having to remind him over and over and over again that he is the one that's making himself feel that way, and that being ambitious is a wonderful thing.

Whenever I talk to someone who's really ambitious and really driven, I want to understand how much anxiety and stress they have in their lives because that will be the indicator of why they are ambitious.

I asked him actually what his top three feelings were on a regular basis. That's one of the questions that we use a lot in our coaching. "What are your top three feelings?" His first feeling was anxiety.

When you take someone who's very driven and they're experiencing a lot of anxiety in their life, it's normally because they're driven by a negative emotion that they're trying to avoid. They're trying to escape that negative emotion by achieving some result that they believe will set them free from that emotion that they're experiencing.

That's exactly what was going on here. He was trying to achieve a certain result to get his father's approval so he could be at peace with his relationship with his dad, and also at peace with himself, and feeling like he was, "approval worthy."

What's so interesting is when I asked him, I said, "Can you understand because of the way your father was raised? Can you understand because of the experience in his life, why he may be feeling this way and saying these things toward you? Do you think it's because he doesn't love you? Or do you think it's maybe because of his belief systems, and his intentions in his own mind, and how he feels and thinks about himself?"

Of course that was obvious. When you point it out that way, most of what we tell ourselves when we really evaluate it doesn't make sense. If we're thinking in our mind, "My dad said that because he doesn't love me." Then I'll ask, "Hey does your dad love you?" "Of course he loves me." It's like we tell ourselves things that contradict what we know to be true.

I offered to him to maybe explore that there is no right or wrong here. It's not like he's right and you're wrong. Or the only other option is that you're right and he's wrong. Maybe there's just two sets of belief systems that are trying to prove themselves right here and that's creating a lot of conflict.

Maybe if we could allow room in that relationship for a different set of belief systems and a commitment to feeling the way we want to feel in the relationship, there would be so much more space and freedom for the relationship to be at peace instead of being in constant conflict.

That doesn't mean that we agree or condone or allow things that we don't want in our life. It also means that we don't give in to negative thought patterns about people that we actually care about.

That is a huge one as we go into this holiday season. A lot of us are going to be connected to our families, and seeing members of our family that we haven't seen in a long time. Members of our family that we wouldn't normally choose to spend time with. You get to decide how you want to feel when you're with those people. You really do. There's nothing they can do or say or act that can prevent you from feeling the way that you want to feel.

If what you want most is approval from someone in your life, and there's so many of us that want this. We want approval from our parents. We want approval from our spouses. We want approval from our children. If that's something that you really want, and you don't have to tell anyone about it. You can, just between me and you here, think about that person that you really want that approval from. You feel like if they were to say to you, "I approve of you. I think you're worthy. I think you matter." Ask yourself, "Why is that important to you? What are you making it mean if you get that person's approval?"

This young man that I was talking to, what did it mean to him to have his dad's approval? If his dad approved of him, then it meant that he was worthy, and that he had done enough in his life, and that he had accomplished enough in his life to have his father's approval. Then he could be at peace. Then he would have a very joyous relationship with his father.

That may or may not be true. That could happen, or maybe it wouldn't happen. What's more important is the relationship he wants with his father is available to him now. It's not the approval that is required for him to feel at peace with his dad. It's his mind changing to allow him to feel peace now. I told him, I said, "When you do this work." He said, I'm just really waiting for that, 'Ah ha', moment. I want to understand this in a way that it changes me."

What I offered to him, and I think that this is really important for us all to remember is. This is something that doesn't happen in an instant. Our perception can change in an instant. The way we see something can change in an instant. In order to practice it in our lives we have to literally practice it in our lives. We can't just expect knowledge to change us. It's applied knowledge that changes us. When we apply knowledge it has to be in a way that is repetitive and practiced so it becomes our new way of being.

If we're used to being in conflict with someone all the time because we're constantly on edge thinking that we don't have their approval, and thinking that they don't love us, and thinking that we're not good enough every time we're around them. To change that, to know that we have the power to change that and then to apply it, will usually take some time and some practice.

It was funny. When I told him that, he was, "Oh my gosh. That, in and of itself, is an, "ah ha" moment for me. Just understanding that this is a practice. This is something that I don't necessarily get and then get over. It's something that I practice in my relationship with my dad."

I think that's important for us all to remember in all of our relationships. It's no, "Oh, okay, I get the concept of the manual. I get the concept that my mind creates my feelings. Okay, now I should be all better. Now this shouldn't be a problem."

It's an ongoing practice. It's an art. It's something that we will continuously do in our lives, and remind ourselves about in our lives.

Noticing, "Oh, I want this person's approval. The reason I want their approval is because I wasn't to be at peace in this relationship. Ah ha, the good news is I don't need their approval because I don't know if I will get it. I don't know that I don't already have it, is a much more interesting thing to explore. I'm giving it so much meaning of what it will mean if someone approves of me."

That's an interesting side note to think about. "What does it mean to have someone's approval, and how will you know if you have it?" How will you know if you have someone's approval? Will they say, "I approve of you?" Will they say, "I am proud of you?" If they don't say it, does it mean that you don't have it? I would be very curious to know if someone says to you, "I don't approve of what you're doing." Does it mean they don't approve of you? Are you making that distinction? What are you making it mean? It's really important to know what are you making it mean when someone says that to you.

The way that we hurt our own feeling is by telling ourselves things that are painful about other people. By telling ourselves things that are painful about ourselves. And by taking what other people say, and either believing it in a way that's painful, or making it mean something that's incredibly painful.

Here's the thing. People are allowed to say what they will to us. They're allowed to say that they don't approve of us. At that point

then we are wither going to hurt our own feelings with that information, or not.

If someone says they don't approve of me, I'm okay with them saying it. I'm okay with them having that opinion. I get that I'm not for everybody. That's totally fine. I'm not going to use that against myself. I'm not going to hurt my own feelings with that information.

Do you guys see the difference? It's so big. In our deepest relationships, it's so important if someone says they don't approve of us. They don't like what we're doing. We can take that on and make it mean that we're not worthy. Or we can take it for what it is and say, "Oh, they're not approving of some action that I took."

The other piece of it is if when we believe something that hurts our own feelings, and when we practice believing something that hurts our own feelings, we perpetuate our negative emotion. Which of course perpetuates negative action in the world. Which will give us evidence that all of those things are true.

Because what happened, and what was so interesting with this young man is his father didn't approve of the way he was behaving. That would trigger some thoughts in his head and create a lot of negative emotion. Then he would act disrespectful to his father. He would act in a way that he wasn't proud of towards his father. Which of course gave him much more evidence to, "not approve of him."

The truth is, not everyone is going to approve of us all the time, and that's okay. It's totally okay for people not to approve of us. Nobody has the power to hurt your feelings. The good news is we do enough of it for ourselves, that it's really good that no one else can do it for us.

Any time you are in pain in any relationship remind yourself, that person did not have the power to hurt your feelings. You took what you believed and hurt your own feelings with it.

The last thing I'm going to say about this. This is I think one of the most important pieces here is that it doesn't mean that you don't want your feelings to be hurt sometimes. You have to take responsibility for

it. You have to take credit for it. It doesn't mean that you should always just be happy every time someone does something.

If somebody says something mean to you. If somebody says something out of anger towards you, you can say, "Oh, that person was angry", and you can blow it off. Or, you can say, "No. I'm going to take that, and I'm going to be in pain over it. On purpose, because that's how I want to feel in this relationship." Own that you did that, and talk to the person about it. Also own that you're responsible. Don't give that power away to someone else, and say that they hurt your feelings. Because they don't have that power.

I will tell you what, in your relationships, especially in your relationship with yourself. If you are able to identify all of the times that you hurt your own feelings, you will be able to change your life in such a drastic way. Especially if you're feeling hurt, and victimized a lot of the time.

Because you will start owning your power in a way that you may not have done it before. You may decide that you don't want to hurt your own feelings anymore. That you're tired of thinking thoughts that cause you pain. That other people are allowed to do what they do, and you get to decide what it means to you in your life if someone's mean, if someone's rude, if someone doesn't approve of you. You can make it mean something about you, or you can make it mean something about them.

Any time your feelings are hurt, you need to own it. Because you're the one that is hurting your own feelings. You're the one that's making you mad. You're the one that's making you sad by the way you're thinking about the external circumstances in your life. Notice that, and then decide, do you want to keep doing that on purpose?

I'd love to know how you hurt your own feelings in the comments. Come on over to the lifecoachschool.com/37, and let's talk about it.

All right everybody. Talk to you next week. Bye bye.

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