

Ep #61: Questions and Answers



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.

Hey, with this happening, you guys? How are you? What's up? Today we're doing another Q&A. I know that many of you have been sending me questions on the comments. I really appreciate it and I am reading them and answering them here. If you have a question or a comment or something that you want me to address, please put that in the comments on the website, lifeschoolcoach.com/whatever episode you're listening to. For example, this is 61. You would do /61, and I will address your question. Let's get it started.

This was one that I got from Leshonda: "Hello, let me start by saying I love your podcast. I swear you're talking to me. Here's my issue, and I thought maybe you could help, and maybe someone else is going through the same thing. I'm a single mom of two, so financially things can be difficult for me. I can't do the things I would love to do with my kids such as travel and family outings, or even shopping. I have great kids and I want to do so much more for them. They are growing so fast, and I just feel guilty. They are 15 and 10.

So here's the problem: I find myself becoming extremely jealous of mom's that are single and can do so much for their kids. I become angry with myself as well, thinking where did I go wrong. I truly hate this feeling. Also, I'm jealous of couples married or not, that get to do so much for their kids. It makes me feel like a loser and unworthy, like my life isn't good and it will never get better. I'm jealous of couples because I think I won't find love. My friends meet these amazing guys and love them, and do so much for them and their kids. It's hard. Makes me feel so ugly and jealous.

I know I'm all over the place. I get so emotional about this, but hopefully you understand what I'm trying to say. Thank you for reading and any help. That would be great. "

She signed it Lala, so I guess we'll call you Lala. I love it. Here's the thing. If you've been listening to my podcast you know that how you think about your life will determine how your life feels, how you're showing up and what you're doing, and the results that you get. Now

you think the reason you feel this way is because of all these external things that are going on in your life. You think that you feel this way because maybe your friends are getting into relationships and finding boyfriends and getting married, and having things that you're not having. What you're not focused on is what you have. What you're not focused on is what's good. You're focused on what's not good. You're focused on what you want more of that you don't have. The problem is that you're thinking about it in a way that comes from a place of lack, which unfortunately will just create more lack for you.

Here's what I want you to focus on. This is something that I've talked about in past podcasts, but I want to remind you all of this. I want you to make a list of 25 things you want. Now initially you're going to want to make a list of 25 things that you want that you don't have. What I want you to do is those first ten need to be 25 things that you want that you do have, that you do already have. This is a little different than being grateful for it. This is different. This is learning how to want from abundance. Do you want your child that's 15 years old? What about your child do you want? What about your freedom that you have right now do you want? What about your ten year old that you want? What is that that you want to do for your kids that you are doing for them that doesn't cost any money? What is it you want that you already have? That's going to get you into that place of abundance.

Now, here's the other thing. This is important for all of you to remember. The only thing you want more of in your life is because of how you think it will make you feel, so you think oh, if I had a man in my life that loved me and my kids, then I would feel a certain way. If I had more money I would feel a certain way. If I was able to do more things with my kids, I would feel a certain way.

You don't want those things for the sake of those things. You want those things because of how you think they will make you feel. I want you to think about and remember that what causes your feelings is your thinking. You think ooh, if I had more money I would feel better, but really what would happen is your would have more money, you would think differently and feel better. The good news about this is that you can actually feel better without getting any more money. You can actually cultivate the feelings that you're so wanting to feel.

When you think about having a man in your life that loves you and your kids, or you think about why you want to be a couple, or why you want to spend more money on your kids and be able to do more for them, how do you believe that would make you feel? What is the feeling you're so desperately after? Now ironically, that is the feeling you need to create and cultivate in order to have those things show up in your life.

But, what happens is if you already are feeling that way, then the desperation becomes lifted. Let me give you an example. You want to buy something for your children. Let's say your 15 year old, maybe you want to buy them a car when they turn 16. I have no idea; I'm making this up. You think if I was able to buy my child a car then I would feel proud and I would feel excited and I would feel accomplished maybe. Those feelings are caused by certain thoughts that you have. There is a way that you can feel proud now without buying the car. There's a way that you can feel accomplished now and excited now without doing those things. You're trying to generate feelings from changing the outside. What you're doing is you're actually creating the opposite situation. You're looking at what other people have in their lives and making an assumption about how they feel because they have those things. In the very act of doing that, you're denying yourself that feeling.

Remember, you guys, whatever it is you want in your life is because of how you believe you will feel in the getting of it. How is it you really want to feel? Then get to work on focusing on feeling that way. You are saying, "I truly hate this feeling of jealousy," and yet you are the one creating it. You're the one creating that feeling. You think all these people around you are creating it, but you're the one creating it by what you're focusing on and what you're believing about what other people have, what you don't.

Now if you tell your brain, "Look around at what other people have, and I don't," that's what you're going to find. You're not going to look at the people that are married and that are unhappy in those relationships, people that feel trapped in their marriages, people that are upset that they're married to the "wrong person." You're not looking for evidence. You're looking for the evidence of how you have it so badly and everyone else has it so good.

What I'm suggesting is that you tell your brain to focus in a different way, and you will ultimately create a different result. At the very least, you'll create a much better feeling for yourself and you'll be able to understand and take responsibility for what it is you're allowing your mind to believe and to think. You have a blessed life with beautiful opportunities and so many wonderful things going on in it, and you're missing them basically you're focused externally on trying to find things that you don't have. I want you to turn back in and focus on the things that you do have. I promise you, it sounds simple, but it will change everything. All right, Lala, talk to you soon. Bye.

Next question. "Hey, Life Coach School. I love the podcast and listen to most episodes multiple times. They're amazing. At one point Brooke asked people to have us comment on potential topics for the podcast. I have a couple. I teach college writing. The line between what I do for them and what they must do for themselves is a messy one. I've certainly found helpful bits in a variety of podcasts, but my goal is to them as writers, which is always about growing them as people." She meant to say, "to grow them as writers, which is always about growing them as people."

"That is a very messy space to exist in. Teachers of students of all ages and abilities find goals and expectations trick you with students. I'm sure Brooke has lots of insights about this."

I think what you're asking about here is the relationship between teacher and student and how much responsibility do you take for the results, and how much responsibility do they take for the result. I think that the most important thing as a teacher ... and this is something that most of us don't realize because we don't separate it out ... is that as a teacher we are looking for evidence of whether we're a good teacher or a bad teacher or an effective teacher. When we are looking for that evidence outside of ourselves, what we can often do without realizing it is try and manipulate our students' results and how successful they are to reflect back on us as teachers.

Now, this isn't something that people are even aware of doing. It's something that I have to teach my coaches to do as well, because a lot of times as coaches we are looking at our clients' progress and wanting to take that on as a reflection of what a good coach we are or

what a bad coach we are or how ineffective we are, whatever. Really, we can only look to ourselves for our own effectiveness.

That's challenging for many of my students because they feel like, "My client's progress has to have some reflection on me because I'm their coach." The way that I teach this is that the best way is to know that when your client is super successful that they get to own that, and when your client is not successful they get to own that, too. That keeps you in that holding-the-space neutral ground, which is really important as a teacher or as a coach.

Now, how will you measure your own success as a teacher has to be really delineated for your clients' or your students' success, because otherwise you'll get all up in their business. When you ask me how can I grow them as a writer, all you can do is provide the infrastructure. All you can do is provide the inspiration. You can provide the energy. You can provide the knowledge. What they end up doing with it is really a reflection of themselves.

The only time you would ever get involved in their results is if you wanted to get involved in their results for your own sake. Now I'm not saying you do this intentionally, because you do care about yourself, but the truth is that's all we really do care about. When it comes down to it, we want other people to be successful and we want other people to be good because then we can feel proud of them and good for them. The truth is we can feel that way anyway. I always give full responsibility to my students for how they show up, and I also give full responsibility to myself for how I show up. How they determine their results will be theirs to own alone.

The other tricky thing that gets involved here is how do you not attach someone else's, including your students' success, to approval seeking from us. One of the things that I really like to offer to my students is that it's not about whether I approve of it or not. I will offer my insight. I will make my contribution, but ultimately you get to decide what's effective or what's ineffective. My opinion just that: it's just one opinion. If you're doing a piece of writing and you need help on making it better, I want to teach you how to make it better instead of just making it better, if that makes any sense.

I think when you clean up your own thoughts, it becomes a lot less messy. The way that you're thinking about it is that it's very messy, but I think it's because you're probably very involved with their success and wanting them to be successful. What I'm asking you is could you show up in that classroom and focus on only you being successful as a teacher and finding a new way of measuring that. Do you show up completely? Do you have full energy? Do you teach them everything you know? Do you give them really honest feedback? Then can you release them into the world and release them to do their own work and take full responsibility for that? I think that's something that most teachers don't take the time to do, to separate their success for their students' success.

Another thing I think is assuming that all students will be successful and assuming that they're all brilliant in their own right I think really helps with the educational process because it has me teaching to the highest level, and everyone that I'm teaching. I think that's very important when you are working with any student, is to look at your own mind with each of them. If you think someone is a really good writer then you're going to respond differently than someone you think isn't a really good writer, and you're going to show up differently. I think it's important to check your own mind and your own judgments and your own opinions about each of your students and make sure that's a clean slate for each of them. Hopefully that helps. You can continue to comment in the comments if you want some more insight on that.

The second part of your question says: "Also, there are many of us who have chronic pain or chronic medical conditions which greatly affect our energy and abilities. When listening to the podcasts, I often find myself thinking something like 'This is a great tool' when I'm not in the throes of a five-day migraine."

Here's the insight that I have for you on that. Listen, if you have a migraine, that's a C, that's a circumstance. I'm not going to argue with that. There are some teachers that would argue, "Do you really have a migraine?" But when you have a migraine, you're pretty sure you have one, and I don't feel like it's necessary to negotiate with that or any other diagnosis, by the way.

Now, the way that you think when you have that migraine will tremendously affect whether you feel worse or better during the migraine. If you have a migraine and then you have really negative thoughts about having a migraine, that will make it worse. If you have a migraine and you're very kind and you take really good care of yourself and you're compassionate through that process, then you're going to be able to have a very different experience. I'm not saying it will take the migraine away and I'm not saying it will make it tremendously better, but it won't make it worse if you're managing your mind around it.

That's true for any kind of chronic pain. There's the pain, and then there's how you think about the pain. There's the physical pain and then there's the emotional pain about the pain. That's what the model really has a lot of power to change, is how are you thinking about your pain. Are you creating emotional pain on top of physical pain? That's where the power is and that's where you can really have an effect and have some control over making it worse or better. All right, hope that helps.

Next question. "Brooke, thank you, thank you, thank you. You answered my question first on this week's episode and it was like you had me in the living room talking with you one on one. To answer your last question, what do I need to believe about myself in order to feel that I'm doing exactly what I'm supposed to be doing? I need to believe that I'm worthy enough to be doing this, smart and do this well, and making a difference with this work. Regardless of whether I earn money or not, this work is extremely valuable to me. I'm fulfilled by this work. This is best use of my life. I am successful." Next, "These are the thoughts that come up when I want to believe the above beliefs, but you don't give it 100%."

What she's talking about here is basically she's trying to think these positive thoughts, and then when she thinks these positive thoughts, these are like her boomerang thoughts that come. You don't give it 100%. You don't follow through on what you're going to do. I can't handle all the responsibility that comes along with this work. Am I choosing the right job? Look at what she's doing. It looks more glamorous and fun. Maybe I should do that.

"I totally agree with you when you said that if I manage my money, my actions will look different and then I will get the results of the new action I just took. Also, when you said that a job doesn't provide us with purpose, it provides us with results, my thoughts are clearly my issue with my actions and results. Do you think affirmations with the new beliefs would be a good go-to daily? I've been doing the five-minute journal entries daily and these help my thoughts throughout the day. You're such an amazing coach, Brooke. I appreciate all you do."

Here's the deal, Annabelle. Affirmations and what you're trying to do here, and case in point is you're thinking these new thoughts and then you're having these boomerang thoughts against it. One of the things that I just want you to slow down and do is knowing that when you have these thoughts like you don't give it 100%, you don't follow through on what you say you're going to do, you can't handle all the responsibility, when you think those thoughts, the effects are so clear in your life. When you truly understand that the way that you're thinking about something is what's creating your results, I can't even tell you how life changing that is.

Because here's what we do. We tell ourselves that the reason why we feel the way we do is because of the circumstance, because of the job, because of what's going on there. We don't own that the reason we don't give it 100%, the reason why we don't follow through on what we say we're going to follow through on, is because of the way we are thinking. Those are the effects of our thoughts. Don't try and change your thoughts too soon, because you will just have those boomerang other thoughts that will come up that won't really have an effect. Having those affirmations won't really help.

But, if you could really start to see and connect with how you think and what that's creating in your life, then at least you can tell yourself the truth about whether you want to continue doing what you're doing. Okay, next one.

She says, "Thank you so much, Brooke. I love your podcast. My favorite ideas for your podcast, in addition to the tools, are that our brains are plastic and can change ... " Yeah, that's called neuroplasticity. " ... and that what I do matters and that I don't need to

hang on to my back story. I spent years in therapy stuck in some painful emotions, and now by changing just a couple of thoughts and getting different results, I am very pleased. The question is what is exhaustion? Is it a feeling? Is it really a result of thinking? How do we deal with it?"

That's a good question. Then I would want to know some more qualifiers for that. I think there's the physical exhaustion that's a circumstance. I think a lot of times we get physically exhausted because we run a marathon or physical exhausted because we've been up for 48 hours. That is physical exhaustion. I would treat that as a circumstances. But I have so many people telling me how exhausted they are emotionally. I would attribute that to thinking and the way the we're thinking about it. I think sometimes the thought "I'm exhausted" creates exhaustion when there doesn't necessarily need to be exhaustion. I would explore how you're using that word and if it's serving you in a way that you like.

There's a lot of words that I don't really use a lot. Exhausted is one of them. I don't really ever use that word. First of all, I take care of myself physically so I don't typically feel physically exhausted, but even when I do, I find that when I use that word it makes me emotionally exhausted as well. I would want to know who are you using that word and is it serving you. If not, then what's a different way that you can think about your emotional or your physical life that serves you in a better way?

Next question. "Every now and then I'll have a breakthrough realization listening to the podcast. I did this week. How do we break out of the drama around our income limits? I love the example of the client that could accept a high income as an accountant but not as a life coach. I didn't even realize I'd been doing the same thing."

I did a podcast where I talked about the difference between facts and drama, and how making money is really just math and everything else is the drama we have around it. I think that that's a really important question that Jennifer is asking there, is how do I break through my drama. One of the things that I think we overlook is the importance of just recognizing our drama, like what is your drama around money, and really slowing down long enough to recognize

that it's not actually factual. That the drama is just our thinking. It has nothing to do with the math. The only thing holding us back from the numbers and creating the abundance we want from having the money that we want is really our beliefs about whether we can or can't do that. Those really are optional.

I would say most people want to move on and create new thoughts and believe new things before they've truly accepted that what they currently are thinking right now are choices and beliefs. You can't just jump to new thinking without truly owning what you're thinking now. When you say, "I want to break through the drama. I want to break through my income limits," you have to really look at and understand that those are all just arbitrary numbers that you've put in your mind and attached onto.

When you really recognize that, you won't ask me the question of how you break through it, because it's kind of like when you understand "Oh my gosh, I've been believing that the sky isn't blue," and then you recognize that it is blue. You don't have to ask me, "How do I believe that the sky is blue?" Does that make sense? It's like all of a sudden you just no, "Wait, I've been believing something that it was the opposite of blue, but now that I see that it is blue, I can release the idea." It doesn't even take any effort really. It's like once you see the truth about what you've been doing, you can simply let it go.

One of the questions I'd like to ask, especially around money, is what do you want to believe. Really ask yourself how much money do you want to believe you can make. Now immediately you may jump to \$4 million, \$5 million. The truth is if you wanted to believe that, you would. There's a part of you that doesn't want to believe that. There's a part of you that's holding yourself back from believing that. Really understanding that part of you and the beliefs around that will open up this breakthrough that you're looking for. Ask yourself what is your current income limit in your mind. What are all the supporting beliefs you have for that? Then stay with that long enough to understand that those are the reasons why you're not allowing yourself to believe something different. I swear to you the truth is what you allow yourself to believe will become what is possible. It's not just airy fairy. It's not unrealistic. It's the truth of how the world works.

A lot of people will say, "I don't want to make a million dollars because I don't want to work that hard. They've associated making a lot of money with working really hard. That's why they haven't allowed themselves to believe in the million dollar mark because of the associations they've made." Ask yourself why aren't you allowing yourself to believe that you can make more money. What is it that's holding you back? What is it you don't want to do that you think you'll have to do in order to make that much money? That will really get you on the road to opening that up.

Let's do a couple more questions. "Hi, Brooke. The useful emotions podcast really has me thinking. Some of my circumstances include bipolar and social anxiety. I try to put myself out there socially. It takes a lot of courage and that can be exhausting sometimes. I'm not an extrovert, and sometimes it feels like I'm flexing my courage for the sake of it." Her question is: "Can courage be like a muscle? Can it grow strong like a muscle or does it simply diminish the fear of discomfort with practice? Sometimes it feels less like courage and more like a battle with anxiety."

I think this is such a fantastic question. Here's what I want to say, is I think you can think of it as courage getting stronger, growing stronger, or I think you can just think of it ... this is the way I like to think of it, is that we can get better at feeling certain emotions with practice. If we want to get better at feeling courage, we can do that with practicing feeling courage more often. You're saying it feels less like courage and more like a battle with anxiety. A battle with anxiety is not going to be useful. That courage is you allow the anxiety without being afraid of it. That's very different than battling it. If you battle against anxiety it's because you don't think that you can handle the anxiety.

What I'm suggesting is that you take action and you allow for the anxiety to be there and have courage to take action anyway and to move forward anyway. That's a very different feeling than the courage to try and eliminate it because you're afraid of it. One of the ways that you can think about it is it's just anxiety. It's just a vibration in my body. It's not something I have to go to battle with or struggle against or freak out against. I can just allow it.

I have my own bouts of anxiety too, and I'm not saying they're comparable to yours, but one of the things that high school made the hugest difference for me with anxiety is just to allow it to be there, to know that it's not going to hurt me and that I can own it and have some authority over it and experience it, and that I can be strong enough to allow it in. I don't have to pretend that it's not there and I don't have to eliminate it. In fact, when I do allow it and when I do have it come in, then I experience my life in a completely different way.

You said: "I loved your comment about insights that seem to come from nowhere. I think it comes along the same lines as the thought your brains create from the lines of least resistance and subconscious thought."

Yes, absolutely. Then you say: "Self-indulgent. Feeling number one in my book is self-pity." I think that's one of the most common ones, actually: people feeling sorry for themselves and people feeling like they are victims, and not meaning to do that. They're well intended but still feeling sorry for yourself I think is the most indulgent emotion, because it serves absolutely no purpose. It's like when my teenagers feel bad for themselves when they have to empty out the dishwasher. I tell them I don't really see the upside of feeling sorry for yourself. You're going to empty it anyway. Why not have different thoughts about it?

I think that's true with our lives. We're going to go through these lives. We can be happy and proud and grateful and excited about the life we have, or we can feel sorry for ourselves and compare ourselves to others and think that other people have it better, when of course they're comparing themselves to other people that they think has it better. I really love that you're aware of that and you're aware of your thoughts that are leading to self-pity, and noticing that you're just indulging in something that isn't ultimately serving you. The more you practice courage, my guess is the less you will feel self-pity.

Okay, you guys. There's tons more questions that you guys have left here in the comments. I am reading all of them. I'm going to do a Q&A every month so you'll be able to have all of your questions answered. If you have them, please put them in the comments. I will

be reading them and I will be answering them here on the podcast. I hope you guys have an amazing week, and I'll talk to you next week. Take care, guys. Bye bye.

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