

## Ep #65: Self-Loathing



## **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.

What is going on, you guys? Holy cow. We are in the summer. Summer is happening. I'm so excited. It's so hot here today. Oh, my gosh, it's so great. I mean, my air conditioner is off right now but I am going to go to the pool. We just recently joined the country club and they have a beautiful pool there and they bring cold drinks to you like you're at a resort. That's what I'm going to do later.

Here's the deal. I just came off of teaching the eight-day experience to 25 amazing people and I can't stop thinking about each of them. It's amazing to get out of our lives and to come together in an environment where we can just focus on each other, and ourselves, and this work. It is one of the most powerful things I've ever done and this is the first time we did the full eight days. Almost everyone stayed. One person had to leave but then another person came so we had everybody there. It was really, really powerful to experience that long of a time together. I'm thinking about you all right now.

One of the things that we talked a lot about, we break for lunch, and I have a couple hosted lunches and so we get a chance to just chat. One of the things we talked about is how we take over this little town we have in El Dorado Hills Town Center. I always laughed to everyone because the hotel we're staying is the Holiday Inn Express and I'm such a hotel snub that that just sounds so awful to me because I've stayed in some Holiday Inn Express's that are not so good but this one is super nice and it's right downtown so you don't really ... When I say "downtown", it's a very small, little town. It has a really shi-shi grocery store called the Nugget and has a movie theater and it has a gym literally right next door that has yoga. Then it has, I would say, seven really good restaurants right around there. You can get your nails done and there's a spa.

We take over this little town when we're all there. It's great because not only do you see people in class all day but then we see each other walking around town and we can go workout together and we ran into each other. It's like a little campus. I'd actually thought about maybe moving it not because the hotel isn't great but just because a

lot of people are like, "Holiday Inn Express, really?" After talking to everyone this week, I'm like, "No way." It's just such a great, amusing environment and so everybody is flying home today and so I'm thinking about all of them flying home.

I just want to give a shout-out to each of them as we go through this podcast because, I think, it's important for those of you who are listening to the podcast. Many of the people that came to this class were once like you, listening to the podcast trying to decide if this was right for them. Many of them said that the more they listened to it and the more they heard about it, the more they realized it was for them. I want to give a shout-out to them and mentioned them as we go through.

Now, this topic that we're covering is self-loathing. I think, this is one of those topics that doesn't come out to play very often. A lot of people don't talk about it unless it's some deep, dark thing. I want to bring it out into the open because, I think, it's really important that all of us acknowledge the areas where we do loathe ourselves and loathe is such a good word because, I think, it's important to not push that away and say, "Oh, my gosh, I don't want to have negative thoughts about myself so I'm not going to acknowledge those parts of me because that is what creates the shame and persists the issue with it." We talked about this a lot over the last eight days and we talked about where it comes up for us is in a lot of our body image and eating and hiding our eating and stealing food and now acknowledging what's healthy for our body is not eating what's healthy for our bodies and treating ourselves in really self-destructive ways.

I was doing work with one of the students, Michelle, and she was talking ... Hi, Michelle. We were talking about her body, her relationship to her body, and how she feels about her body. One of the things I really wanted to help her see was that when you don't trust your body, when you hate your body, it's very hard to have any authority over it. It's very hard to create any intimacy where you can listen to it and know when it's hungry, and know when it's full, and know what food to serve it because you're in this adversary relationship with it. I talked to another amazing student, Carissa, who was there and we talked about how for her it's really hard to look at a

picture of herself because she judges her body and she feels good about herself until she sees a picture and then she goes immediately into judging.

One of the things we talked about with her which was interesting is I told her that I had made a commitment a couple of years ago that whenever I saw a picture of myself, I would look at it as if I was looking at a picture of my child or of my puppy. She has a puppy too and we were talking about how she would never look at a picture of her puppy and think, "Oh, that's a horrible picture of him. I don't like that angle." Right? She just would unconditionally love any picture of him. We talked about that maybe being a practice for her and looking at herself.

When we look at a picture or we look at our bodies or we think about our bodies, it's important to pay attention to what comes up because we want to acknowledge the knee-jerk thoughts that we have. When you think about self-loathing, it really is, what is your opinion of yourself? How do you think about yourself? Of course, how you think about yourself is going to determine how you feel about yourself. Now, you may be one of those people that most of the time when you think about yourself, it's positive, wonderful thinking. Sometimes, when you think about yourself, you say really mean things.

You won't really know this unless you start increasing your awareness and really thinking about what is it that I think when I think about myself, when I think about my body, when I think about how I am in relationships, when I think about how I am in my career, in my business, when I think about how I am athletically, when I think about how I am socially. It's really worth paying attention to your opinion of yourself. Why? Because it will determine how you feel, and how you feel determines what you do, and what you do will either increase the evidence that you have to hate yourself or loathe yourself or it will decrease that evidence.

For example, if you have a thought that something is wrong with me, you will feel probably some level of shame which will make you act in a way that is "wrong" in your opinion which will give you more evidence that there's something wrong with you. As we went through this eight days, there were just example after example after example

of how we do that to ourselves, how we create our own evidence to prove our own belief systems right. Some of the thoughts that came up around self-loathing were, "There's something wrong with me. I am different. I'm not okay. My body is not okay."

Sometimes, it's just maybe a subtle thought that you wouldn't even notice or it's just like, "Yeah, I'm all right. I guess, there are some things wrong with me but overall, I'm all right." Just that thought, "There are some things wrong with me," is something that you probably wouldn't ever think about someone that you loved unconditionally like a child or a pet. Those little thoughts are really important to pay attention to because those are going to create this little thoughts, create little feelings, which create little actions and that just spins us and creates that cycle there which it's really, really important to notice.

One of the students that came, CJ, we love having dudes in the class. By the way, we had two guys in this one and he drove cross country to come to the class. It's funny. Sometimes, people tell me that the reason they can't come to the training is because they live across the country but we have people coming from all over the world. CJ came from Maine. He actually drove across country and he was one of the people in the class that has a general good opinion of himself but there are these little pockets we found where he was able to notice that his thoughts about himself that he had been practicing weren't necessarily ones that create a really positive, wonderful emotions.

That's fine but what I want to do and what I want to teach you all to do is make sure you're doing that consciously. Make sure the thoughts you have about yourself are conscious. A lot of times, we think there's something wrong with us. We think that's just an observation. We don't remind ourselves that that's an optional thought. We don't have to think that there's anything wrong with us. We can believe that everything is wonderful with us if we practice thinking that. Okay?

One of the things that's important is a lot of us have been taught that it's important to accept ourselves and I really do believe that we need to accept the thoughts we have about ourselves but we do not have

to accept that we hate ourselves. Okay? That's a really important distinction there. Hate is a choice. Loathing is a choice. Wishing we were different than we are is a very sneaky way of thinking that there's something wrong with us and we should be better. Really paying attention to those thoughts.

One of the things that I had talked about with, Carissa, the woman that I talked to you about before and about how when I looked at a picture of myself, I say, "This is what we have today. This is what I am today. This is what I look like today." Just really being in that space of knowing that what I am and how I show up and what my body looks like is exactly what is meant to be. It is what is necessary. It's what's important. It's what's good for me in my life today.

When I can look at it in that way, it really changes the way I feel and therefore the way I act which, of course, creates more evidence that there's absolutely nothing wrong with me. There's nothing in my life worth hating or not liking or not appreciating. One of the practices that I recommend that you do in order to really discover these areas is looking at a picture of yourself and really seeing what comes up, standing on the scale and seeing what the thoughts are. That's just a number on the scale. What are the thoughts that come up? Are they negative? Paying attention when you're alone. How do you speak to yourself? Paying attention when you make a mistake. How do you speak to yourself? Do you speak to yourself with kindness or do you speak to yourself with self-loathing? Do you treat yourself as if you aren't worthy?

Now, one of the exercises that I encourage my students to do, one of the students in our class, Donna, totally fantastic, amazing woman, one of the exercises that we had her do and we had everybody do it but it was one that we were using her as the example to demonstrate is come up with 12 things that you appreciate about yourself. One of the things that you might think about when you're listening to this is, is it easier for you to come up with things that you don't appreciate about yourself? Donna struggled a little bit with some of the things because she said, "I could think about some things that I would like to appreciate about myself but I don't believe them necessarily." It was really challenging.

One of the things that I told her and one of the things that's important to remember is that when you practice thinking thoughts that are negative about yourself, that's what you're good at. When you practice appreciating yourself and thinking thoughts of appreciation, that's what you get good at. If it's difficult to come up with 12 things that you appreciate about yourself, what that means is that you just haven't been practicing. You haven't been practicing thinking about all the ways you love yourself, all the ways that you're fantastic. For many of you, that will be very challenging. It will be like a hard workout.

One of the things that I like to say and teach my students is that, "Yeah, it is like a hard workout." It is like going into the gym and practicing getting stronger. It's like the mental gym. You're going to go and practice getting nicer and kinder and more loving towards yourself. Think of it as a difficult workout. Maybe you'll be able to come up with 5 things that you appreciate about yourself and the next time you come up with six and then the next time you come up with 7 and you increase your reps. You increase your ability to come up with things that you appreciate about yourself.

One of the things that I had said to the students in the class was, for me, it's easy for me to come up with things that I appreciate about myself. It's not a problem. I practice appreciating myself. I practice finding things that I do like about myself. I practice the things that are hard for me to love about myself. I practice loving those parts. I make room in my life where the parts that I don't think are as pleasing or wonderful and I love myself anyway and I practice loving myself anyway.

I had some people in the class say to me like, "I would like to be more like that. I would like to be able to appreciate the things in me. I'd like to be able to say it's easy for me to come up with 100 things that I appreciate about myself." One of the students in the class, Kari, had told me that she was going to work on coming up with a 100. I think, she said 100 things that she appreciates about herself. She's working with somebody else and really coming up with a practice of doing that. I think, that that is an amazing idea.

It makes me think about Ashley who was also one of the students in the class. She owns a gym and she's a personal trainer. I had told her in passing that one of the things that's really challenging for me is to do a pull-up, to pull my body weight. She's like, "Oh, I could totally teach you how to do that." I said, "You could? That's awesome. How would you teach me how to do multiple pull-ups?" She said, "I would have you do pull-ups." It was such an obvious answer, right? I mean, doing assisted pull-ups in the beginning and ultimately doing one pull-up and then trying to do two pull-ups.

Whatever it is you want to learn how to do, you have to do it. Yeah, I know. I was laughing hysterically and I was thinking about that. If you want to learn how to appreciate yourself, right, you have to start appreciating yourself. It seems so obvious and it seems like you need prepare yourself to get ready to do that pull-up but really the best way how to do it is just to do it. The best way to learn how to appreciate yourself is just to do it, is just to start appreciating yourself no matter how hard that first pull-up is. Right? Being willing and able to do that pull-up, that first time, that assisted one, and to do it terribly. That's the same with appreciating ourselves as the opposite of loathing ourselves.

Can we stare at that picture of ourselves where maybe we think we look heavier than we want? Maybe we look older than we want. Our hair doesn't look the way we want. Can we be in the space of appreciating what is there instead of judging it? If we haven't practice doing that, it's going to be challenging for us to do it. Okay? That's really, I think, a worthwhile practice.

The other thing to remember is that loathing ourselves is not something that is inevitable. It's actually a choice. We think that, "Oh, it's just something that I am. There is something wrong with me and I'm just noticing that." The truth is, thinking that there's something wrong with you is a choice. It's not a good one. Right? It creates a negative emotion and it creates us taking action that perpetuates that. If we can notice that every time we have a negative thought about ourselves, it's a choice. If our thighs are bigger than we want them to be, that may not be a choice in that moment but how we think about them is. If we make a mistake, we may not be able to undo that

mistake in that moment but how we choose to think about that mistake is a choice. It's a really important choice.

If you think about making a mistake, the mistake is no big deal until we make it mean something. We make it mean that we should quit doing it or we make it mean that we'll never get it or we make it mean that like we said, there's something wrong with us. When I'm trying to do that pull-up and I can't do it and I make it mean that I'm not strong or I make it mean that I won't be able to do it or I'm not as good as somebody else. There's something really wrong with me. My body is too heavy for my arms. If I make it mean all of those things then I'll probably quit trying to do it. If I make it mean that I'm a beginner at this and I'm learning how to do this and this is the first time I've tried and maybe I'll only be able to do a half of pull-up for 6 months but I can make it mean, "I can do a half of pull-up and I'm going to keep doing half a pull-up until I do a full pull-up."

Maybe that's what you need to do instead of saying, "I hate my body. My body's ugly." Maybe you just do a half of an appreciation. You say, "I have a body. I'm in my body. My body is alive." Really being in that space of trying to appreciate as much as we can with what we're able to do. Because like Donna had said, telling yourself that you feel a certain way about yourself when you aren't really feeling it is not going to serve you because you're not going to believe it. You're actually going to believe the opposite of what that is.

Just taking yourself to the point where you can feel a little bit of appreciation, one of the things I offered is you can appreciate that you can see. You can appreciate that you can breathe. You can appreciate that you can afford to eat, that you're the person that has friends. You're the person that is kind to the person that's serving your food. If that's true for you, right? If it's not, maybe you could say, "I appreciate the fact that I didn't scream. I appreciate the fact that I don't hit people." If you're the person that doesn't hit people, right?

Look for it and it requires some creativity because your brain will block you from finding that if you believe for so long that there's nothing redeeming about you. Notice those areas where you do practice self-loathing. If you have a hard time finding them, look at the results in your life that you hate. If you have a result that you loath in

your life, it's probably coming and starting from a thought of self-loathing. If you have an action, something you do that you loathe, it's probably coming from originally from a thought of self-loathing and you can track yourself back to it. If you notice that you feel awful about yourself, it's always because of a thought that you're having about yourself. Find those thoughts. Notice how you're practicing them and then think. What could you believe and think about yourself instead? Could you find a way towards the opposite or even a little bit better from loathing to neutral? Can you go to a neutral place? Can you focus on the things that you do like about yourself?

Let's talk about when you find the thoughts that are self-loathing, ask yourself why you are thinking them because one of the things I noticed when I was working with some of the students like we actually had two Michelle's. There was another Michelle in our class and when we talked about one of the things that she had said was that it was really hard for her to not loathe her body. It was really difficult for her to love it. One of the things that was really helpful for her was to think about her body in terms of loving it as an action, as something she could deliberately do on purpose, not as something that was supposedly just supposed to come over us. That's a lot of times the work that I do with clients who are in relationships. They talk about, "I just don't love my husband. I just don't like my husband." When I show them that that's actually a choice, it's not a default, it's not something that that person is causing, that's really helpful for them because then they can do something about it. They don't feel they're at the effect.

When I was talking to Michelle about this, one of the things that she was saying was that when she thinks about loving her body in an active way like as a practice, as something she can put on her to-do list, it really changed everything for her because if she felt it was something that she could actually do and when you do it, when you think about your body in a way that feels good, you get to experience that. It's difficult at first because your brain wants to stay in the old pattern of hating because it's familiar and comfortable but as you practice the new thing, even though it may feel awkward in the beginning, the more you do it, the more it will feel natural. The more you will get proficient at liking yourself.

One of the things that I had said is that it's just not an option for me to hate myself. Another one of the students, Jane ... Hi, Jane. How are you? ... came up to me and said that that was really helpful that you had said it's just not an option to hate my body. That's what I had said and I said I haven't hated my body in 10 years and I used to hate it pretty actively but now it's just not an option. I don't give myself permission to think negative thoughts about my body. I'll say, sometimes I look in the mirror and I'm like, "Really? What's happening back there? Why is everything falling? I don't understand it." The temptation is to go into a spiral of hate and go into a spiral of judgment. It's just not optional for me. I know that there is no upside to doing that. It doesn't serve me in any way. It doesn't feel good and I will not do it.

Now, many times when I used to do it before, I had this belief that if I hated myself enough, if I hated my body enough then I would change it. A lot of people think that. They think if they could just hate it enough then it would motivate them to change. What I have found is that the opposite is true. The more I hate my body, the more I sabotage myself. It was an illogical belief. The reason I bring it up is because I want you to understand that it's coming from a well-intended place. A lot of times, what we tend to do is get mad at ourselves for hating ourselves then it becomes a double whammy. In fact, we can start hating ourselves because we hate ourselves. It's one more reason to hate on ourselves.

What I want to show you is that a lot of times the negative thoughts we have towards other people and towards ourselves is because of a well-intended, well-meaning place where we think that that will help us to hate ourselves. Even though it's illogical, it feels powerful. What's important to remember is that we're doing it for a good reason but it doesn't mean we have to keep doing it. I never found hating my body to end up in a good place. It never served me. As soon as I decided that that was no longer an option because there was no upside, I started creating evidence. I started looking for ways where I could love my body and I could appreciate it.

One of the thoughts that really served me and helped me and maybe some of you all could borrow it was the idea that I did not create this body. I am not the creator of it. I really do determine how much it

weighs by how much I eat but I did not create my body's ability to gain weight or not gain weight. It has really helped me to know that, yes, it is my body but I didn't create it and it was created this way on purpose. It's the body that I am meant to have to fulfill my ultimate destiny in life. When I'm able to release it as a gift that was given to me, as something that was created for me then I get some really clear perspective. If this body is for me and not against me then how can I find the ways that it is for me?

For those of you who don't have the self-loathing towards your body but you have it towards your mind, towards your abilities, towards the way you are socially, you can just apply it in that way. You can look at it in that same way to find, "Okay, I'm an introvert. How is that for me?" "I am socially awkward," for some of you. "Why is that? How is that for me?" For me, one of my characteristics is I'm very intense and I can be bitchy sometimes. Instead of trying to push that away and hate that about myself, I've tried to find how does that serve me. How can I embrace that part of me? How can I see what's good about that? When I'm able to do that, it completely changes how I show up. It completely changes how I feel about myself, therefore, what I do about myself.

I want to encourage you all to do that self-appreciation exercise. I want you to look at yourself in a way that maybe is different than the way you've looked at yourself before. Maybe you can start appreciating yourself and seeing the effects of that in your life. I also want you to look at the spaces where you are loathing yourself and have compassion. Maybe you're doing it for a really positive reason. Maybe it's just a habit that you learned when you were a small child and you just haven't unlearned it. That's okay. Use this as an opportunity to get to know yourself. One of the ways that you will have a happier life is by finding out more about yourself and what makes you happy, going into the crevices of where you aren't treating yourself in the best way and understanding that from a place of compassion. Notice the results the self-loathing has given you in your life.

Most importantly, understanding that it is a choice. You do not have to loathe yourself. If you do loathe yourself, it's okay. Even in the small areas, those little things you "hate" about yourself, those little

areas are worth working on. Keep your ears out for more mentions of my students who I just spent time with. I learned so much from them and they have so much to offer and so much of their work and their examples I want to share with you in the upcoming episodes. Have a wonderful, amazing, beautiful week and I will talk to you next time. Bye-bye.

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