

Ep #70: Lessons from Dan Sullivan



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.

Are you guys kidding me, it's seventy, that's a lot. I am so happy to be here. I just finished a webinar you guys. Oh, my God, I know that some of you were there. First of all, if you haven't seen my new website www.thelifecoachschool.com, it's so fun, go check it out. Here's the deal, I was recording a webinar and it stopped right in the middle, which was fantastic, not. Then, I had to restart it and redo it, and it was just mayhem. I told my husband, I'm like, "What the heck is happening? Why am I ...?" It was funny because the webinar was on self coaching and I was just coaching myself in my brain the whole time, because I never want to let anyone down. I don't want any of my customers to be inconvenienced by having to have the video freeze.

I want everything to just be professional and awesome. I apologize if you were on that webinar and it didn't work out, because it did work out. What we did, is we recorded for about a half an hour, and then it didn't work, and then we started it again. It actually ended up being a great webinar and we're doing a replay of it. If you want the replay of that webinar, you can e-mail melodee@thelifecoachschool.com, and tell her you want the self coaching webinar replay, and she will hook you up. Actually tell her, we did a webinar, and then we also did a workshop, this one that we did today was the workshop. Anyway, I feel like okay, now I'm going to come home and episode 70, crazy to me and so proud of myself for all of these episodes that I've done.

I'm totally stoked that today we're talking about Dan Sullivan. As you know, every ten sessions I talk about one of my teachers. Dan Sullivan is one of the most amazing teachers I've ever had. It's so interesting because when I first became a coach, I read a book called, *The Success Principles*, by Jack Canfield, and I also read a book called, *Body for Life*, by Bill Phillips. These two books had a huge profound impact on my life at the time. I read in the acknowledgements of both of these books, both of these people thanked someone named Dan Sullivan.

I was trying to figure out what the heck do these two authors, Bill Phillips and Jack Canfield, have in common that they would both know Dan Sullivan. Well, it turns out that they were both in a program called, The Strategic Coach. Dan Sullivan has a business called The Strategic Coach, where he coaches entrepreneurs. One of the things that he does is, he puts groups of people together that meet quarterly, that are in the same financial bracket and he gives them his wisdom and has them find their own wisdom. When I first found him, you had to be making at least six figures in order to join his organization.

I wasn't making six figures at the time, so what I did is I bought every single thing he had on his website and read it, and absorbed it, and practiced it. I wrote him a letter and basically said, how much I appreciated his work, and how I had found him. I thought that was coincidental. At the time I was thinking about starting a business called Workplace 24, this was ten years ago. My husband and I were thinking about starting this business and we wanted to ... God, it had to have been more, it was before 9/11, more than ten years ago, about thirteen years ago, right.

Anyway, I had sent him a letter and said, "Hey, I'm thinking about starting this business, and I want to get your input. I have a lot of respect for you and I want to know what you think." He wrote me back and he said, "I'm not sure about this business. I don't know if this is a viable option." What we were going to do is, buy a piece of property and build a building where people could come and work and have the third space work environment, we'd have conference rooms and that sort of thing. He didn't think it was a great idea, because he thought people would just go to Starbucks and do that sort of thing.

It turns out we went to a marketing company and they agreed that it wasn't a great idea. Now, I don't know that we wouldn't have made it go or not, but the timing certainly wasn't good, so I'm glad that we didn't do it at the time. I went really full force into my coaching business at the time. Now, one of the things that I wanted to do was, he had this program called, The Gold Cultivator, and there were so many tools, and there are so many tools at the Life Coach School that are influenced by him. I wanted to, basically, just teach his tools.

I wanted to just be his advocate and just teach all strategic coach tools.

I went and met with him and actually asked permission, if I could do this. They came back and said that I couldn't. I was so devastated at the time. I remember I had flown down there. I think it was to San Diego, and I went to one of their conferences, and then I waited until he was done with his conference and sat down with him. They only had a few minutes to talk with me. At the time, I didn't have the kind of money that it took to fly down there and stay at this really plush hotel that they were staying at. They only gave me a few minutes because they were going to be late for their flights, and then told me, no, I couldn't use any of their stuff.

I was so devastated and I proceeded to go back to my hotel room and cry my eyes out, and went home and created the model. I love Dan Sullivan for saying no to me. I love him for not letting me use his stuff. I love him for putting me in that position, even though he doesn't even realize that he did it. He doesn't even realize how devastated I was. It was one of those things that really was the turning point for me. I came home and decided to create my own material and not use his. I'm so, so glad he did. I'm so glad he did that and I'm so glad I did that.

So many of his tools, I have used in my life and have used at the school, and have implemented into so much of the stuff that I do. His work doesn't influence the model. You'll notice in Self Coaching 101, I really attribute that to the collective work of the authors that I've talked about, previously. Dan Sullivan influenced a lot of other things. One of the main concepts that he really helped me with was future focus, and focusing on my future, and creating a future that's better than my past, and goal cultivation, and the importance of goal setting and really thinking about goals and how to achieve them.

I'm very happy to introduce you to Dan Sullivan, if you don't know him. We just actually read one of his books in Master Coach Training, Want What You Want. You can find out more about Dan Sullivan, by going to thestrategiccoach.com. He has some stuff for sale on his website. I think you can find some of his stuff on Amazon, as well. I'm just going to talk briefly about him and introduce you to him. I'm

excited, it's such an honor for me to talk about him. I just feel like he's such an extraordinary person with such extraordinary ideas, that have had such an impact on my life.

I'm just going to go through some of his quotes. Here's one of his quotes. "We remain young to the degree that our ambitions are greater than our memories." I want you guys to really think about that. He has this idea, your future is bigger and better than your past. You can make your future bigger and better than your past. That always just had this huge impact on me. The thought about that, because I was so past focused, I was always focusing on what I hadn't done, and my childhood, and what hadn't worked out for me, that when I started really focusing on my future, it changed everything.

Having something to look forward to has a profound impact on our sense of happiness. More and more scientific studies suggest that the way we experience advancing age has an awful lot to do with our mindset. Dan Sullivan just turned seventy, and he shared his twenty-five year goals in some of his work that he's done. I just love ... He is always talking about how when he's ninety, he's going to be just as active, and just as sharp, and just as busy as what he's doing now and he has no intention of ever retiring. I'm so inspired by that. He loves his work so much, he just wants to keep working. Most people can't wait to stop working, so they can retire.

If you create a life for yourself that you love, you just want to keep going on, and on, and on. Even at seventy, his goals are much bigger than they've ever been in his life and I find that so incredibly inspiring. When people come to me, to the school and they say, "I'm too old, I'm way too old to be signing up for the Life Coach School," I always think about Dan Sullivan. I think about all the other people that got started so much later in life, and what they did and created in their older years. We're just so much wiser in so many ways I think the stuff we can create, as we get older, can be much richer than what we create when we're younger.

All right. Our next quote that he has, "You can't be half envious and half grateful. Comparing yourself to other people is inevitable and can be a source of useful insights. When it leads to envy though, it's useless. Envy is debilitating and demoralizing, and it gives you a

scarcity view of the world, where other people's gain can only be seen as a loss for you. If you ever find envy creeping into your mind or emotion, here's a quick and effective way to root it out. Be grateful, cultivate gratitude by thinking about or even better, writing down five things you appreciate about that person, their accomplishment and what that means is possible. It's a great source of insight into what matters to you and can uncover some goals you may have had for yourself, but not looked at until now. You can be half envious and half grateful, it's either one or the other, so choose gratitude. It's a state of mind that will give you the happiness and confidence of knowing you live in a world of abundance."

That is another thing that I've really learned from Dan, is that there is no competition, because everybody can win. Everybody that does the work wins and you aren't better because of your accomplishments and someone else isn't better, we're just on different paths and different spaces of our path. Everyone can win, and everyone eventually has the same opportunity to win in their own life. That, oh my God, makes me appreciate other people that are further ahead of me on the path, because they inspire me so much. Instead of using them as a reason to be defeated. I love this idea of, once you cultivate gratitude, there's no way for you to stay in envy.

"People do things for their reasons, not your reasons. Endless amounts of time and money are spent by marketers, advertisers, and psychologists trying to figure out how to understand and influence human behavior. Perhaps we'll never really know why people do what they do, but there's one thing you can always bank on in every situation, people do things for their reasons, not your reasons. Ignorance to this fact abounds in sales situations, where people try to convince and cajole, persuade and reason, yet none of this will ever work until it taps into the listener's existing set of hopes and fears. The only thing you can really sell someone is on their future, there might just be room for you there. If you can help them achieve something they want to do, be, or have."

This is so important, right? "Whenever you are trying to help someone or sell someone on something, you are selling them on themselves, on their future, on what they can create. Don't ever try to convince or cajole someone to do something for your reasons. It's

always about their reasons." Love the way he puts that and it's so, so true. "If you've got enough money to solve the problem, you don't have the problem. Maybe at the beginning of your career it was necessary to struggle away at problems, because you just didn't have the resources to spend on fixing them. At what point though, do you stop?

There's a certain level of success where your time is measurably valuable, and when you weigh that against the problem in front of you, it's simply not worth it for you to persist in trying to solve it. Not when there are experts you could pay and the problem would simply vanish." You have to remember that Dan Sullivan coaches entrepreneurs that are making at least a hundred thousand dollars or more. I'm not talking about those of you who are still in the start up phase, but for me, when you understand that when you start making some money in your business that you can have other people solve those problems for you and you don't have to solve all your own problems, it takes the level of complexity out of your business and allows you to grow.

That was a really hard lesson for me to learn, but one of the most powerful ones that I've learned from him, because there's something about investing back into your business and treating your business like an asset, and hiring people that can solve the problem, so you don't have to keep solving your own problems. One of Dan Sullivan's main things that he's taught, I did eventually sign up for The Strategic Coach, when I got to a hundred thousand dollars. I went to the group and one of the things that he taught was that you have to work less, to make more. I know that it's counter-intuitive, but he really did teach me that.

"To beginning entrepreneurs success may seem tied to personal sacrifice. If you want to achieve more I have to give more. But as your business grows, the opposite becomes true. You need to protect your time and attention, reserving it for just those decisions, relationships, and opportunities that need your particular skills and wisdom. If you don't do this, your business will be limited to what you, personally, can do on a given day." Right? It may seem like a paradox, but working less is actually the secret to making more. He really taught

me that I should focus on my unique ability and what I do, the best that no one else can do for me, and then hire out the rest.

I'm in the process of really doing that. It's making such a huge difference in my business. I think it's funny, some people think that I'm so into self help, but I've always been very fascinated with business books. When I used to work at HP, I spent a lot of time with men. For some reason I was in this organization, this department that was all men, and I love working with men. I was twenty-five and they were all in their fifties, and I just ... I don't know why, but I just feel like my ambition has always been so much. I've always been very ambitious, and so, I think, in some ways, relating to a lot of these ambitious men at such a young time in my life really served me.

I love Jim Collins, and I love Dan Sullivan, and he's very ambitious. One of the things that Dan talks about, that I can really relate to, because I hear this so much from my customers is, "Advantages will come only to those who simplify for others. The market offers us lots of clever products and solutions, and the internet is full of ideas. But there's a real difference when real person steps over into our world and gives us their wisdom. You may take what you do for granted, but to certain people, your ability to cut through their confusion and complexity, will seem nothing short of miraculous. This is a huge advantage and the best opportunity to create a dedicated fan base among your clientele."

I totally agree with this. I think that that's one of the things that I try and do. I'll tell you, I think this is a skill I learned in grade school, because I wasn't smart as the other kids around me. I look at my son, Connor, he can just figure everything out. I always had to understand the why behind everything, right? I always had to simplify it in order to understand it. I think that actually ended up being a skillset that was really helpful to me as a teacher. Now, as a teacher, I'm able to take really complicated concepts and simplify them. I love that he acknowledges how valuable that is.

One of the things that he talks about in there, that I think is important is, you may not recognize something that comes really naturally to you, and that may be your secret sauce for what it is you want to create in your life. "The secret to the universe is to make sure you're

always happening to the world, and never the other way around." Ew, that's so good. "The news media are in the chicken little business, ignore the fear mongering, because you can never be creative from a place of reaction. If you really want to future proof yourself, start where you are, with your own talents, interests, wisdom, and relationships. No matter what's going on around you, these will be your tools for creating value."

I love this, you guys. Make sure that you are happening to the world. I can't even ... I have nothing more to say about that. Your life doesn't happen to you, happen to the world. "Make sure you achieve your meaning through creativity and not consumption. It's nice to have nice things and rich experiences, we're not against that. Just don't mistake them for an identity. The things that really distinguish you from the rest of the world came factory installed and will always lead you to your most significant and rewarding achievements." Oh, my God, that's so good. I just want to savor that, so good.

"The anticipation of a difficult situation is always worse than the actual results. There are two types of suffering. There's short suffering and long suffering, the choice is yours. There are no benefits to procrastination." That's good folks, I love it. "you're going to put in the time anyway, so why not enjoy your life? Most people think happiness is a byproduct of their circumstances, beyond their control, but truly happy people don't react to the world, they create it with a mindset that automatically seeks out the most positive interpretations, opportunities, and experiences. Moment to moment, the choice is always yours. Which would you rather experience?"

Holy cow, so good. "We don't control the world, but we control our response to the world. Whether an experience is negative or positive, is really a factor of what you do with it. Transform every situation into a lesson for the future and you'll never regret anything in your past. In fact, you'll be grateful for it. Entrepreneurial success springs from a vision of how something could be faster, cheaper, easier, or better, and then committed action. Not from complaining about the way it is." Oh, I could just keep going on and on. All right, let's do a couple more.

"You'll never fully know all you'll need to know, until you actually get started. It's great to do your due diligence, but the best leaders know there's no accounting for what can happen in the fog of war. Being in action teaches us lessons we could have never anticipated, so you might as well get started, rather than waiting until you're completely and totally ready, because there's no such thing. The truth is that all of us are already one hundred percent self-disciplined to our existing set of habits. Imagine a line that divides your habits into two kinds. One set of habits leads to ten times growth, and the other leads to no growth at all. They're both just as hard to establish, so which do you choose?"

That's so good, you guys. Let me just read that again. "The truth is that all of us are already a hundred percent self-disciplined." Knowing that you already have a hundred percent self-discipline, the question is, what is your discipline to? Is it to your current set of habits or is it to the habits you want to create for yourself? That is so brilliant. Okay, this is the last one. "Making things clear and simple takes work. Being complicated and confusing is much easier. The best way to eliminate complexity, is to just ask good questions." This is what we do in coaching, you guys. This is how we eliminate complexity. "When we ask questions in coaching, that is how we really clear up our own minds. That inquiry into what's going on in our brains."

I think even though Dan Sullivan, talks about all of this stuff in a different way than I do, all of the basic concepts are the same. His belief that asking great questions leads to wisdom, I believe. I want you guys to think about that, all that wisdom that you have within your own mind. If you ask your brain a question, it will come up with the answers you are seeking. It will come up with what you need to know to move forward. I hope you guys enjoyed Dan Sullivan, as much as I love him, love him so much. I think his work is fantastic. Hopefully, you'll go check him out. If you have any questions about Dan, or you want to make any comments, head on over to the website, thelifecoachschool.com/seventy. I'll see you guys over there. Have a good one, bye-bye.

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