

Ep #85: Constraint



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.

Hello, everyone. How are you, my friends? I always say that to my kids. How are you, my friends? My oldest always says, "Um, I don't think we're friends," in the sarcastic voice that only a 15 year old boy can muster. He's a good kid. He's now officially taller than my husband. He's 6'1". He's huge. It's crazy to watch a baby turn into a man that is taller than your own husband. I'm loving every minute of it and high school, a joyous experience. So many cool things going on at the end of this. I'm going to give you a hint as to something ... actually, I'll just give you the hint now because I might forget.

I am going to be doing an event where I will be recording all day for a program that I'm creating. I'm going to invite ten of you to join me to get a full day of coaching for a very reasonable price. All you have to do is agree to be recorded on video for that, but the rest of it will be thousands of dollars worth of coaching that you will get for a very low price. I'm going to only include the details about that inside of a podcast. It will be for the people who are regular listeners who would like to get additional information from me, some additional coaching from me. This is not for coaches. This is actually for clients who want to get some coaching. This is what's going to be coming up. I'll probably announce that in the next episode. Make sure you're listening if you're interested in getting some coaching.

Let's talk about what we're going to talk about today, which is, very excited to say, constraint. Now this is a concept that I was introduced to a year ago. I was introduced by a man, a coach, named Todd Herman. I took one of his classes called the 90 Day Year. Todd has since put out a podcast that I think is fairly good, if you're interested. Obviously, you're interested in podcasts. Might want to check him out.

He taught this concept called constraint. His whole philosophy I really adopted. Now I know that some of you know that I don't take classes unless I'm willing to do the entire class and all the exercises, and apply everything that I've learned. That's a new constraint, so to speak, that I've put on myself that has kept me from buying too many

courses, because I'm a total course junkie and education junkie. I like to consume materials, and a lot of times that prevents me from actually creating material. I know that some of you have that same issue.

Anyway, I signed up for the 90 Day Year. I loved it, loved, loved, loved it. One of the main concepts that he taught was constraint. Basically, constraint is a limitation or a restriction that you put on yourself that simplifies your life. Basically, Todd as a coach, what he does is he comes in and subtracts things from our lives. The reason why this is so important is one of the main complaints I get from most of my students and my clients, is overwhelm. There's an overwhelm of information. There's an overwhelm of things to do. It creates a problem for us, so then we don't actually do anything. We just spin in overwhelm.

The second area where I really got this concept was when I hired my business coach, Frank Kern, who told me to focus on just one thing at a time in my business, which was the exact same concept that Todd had introduced, which was the constraint. I decided to pick one area of my business and focus on it until I got it exactly where I wanted it. I have to tell you that sounds like a great idea and it sounds like it makes sense, but it was tremendously challenging for me to do. When I was introduced to this concept, I actually had a lot of things going on in my business. I had a lot of different options, a lot of different classes, many different things that I was doing. It was incredibly challenging for me to take everything off the table except for what I was focusing on were my in-person trainings.

I completely turned everything else down that I was working on, every other possible class that I was offering, everything else. I just completely stopped doing it and only focused on my in-persons. I struggled with that. One of my clients, the way that she described it was, when we were doing this with food, and I'll talk about that in a minute, was that she felt like she was duct-taped to a chair. That's really how I felt, too. Oh my gosh, I can only focus on one thing. That's such a challenge. I don't want to only have to focus on one thing. I have so many other things I want to do. And that fear of missing out, the fear of not being able to do everything I want to do was really present there.

Let me tell you the results of doing that. I was able to focus all of my time and energy on one thing. That's important not only in terms of what I ended up working on, which was huge, and what I spent my time focused on, which was huge, but it also really helped me know what to spend my time thinking about when I wasn't working. This is, I think, the most important piece for me. It wasn't articulated by either one of my coaches, but this is the way that I have understand it, is that a beautiful thing about having a goal is it directs your mind and it teaches your mind what to think about.

When you only have one goal at a time, you can be laser focused and disciplined with your mind. One of the things that I have discovered is that when I'm focused on one thing I have much more disciplined thinking. I know that my brain is so powerful. I know that it has the ability to literally create whatever it spends time thinking about. If I have too many things going on and it's thinking about too many different things, I create a lot of half-assed things. When I focus on one thing and really focus on creating that really well, then I notice that my brain comes up with things that it might not have otherwise come up with. It solves problems in ways that it might not have ever solved those problems. I think that's an incredibly powerful ability to have.

And, the other thing that it does for me is because I'm so disciplined in my thinking about that thing, I've noticed that my disciplined overall has increased when I think about other things. It's almost like I'm becoming much more of a steward of my mind. I'm able to manage it in such a better way; it's cleaner. My tolerance for things not being cleaned and disciplined has gone down, and my productivity has gone through the roof.

I absolutely want to share this concept with you. I wanted to show you how it applies to many other things in life, not just to business, because you may not be an entrepreneur. Why focusing on too many things at once is not useful is a really important thing. That's one of the reasons why I'm doing my stop overeating class starting next week. One of the things that I made really clear to everyone in that class is that I want to make sure that you're going to have enough time, energy and focus to really focus on your body and losing we're going to over the next six months. It's going to take all of your brain

power to really constrain your focus into this one thing. That was really important for me.

The other thing that constraint does is it really helps eliminate decision fatigue. The way that it does that is that you make a decision ahead of time on how you're going to focus your energy, and you literally don't have to make as many decisions. For example, if I'm only focusing in my business on in-person trainings and working with clients in-person, I don't have to make decisions about what other classes I'm going to offer. I don't have to make decisions on whether I'm going to do other seminars or other one on one clients, or any of that stuff. All of those decisions are made. I made one big decision on where to focus my energy, so it eliminated a tremendous amount of other little decisions.

The less decisions I have to make, the more willpower and discipline I have. I've talked about this on the podcast before, deciding ahead of time and how that clears up the energy of your brain. It literally clears up your mind fuel and let's you put all of your decision-making ability into that one thing. Being able to have all that energy towards that one thing taps you into this deeper well of resources.

Really what is constraint? The way I like to think about it is it's basically a rule that you set up for yourself that helps you decide ahead of time. I've talked about on this podcast before that when I learned the concept of constraint I decided that I was only going to buy my clothes at one store. I've since gotten many comments for your all and emails from your all like you're a nut job, you're crazy, that's so boring. Why would you do that? But I cannot even tell you guys what a brilliant decision that's been for me. I have one place where I shop. I know exactly how much money I can spend there. I know exactly when the new season comes out because Shellie there will text me and let me know. I go in, I feel totally free to buy what I want to buy. Everything goes together so I can mix and match really easily. Everything there fits me. That's one of the examples.

Now why is it so hard for us to practice constraint? I think the clothing example, picking one store example, is a great example of that. Because a lot of people don't want to pick just one store because they don't want to miss out on something else. They want to keep all

their options open. I want to offer to you that keeping your options open is a huge mistake. There, I said it. Think about this in terms of your mate. As soon as you decide this is the one, notice how much that clears up that entire area of your life. All of a sudden you don't have to be looking at other men. You don't have to know if they're single. You don't have to know if they like you. You don't have to know what they like to do. All of a sudden, everything becomes focused on one person in your life, and cleans up so much of the rest of your life when you do that.

Same when you buy a house. Same when you pick a car. When you're in that decision-making mode, it's so overwhelming. Now, you may not want to pick that one mate because of the fear of missing out. Maybe there's somebody better out there. Maybe there's someone that's more compatible with you out there, so you're constantly in that making decision mode. It creates a whole new added level of stress to your life that maybe you don't even realize. Using that example for you in your own life can really set you free.

When it comes to my house, I've created these rules around, this constraint around my house that everything in my house has to have a place where it belongs. There's nothing in my house that doesn't have a place. If it doesn't have a storage place or it doesn't fit in the house, it doesn't stay in the house, period. That's really important. When someone leaves something at our house, it always goes in the same spot in the garage. Because there's no place for it in our home because everything has its place. It has to be useful or we have to love it, or it doesn't stay in the house. My house is very clean and very organized, and I absolutely feel like it's a beautiful safe haven for me because I have those constraints and those rules around what goes on in my house. There's no clutter anywhere. That includes inside my drawers and that includes inside the cabinets. We go through them. If ever I see anything in there that I don't love or isn't useful, it's gone. It's a really beautiful thing. It's kept our life streaming just beautifully in terms of our house.

In the beginning, what we did, I know that some of you know this, is that we went on a year-long trip and sold everything we owned. It was easier for us to establish those rules because anything that came into our house was that way. I've since done ... I go through my closet. I

go through my drawers and make sure that I go through everything on a regular basis and apply those constraints.

The next thing that I want to talk about ... I know that a lot of my students listen to the podcast, and one of the things that we struggle with a lot is picking a niche, picking a focus, a target market on who are the people that you're going to work with. Now a lot of people don't want to narrow it down too specifically because they think it will make it harder to get clients. They think it will make it so they'll miss out on people. They don't want to make that decision because of the fear of missing out, the fear of loss.

What I teach them and what's so important to know is that as soon as you make that decision, as soon as you narrow it down, then it frees up your mind to focus. That's when your creativity taps in and that's when you can really start thinking about how to help that group of people vs. trying to help the whole planet, which keeps your brain overwhelmed, completely overwhelm. Now while you're choosing that niche, it's very overwhelming because there's so many options and there's so many things you can decide. Once you've decided it and you're committed that you're not going to go back on it, that's when you have freedom.

Another area where I think it's very important to provide yourself with some constraint is with food. I've been talking a lot about this with my weight, coaching students, and with my clients, and in creating this new program. One of the things that I really like to teach is that you find your fuel and then you eat only that. That's one constraint when it comes to food. One of the things that I'm working on is just having my clients put on one piece of paper the food that they want to eat. It's that decision ahead of time and then providing that constraint.

What are the kind of fats you want to eat? What are the types of carbohydrates you want to eat? What are the types of proteins that you want to eat to fuel your body? We go through a process where we test out that fuel with your body. Does it serve you? Does it give you the result you want? If you're trying to lose weight, does it help you with that? Then once you've figured it out, then you put it on that sheet. That's it, that's all you eat, whatever's on that sheet. You don't

have to make a lot of decisions. If it's not on the sheet, you don't eat it period. That's the end of it.

Now, a lot of people are like, "Oh, but what about I want to eat that and I don't want to miss out on eating that." When you make that decision for yourself ahead of time and you know that it's going to be challenging, you remove all the overwhelm. You just take it out for me, it's no sugar, no flour. The more I've studied, the more I've read about the effects of those powder substances in my body, I've decided just not to eat them. And no trans-fats. On a very intense level, I do not. It's like a strong, hard, fast rule for me. I do not ever drink sugar in any way. I've seen what that does to the glucose in my body. I've seen what that does to my insulin. It's just not even an option for me. What are your rules?

Now you already have constraint rules on your food. People are like, "Oh, I don't want to constrain my food." But you already do. There are certain things that you just don't eat because you don't like them. There are certain things you don't do because you just don't want them. For some of you, you just don't smoke cigarettes. You just don't drink alcohol. You do not do heroin or cocaine for any reason. You do not speed. You do not break the law. There are certain constraints that you have, and it just makes it easy for you.

I think food is one of those great ones. The other one that I've introduced to my clients recently that they've found very useful is no snacking. You eat at your meals and you don't snack in between, period. I heard someone recently say that snacking is always an emotional event. I think that that's so true for so many reasons. One of the reasons why many of you like to snack is because we can't tolerate what we think is hunger. A lot of my research, what it's shown, is that a lot of what we think is hunger is really withdrawal, especially if you eat a lot of sugar. As I've been refining my own hunger scale, I've really been researching the things that affect its accuracy. That's one of the things that I have found really affects it. It prevents me from being really in tune with my body. My constraint there is I just don't eat it, period. What is your constraint when it has to do with food? What is it already and what do you want it to be?

Now, one of the things that constraint really reveals is first of all, your ability to make a decision and make a commitment to yourself. Then it reveals how your relationship is with yourself, and are you willing to honor those commitments that you have with yourself, and what is your relationship like with yourself. For example, when I create constraint around a goal that I have and I say that's what I'm going to focus on, then I go through the process of creating all of the steps that I need to take to achieve that goal. Once I have all of those written down and prioritized, and really detailed down ... For example, if one of the items was ... For example, for stop overeating master class, when I set that goal and I was focusing on that, one of the things that needed to be created for that was a website. Instead of just putting create website, I put all the steps I needed to do to create that website. I needed to call my team. I needed to meet with them. We needed a photo shoot. We needed a video shoot. I put it all down.

Then what I did is I just put it on the calendar. Then it was good as done. The decisions had already been made ahead of time. All I had to do was relax and then go to my calendar each day and honor that commitment to myself. It's the same with food. When you decide ahead of time what you're going to eat, you plan that ahead of time, the more you're willing to plan it the more you're willing to make that decision ahead of time, and easier it will be to honor that commitment. What I have noticed is that the more I honor my commitments to myself, the higher my self-esteem, the better I feel about myself.

Now, in that moment, if I'm trying to decide what to eat in that moment, it's much more difficult than if I've made a decision ahead of time not to do something. Just recently I made a commitment not to drink for a hundred days. No alcohol. It was just not even a question. When I went into those hundred days I honored that comment to myself. That built up a lot of integrity. It wasn't always easy for me. Sometimes I really wanted to. I wanted to break that commitment, and other people wanted me to too, but I didn't because I wanted to honor it to myself. There's a story that happened in that hundred days that I'll have to tell you guys another time that really reveals my relationship with myself towards the end there.

The other one that I have ... one of the rules that I have constraint around is money. I never lend money, period. It's just not even an option. If someone asks me, "Hey, can I borrow some money?" I just say, "Oh no, I don't lend money," just period. I don't. I don't feel bad about my answer. It's just that's just a rule that I have. Now, I can give people money, no strings attached. Or I can say no, but I just don't lend money. That has saved me in my life so many times. I have rules about having kid birthday parties at my house. It just doesn't happen. We've got constraint around phones and computers. My husband and I only use Apple products. Makes life very easy. We were searching for a car for my husband. We have constraint about the brand of car we wanted and the type of car we wanted. That made that decision so much easier.

I told you earlier about my constraint around one class and one teacher at a time, and do everything they say. You guys, that saves my life. I can't even tell you how many classes I want to take and things I want to sign up for, and things I want to do all at once. When I made that rule and I honored that commitment to myself, it's one class at a time. If I'm in the middle of a class, I can't be buying another class. If I haven't completed the first class I purchased, I can't even think about buying another one. It's saved me so much time and money I can't even imagine it.

I have constraints around my work days. This is something that most of you have. Most of you will work Monday through Friday. I work Monday, Wednesdays, and Thursdays. I have constraint around what I do on those days as well. I teach classes and talk to my team on Monday. On Thursdays when I have set up for my appointments ... I received my podcasts on Mondays. I have this constraint around it. It's already on the calendar. It's already done. I don't have to think about it. I don't have to keep making decisions. I don't have to say oh, when am I going to get that done? When am I going to do this? When am I going to do that? It's already on the calendar. I can just relax. When the day comes, even if I don't feel like doing it, I know that if I do it, that I'm honoring my commitment to myself, and it keeps everything on track. Makes my life so much freer.

Now you may feel like oh my gosh, that's so mundane. For me, especially because I pretty much eat a lot of the same things for

lunch every day ... I call it my super salad, super as in not soup or salad, but super salad. I have a huge salad at lunch. It has a lot of really good fats in it and a lot of really good vegetables. A lot of people have adopted that as well and they think, "Oh, I get so bored with the same thing." If you're not using your food for entertainment...if your food isn't supposed to provide you with the pleasure in your day, then it's just so much easier. I've really had to switch that in my life. It doesn't mean I don't enjoy eating it. I just don't rely on it to provide me with enjoyment. I feel like that's my job, and my food's job is to fuel my body. That's when I feel the most fueled, and that's when I feel the most energetic. That's when I'm able to maintain my weight very close to about a half a pound.

That's a constraint that I'm willing to put on my life because I'm not relying on my food to entertain me. I don't give myself a lot of options there because it just works. I think that that's something really important for you all to consider too when it comes to things in your life. You don't give yourself a lot of options when it comes to maybe the mate you have because it works. You may say, "Oh, same guy, so boring. I want some variety." But you don't do that because it would just complicate your life so much. Some of you do do that. You give yourself a little variety and some options, and it does create a lot more complication. That's up to you, but you want to think about the areas where constraint might really serve you in your life. It certainly has served me.

Here's what I want to do. I want to offer you guys a way to get started with putting some constraint in your life. I don't want you to see it as a limitation that will restrict you, but more as a limitation that will simplify and set you free. Think about an area in your life where you're frustrated, where you have a lot of frustration and you're dealing with a lot of resentment. A good example of this actually is in relationships that need boundaries. Boundaries are just a way of constraining a relationship, your relationship with yourself when it relates the other people. Think about an area in your life where you're frustrated. It may be your finances. It might be your weight. It might be your productivity at work.

Think about what could you focus on, what could you subtract and constrain in that situation where you would be able to focus. With the

food maybe it's you're only going to eat foods that you write down on the sheet of paper. You're only going to eat meals and no snacks in between. You're only going to eat during certain hours. Those are the constraints that you put on yourself. Now, if you find yourself in a chair with duct tape, you're feeling like it's really upsetting to you, allow yourself to be there for a minute. You've made this decision. You're freaked out about all of the things you're going to miss out on. That's part of the process. Let yourself freak out a little bit.

Then try to do it for 90 days. People say that it takes 30 days. I think it takes more like 90 days to really make something so it's automatic, so you don't even question it anymore. You don't have to negotiate with yourself. It's kind of like it's final. The way that I like to think about this with myself is when my kids know that there are certain rules that they can bend with me. They know that they can negotiate. Then there are certain things you just can't. It's just not even a question so they don't even try.

For example, I do not ever allow my kids to come to dinner without a shirt on. I just don't think it's proper. It's not negotiable. They all take a shower after practice. They'll try to come to the table. They'll say, "Whoops. Sorry, mom." Go back and they'll change. They don't go, "Oh, just this once." No, you must have a shirt on if you're going to be in the kitchen eating, even standing up eating a snack. You have to have a shirt on. It's just certain things. They know that they have to get A's and B's in school or there's going to be consequences in terms of what they're going to be doing with their time after school. My expectations is A's and B's and that's it. They know that B's are good, that's fine, but they know that's the rules there. It's the same with myself.

The other thing is, with them sometimes I'll say no about something and then they'll negotiate and I'll change my mind. Sometimes it's back and forth there. Now, if you think about this, that intermittent not being consistent is what causes the most drama. Because, "Well last week you said it was okay, and this week you're not." I'm kind of that way with soda. Sometimes I'm like, "Enough with the soda. It's so bad. Do you know what that does to your brain?" I'm always wanting to talk to them about it. Then other times I'm like oh my gosh, it's just soda. It's not that big of a deal. It's going to be fine. That's where I get

the most pushback from them. When I'm really clear with my rules, then it's just automatic.

I think that's what's true for us. If we can make some constrained rules with ourselves and they're not negotiable for 90 days, then we really develop that discipline. I've really established that with myself in terms of my productivity. I do not negotiate with myself when there's something on my calendar that I've put on there and I've decided ahead of time. I just know that's it. I have to do whatever I put on my calendar. I'm honoring my relationship with myself and the decisions that I made.

Find that area of frustration. How can you constrain it? Remember, the more that you constrain it, the less you have to decide on things. Sit down. That area of frustration, write it all down. Write down why you're frustrated. What do you wish you could have in your life? Constrain it into a goal, and then make those decisions ahead of time. Put them on your calendar and start planning for them. Start honoring them. If you make a mistake, that's fine. Don't go all or nothing. Just get right back in there and continue to constrain.

I'd love to know what you guys get from this and if you benefit. I can't even tell you how much it's completely changed my life to be able to constrain my focus to very few things at a time, and be willing to subtract things, and be willing to miss out on other things in order to make certain things really great and fantastic.

Speaking of great and fantastic, we do have an in-person training coming up in January. My amazing sales enrollment happiness specialist Jodi Moore is pregnant, and she's going to have a baby, so we're doing our best to sell out that training by the end of October. If you're interested in joining us in January for the in-person, we would love to have you. You just head on over to the Life Coach School and we'll tell you more about it and spend six days together in California in January learning this life-changing material. I can't wait to tell you more about it. If you guys are interested, go over to the website and we'll talk some more. Otherwise, have an amazing, wonderful week. I look forward to next week when I tell you about a little special offering I have for ten of you. Have a good one. Bye bye.

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