

Ep #92: How to Feel



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, my friends. How are you guys? Holy cow. I am in the middle of what I would call a wild whirlwind. I just went to Miami. I had the most amazing experience with a program that I did called Program Creator. There were, I think, twelve of us that went through two full days of creating a coaching program. I don't know why we were so lucky to have such an amazing group of women. I have never taught a class like that before. I taught it with my colleague, Angela Loria, who teaches people how to get their books done, basically, in a very magical way. We took her process and applied it to creating a program. I would say, I think it's one of the most enjoyable things that I've ever done in terms of something kind of off my beaten path.

What we did is we just basically took people from zero to having a completed program. They had to have it completely emailed to us including all the pictures and everything they wanted included in it by the time they left after two days. I had questions on whether I thought that would be possible. It absolutely was possible and magical and so exciting. I can't wait until we have all of those programs done. What happened was all the people that created a program sent those programs to Angela. Her editor is going to do it, then a designer will design them, and then they will be complete. I will absolutely share a link to each of those on my podcast. I think it was such a powerful experience and I'd love for you to at least have access to the people who created such amazing programs.

I came back from that and that was very exciting. Then, we went straight into Thanksgiving, which was amazing, of course. I spent a week with my family. That was powerful and challenging all at once. Then, I came home and now I am in the process of preparing for a huge event that I'm doing. The event itself is only ten people so it's not huge in the amount of people. Basically, what I'm going to do is go to the hotel in Palo Alto, California and record for an entire day all of my new curriculum for How To Feel Better.

How To Feel Better is the podcast that gets the most love on this podcast. That's big, right? My podcast has almost 100 episodes.

What the what? So exciting. The one that gets the most love is How To Feel Better. I created a whole program called How To Feel Better. I'm going to be teaching it this Saturday to a group of ten people. We're going to be videoing the whole thing and then that is going to be an online program. My online program will include all the videos from that full day, all the curriculum that I've just created. I created a bunch of brand new worksheets that really apply this work intensively. I've been doing the work myself. Who doesn't want to feel better? It's really powerful. I think it's some of the best work that I've done.

I'm also creating a program that I will be selling online. The first round of this program, How To Feel Better Online, is going to be at an introductory price. I'm excited to offer that to you guys. Those of you who listen to my podcast will have first dibs on it. You can go to TheLifeCoachSchool.com/92. There will be a link to the page where you can sign up for the course.

The course will be eight modules that will cover Ten Steps To Feeling Better and all of those videos from that day will be immediately available. They won't be dripped out over the weeks. They'll be immediately available. If you're interested in learning everything like with a fire hose, the way I do, you will love this course. You will have the video, the transcript, and then also the audio if you want to download it. In addition to those eight modules, you will also get a live call with me once a week for eight weeks. Depending on when you sign up, you will get eight weeks of calls with me that will be on video where we will really work through the details of How To Feel Better. I will help you with anything you're struggling with. I will answer questions that you have.

I didn't mean to quite tell you all about it. I just got a little bit excited. I have these huge sticky notes all over my office right because I've been working on this all week. I'm just, I guess, a little bit excited about it. Anyway, to get more information about that, you can just go to the show notes. I'm actually recording it. The course will be available in January. I'm going to do pre-signups in December. All of those videos I will be recording this weekend. I'm looking forward to that.

Then, as soon as I'm done with that event, I fly to go see my coach, Frank Kern, for my very last mastermind meeting with him. That is so bittersweet. My last year of working with Frank Kern has been the most powerful, amazing year in my business. It's also been very uncomfortable and challenging, which is perfect for what I'm going to be talking about today, which is How To Feel.

Then, I come back for one day, kiss my kids, kiss my puppies, and then my husband and I fly out to Ryan Moran's event called Freedom Fast Lane. We will be in Austin for four days at Freedom Fast Lane learning everything that all of his guest speakers have to offer us in terms of business. It's really exciting for Chris and I. We haven't ever gone to an event like this together. One of us usually stays back and watches the kids. Because Chris is my business partner and loves to learn about all of this stuff, we made it so my niece could come watch the kids and we could go together.

Then, after that, I'm gone for two weeks taking the kids on Christmas break to ski in Colorado. We got a place right on the mountain and we're just going to ski and snowboard the whole time. Those of you who aren't from California don't know that we have had no snow here the past three years. I'm afraid we've all forgotten how to ski and snowboard. That's what I planned for this Christmas.

That's why I feel like I'm on a whirlwind. I usually do not have that long of an introduction to a podcast. For those of you who don't like those long introductions, I totally apologize. Sometimes, I feel like I listen to a podcast and I'm like, "All right already with your personal life." Since I rarely do it, please forgive me. Just wanted to give you guys kind of an update on what's been going on with me.

What are we going to talk about today? How To Feel. Now, that may sound kind of funny because we should all know how to feel, but most of us don't. Most of us have no idea how to actually feel our feelings. When I suggest to people that they feel them, they look at me sometimes with a blank stare, but they're afraid to ask because it sounds weird to say, "I don't know how feel." What I've decided to do in this podcast is to talk about literally how to feel.

I'm going to start by saying that I think that there's four options when it comes to feeling a feeling. As I have evolved as a coach, these options have changed slightly and the terminology has changed slightly but basically the choices that we have when a feeling is present are these. The first thing we can do and what most of us do is resist that feeling, resist the experience of it. When people say to me that they know what it is to experience anxiety, when they know what it is to experience anger, when they know what it is to experience fear, a lot of times what I point out to them is that they really don't know what it's like to experience those emotions. What they know is what it's like to resist those emotions. If you think about the kind of proverbial beach ball that you're holding under the water, then to hold it under the water is to resist it and then to have it pop up after you've resisted it is a very different experience than simply having a beach ball in your hands. The experience of having it be resisted and then having it explode above the water is not the same as just simply having experienced it.

Many of us spend a lot of time resisting our emotions because we are afraid of what that experience of them will be because we associate the experience of an emotion to what it's like to experience it after we've resisted it because it explodes. Most of us have learned to resist our emotions because as children, if we had any kind of trauma or any kind of experience as a child that we were unable to have the emotional maturity to manage, the way that we survived was simply by resisting emotion. It's not a bad thing. Some of us didn't have a choice. The problem is no one pulled us aside and taught us an alternative option. For many of us who haven't had the experience of a really good therapist or a really good coach, we never really learned how to be present with our emotions. We only know how to resist them.

The experience of being alive and being a human being is the experience of feeling emotion. Emotion isn't one of those things that you can go through your life and not experience or acknowledge as something that's important because everything we do or don't do is because of a feeling we want or don't want. Our feelings run all of our motivation and our feelings run all of our lack of motivation. Everything we've created, everything we've done, everything we've put ourselves out there for is because of emotion. Then we spend a

tremendous amount of time resisting the emotions that are present within us. That's the first thing we can do with an emotion.

The second thing we can do with an emotion is react to it. Now, as I'm giving these examples, I'm using mostly negative emotion because typically it's easier to explain why we would resist an emotion if it is negative. This can also happen with positive emotions and many of you can relate to not wanting to experience any emotion at all. The second thing we can do is react to emotion. A lot of people believe that feeling an emotion means you need to react to it. For example, they believe that if they're going to feel anger that they have to act angry. If they're going to feel sad, that they have to express sadness either by crying or talking to someone or if it's anger, by yelling at someone or throwing something or punching a pillow to really react to it and act it out.

Now, a lot of us have ways to reacting to anger that don't actually allow us to feel it at all. If we're feeling angry and then we're screaming and yelling at someone and then they're reacting to our reaction, then we haven't actually experienced what it's like to be angry. We've only reacted to it. I really want to make sure that those two things are differentiated because just because you're feeling an emotion doesn't mean you're doing anything. I could sit here and feel very angry and you would never know. I could feel very sad and you would never know. Just because I'm angry doesn't mean I'm going to have an expression of it. A lot of times the expression of an emotion, the reaction of an emotion on my face or through my body is part of the reaction to it that doesn't allow it to be fully experienced. I really want to make sure that you separate those two out. Just because I'm screaming and yelling doesn't mean that I'm actually experiencing the emotion. It means I'm reacting to it.

The third option we have when it comes to our emotions is to distract ourselves from it. I've had a lot of personal experience with this by overeating and over-drinking and overworking. There are other ways of distracting ourselves from emotion that may seem more positive like over-exercising or overworking or over-socializing or being overly busy. Just because it looks like a productive way to not feel because you're distracting yourself ... I mean, even taking a walk or taking a bath or getting a massage or getting a pedicure can be a way of not

feeling, of a way of distracting yourself from an emotion, by not focusing on it, not thinking about it. It doesn't mean that it's not there. It doesn't mean that the experience of the emotion isn't being kind of buried away because you're distracting your mind from it.

Those are three options. You can resist an emotion, react to an emotion, distract yourself from an emotion. The last option is to actually feel it. That's what I want to talk to you guys about in this podcast today. How do you not resist? How do you not react? How do you not distract and actually feel? I'm going to give you kind of some options on how to do that.

The first and very important skill that I teach all of my students and all of my clients is how to hold space without judgment. If I'm coaching somebody that's one of my clients, I need to hold the space for them. What that means is that they can come to me and tell me anything. There will be no judgment. I will not judge them. My personal opinion will not be relevant. Now, as human beings, our initial reaction is always to judge something, have an opinion about it. Holding space is not something that comes naturally to us. We have an opinion. That person's beautiful. That person's ugly. That was a good thing to do. That was a bad thing to do. Immediately, we have opinions and judgments and thoughts about things. To hold the space is to hold those opinions, those judgments, anything that comes to your mind as an irrelevant, neutral thought pattern.

If I have a client come to me and I think she's amazing and I love her and I think she's doing a great job, that's not relevant to my coaching session. If I think she's being a victim or having a hard time or whatever, that's not relevant. That's not going to help me coach. My opinion of her is not going to help me coach whether it's positive or negative. The same is true for ourselves when we're having emotions. If we start judging our emotions, we will not allow ourselves to feel them. We will distract or react or resist them. For example, if I'm feeling insecure, that may be an emotion that I don't want to be having. I may resist it, pretend like I'm not having it, distract myself from it, or act it out.

First and foremost, I need to learn to hold space for any emotion. The spectrum of emotions that I will experience as a human being are

normal and natural and part of what it means to be alive. When I can hold the space for any emotion to appear, to be present inside of me, then without judgment then I will more likely be able to feel it and experience it in my body.

Now, the way that I define a feeling or an emotion ... First of all, I use those two terms interchangeably. Other people have different definitions of them. I used them interchangeably. A feeling that you have is a vibration in your body. Right? I differentiate between a sensation, which is something that's caused by your biology, by your physiology, and is then translated to your brain. An emotion is something that starts in your brain and is transferred to your body.

For example, if you think about something happy, you think about something sad, you find out someone died, that thought that you have in your mind is going to create that emotion in your body. That emotion in your body is a vibration in your body. It is meant to be experienced and allowed. When we try and block those vibrations or distract ourselves from those vibrations, we miss the opportunity of genuinely being alive in the world. It is part of the human experience to have emotions.

Emotions truly are our guidance systems. Our emotions are the reason we do and don't do anything. We anticipate a positive emotion or we anticipate a negative emotion. That is what determines what we will do or what we won't do. We feel a certain emotion and that determines what action we're taking, how much energy is behind something.

First step, hold the space. Be willing to hold the space for any emotion without judgment.

The second thing is to allow it to be there. The way that you do that is you open yourself up to it, you breathe, and you just are willing to be. You look at that multiple choice and you say, "I can resist this, I can react to it, or I can distract from it, but what I'm going to do is just feel it. I'm going to allow it. I'm going to stay present with it. I'm going to acknowledge it without judgment." Once you do that and that takes a split second of decision, a split second of decision, and you can notice yourself as you're reacting and bring yourself back. You can

notice as you're distracting and bring yourself back. You can notice as you are resisting and then release the resistance and allow the feeling to be there.

Once you do that, once you make that split second decision to do that, my next suggestion is to describe it in detail. Describe the experience of the emotion as if you were explaining it to a martian. This is a really important piece. A lot of people kind of want to go into that meditative state to be present with that emotion. That's powerful. Breathing it in, relaxing your body, feeling the emotion is important.

Once you start to describe it, then what you notice is that you are not it. Why is this important? So many of my clients are so worried that the emotion will take them away. Once they allow themselves to feel grief or fear or anxiety, they won't ever be able to stop experiencing it. This is a pretty valid fear in the sense that that's what it was like for us as children. We were so overwhelmed with emotion, we didn't literally know what to do with ourselves. As adults, we have the ability to truly feel any emotion.

Once we start describing it what happens is we're able to separate ourselves out as the compassionate observer. We're experiencing the emotion, but at the same time, we're also describing ourselves experiencing the emotion.

Now, I've had conversations with some of my peers who have told me that once you get into that intellectual framework of describing it that you're no longer experiencing it. I find this not to be true. I find that you can fully be experiencing it and the safest way that I know how to do that is to also at the same time identify yourself as the watcher of yourself experiencing it. You are the person experiencing it, the human being experiencing it, but you are also the awareness of yourself experiencing it. Until you've had that experience of describing an emotion as you're experiencing it, you may not know what I mean. The way that I like to teach my students to do this is to describe it as if you're describing it to a martian.

Now, I used to say alien and I looked up alien when I was preparing for this podcast. Like, the alien that came up was like the alien from the movie Alien, which is very scary. I looked up martian and there

was a very cute little cartoon that I liked much better. I'm having Pevell put that in the show notes for you guys so you can see the little martian.

Now, I want you to imagine this little martian that comes from outer space that doesn't feel emotion, doesn't know what emotion is. When you describe an emotion to someone who doesn't know what an emotion is, you have to describe it from like where you're experiencing it in your body and what exactly it feels like.

If you're describing anxiety to a martian and you're trying to have them know what it feels like in the body, you have to be very clear in the specific locations of the body and what exactly is happening. A lot of times, when I have my students do this, they want to start describing what they're thinking. When you're describing and feeling an emotion, you're not describing what you're thinking. You're not describing why you're feeling what you're feeling. You're only simply describing what's going on in your body. When I describe anxiety, it's a little bit of a buzzing in my solar plexus. I may feel a little bit of tingling in my arms. I may feel a tightness in my throat.

Even when you describe a feeling like terror in that way, I image the martian would be kind of like, "What's the big deal?" The worst emotion is still just a little vibration in your body. If you look at it from a very objective way, you can see that factually, emotions aren't any big deal. Sadness, horror, frustration, terror, fear. Describing them as that physiological vibration is no big deal. That's very important. Sometimes we feel like our emotions will take us over. They feel like our body will not be able to tolerate it. When you imagine and describe it, it's really not such a big deal. I have found that when I describe exactly what an emotion feels like in my body, it becomes much less of a big deal.

The next thing you want to do is once you've described it to that little martian and you can go to TheLifeCoachSchool.com/92 if you want to see that little picture, that little cartoon that I'm imagining. Then, you want to name the emotion. What I did is I went to Wikipedia and found list of emotions. You guys can go and print that off if you want to have a list of emotions that you can look at. I also have that in my book *If I'm So Smart, Why Can't I Lose Weight?* I have the list of

emotions in there too. You want to name your emotion. The more specific you can get instead of just saying, "I feel down," if you say, "I feel discouraged. I feel disappointed. I feel frustrated." Being able to name the emotion that you're experiencing is very powerful. I believe that labeling, not for everything but for emotions, helps you wrap your mind around what your body's experiencing. To be able to associate what your body's experiencing with the emotion, I think it takes us to a higher level of emotional intelligence, being able to name what it is that's going on in your body.

The first piece of that is just being present in your body long enough to be able to genuinely experience something and then to be able to describe it and name it, I think takes us down the road of really becoming experts of our own emotional experience in the world. Then, a couple ways that I think truly help us fully experience emotion is willingness. The first piece was allowing. You allow the emotion, then you describe the emotion, and then you name it. Then, there is this willingness to be with it. In my book *If I'm So Smart, Why Can't I Lose Weight*, the way that I described it is that there's a doorway with the emotion listed on it. Maybe it's anxiety or maybe it's fear, maybe it's frustration. Instead of trying to hold that door shut with resistance, you're willing to walk into the room that is filled with the energy of that emotion. You are not afraid to feel the emotion that is present.

The other way that I like to describe it is you're willing to carry it with you. I told a story on this podcast about experiencing shame and heaviness of shame and carrying it with you and the experience of carrying it with you and what that feels like to carry it with you is, I think, one of the most powerful things we can do instead of pushing it away or reacting to it. We actually allow it to be there by being willing to carry it with us as long as we need to. The other way of thinking about it is to coexist with it instead of trying to get rid of it.

A lot of my students will say to me, "Okay. I'm willing to experience it but then how do I get rid of it?" Many, many times, when you allow an emotion to be there and you allow yourself to be present with it, it will dissipate within a matter of minutes. It's just a vibration that flows through you and then it's gone. I have had times in other experiences where it doesn't go away, where there's a heaviness that stays with me. There's a feeling of depression that stays with me or anxiety that

stays with me. When I try and fight, resist, distract, or react from those emotions, it always makes them worse and makes them fester and makes them stay longer. When I allow them and I am willing to coexist for them, they may stick around for a while, but it's okay because I'm allowing them to be there and they usually go in waves. If I allow them to be there, they come in and out of my vibration and then eventually dissipate much more quickly than if I didn't. I would say your willingness to be present with emotion will require you to be uncomfortable. Negative emotion is uncomfortable.

I was talking to someone today and we were relating the discomfort of negative emotion to physical pain. It's a very different experience. An emotion, a painful emotion versus a painful sensation, are very different. Now, painful emotions can make painful sensations worse. Imagine if you're being tortured by someone. There's the physical pain of being tortured, which I'm sure is excruciating, but then there's also the terror, the emotion of terror, the fear of dying that compounds that. If you're just looking at what is the most painful parts of emotional pain, what is the most painful experience, what is the worst possible emotion that you can imagine ever experiencing, you want to think about that and know that it's nothing you can't handle. It's just uncomfortable.

I've said this many times on this podcast but I think is such an important reminder: Your willingness to be uncomfortable, your willingness to be present with your discomfort, with your emotion, is directly correlated with your success, is directly correlated with your growth. I would say it's not just correlated, it is the cause of it. Putting yourself in challenging situations, being willing to be uncomfortable and overcoming whatever it is that's creating that discomfort by being open and willing to it and being aware of it is what will create your success in life.

People ask me all the time, "Why are you willing to be so uncomfortable? Why are you willing to constantly put yourself in these positions that are so challenging? Why don't you ever say, 'Enough is enough is enough and I'm just going to stay here?' Why don't you just ignore some of those things?" I think for me is my experience of being alive is ... The first half of my life is one of distraction and retreat from myself, pretending that I wasn't feeling

what I was feeling because it was so uncomfortable. When I learned how to feel, what I realized is it's the worst that can happen. The worst that can happen is a painful emotion. The worst that can happen is a negative emotion. There is no emotion I'm unwilling to feel. I have the courage to feel any emotion. I can describe any emotion to a martian and it will not kill me. There is no emotion that can kill me. If the worst thing that can happen is that, I'm all in. The more skilled I get at feeling, the more I practice feeling my emotions, the more willing I am to put myself in positions that may cause even more negative emotion.

I want to invite you to do the same. I want to invite you to put yourself in positions that are risky in terms of creating fear or creating self doubt or creating the fear of failure, something like that. Know that at the end of the day, you can handle it. It's not a reason not to put yourself out in the world. It's not a reason not to create.

That's a lot that I've given you guys in there and there's some steps and some processes. I want to remind you that we do transcribe each one of these podcasts. If you want to kind of study this in a deeper way, you can go print out that transcript. The other option you have to join me in How To Feel Better, my online program that's coming up. We will taking all of these concepts even to a deeper level and applying them to your life. I have some exercises that we can go through that will help you take all of this to the next level. This is a great start and if you need additional help, make sure you join me in that course. I would love to have you. You can find out more information by going to TheLifeCoachSchool.com/92. Have an amazing week, everybody. I'll talk to you soon. Bye, bye.

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