

Ep #377: Being Left



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With Your Host

Brooke Castillo

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You are listening to *The Life Coach School Podcast* with Brooke Castillo, episode number 377.

Welcome to *The Life Coach School Podcast*, where it's all about real clients, real problems and real coaching. And now your host, Master Coach Instructor, Brooke Castillo.

Hello, my friends. Welcome to this episode that was inspired by an email that I received from one of our listeners. She wrote me a very heartfelt email talking about how I often have explained how to make a decision if you should leave a relationship or leave a job or make a decision to change something dramatically in your life.

But I don't address the people and relationships who are left or the people who are fired from jobs or the people who have their life circumstances change because of unwanted things happening to them. And so, I wanted to record a podcast called *When You're the One Who's Left*.

This woman had recently been left by her husband of many years. He had said to her, "I'm just not in love with you anymore and I want to leave." And she was devastated and felt like she didn't have a podcast to listen to, didn't have anywhere to go to figure out how to move on, move forward.

And so, I wanted to do this podcast for her. This is dedicated to her. She knows who she is. But this is also to all of you who have been left or your circumstances have changed against your will.

I talked to Rahul and to Chris Castillo about this, actually, because they were both in marriages where they were the ones who were left, and what their ideas and thoughts were on the topic and any advice that they had to use it as an opportunity to love yourself more instead of loving yourself less.

And I think the very first step has to be grieving and crying. I think the knee-jerk reaction for most people is to get angry and to get mad because you feel so powerless and out of control that you want to lash out, you want to

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try and control, you want to try and change the reality, you want to blame the other person, and so you get mad.

And from that place of anger, you don't want to react. You don't want to take action. You want to just monitor your thoughts in that place. And when you do that, you will see that what's underneath that is grief and sadness. And there is a clean process of grief when a relationship ends that is very important to go through. And if you're in anger and blaming for too long, you won't be able to drop into that grief.

The other thing you need to be very careful about when you're grieving the loss of a relationship is to not internalize the blame, to not make it about there being something wrong with you. There's nothing wrong with you. Relationships end sometimes. Circumstances change sometimes. There's absolutely nothing wrong with you.

And so, even those of you who the reason you may be being left is because you have done something wrong does not make you a wrong person, does not make you a less worthy person, it does not mean there's anything wrong with you.

There's something different between doing something wrong and being a wrong person, or there being something wrong with you. So, make sure you clarify those distinctions with yourself.

Processing pain is one of the most important skills any of us can have. And when you're feeling grief, which is a very clean emotion, you can allow that emotion to flow through your body and you can carry it with you like a heavy purse and you can be in grief for as long as you need to be. There is no rush.

Sometimes, we try to get to the other side of grief too quickly and then we end up having to go back and redo it. So, I highly recommend that you give yourself as much time and space and energy that you need to be able to really feel the loss and the grief that you are experiencing, and to separate that out from beating yourself up or making yourself wrong or thinking there's something wrong with you.

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That's what we would call dirty pain, when you're creating a bunch of thoughts that are untrue and using them against yourself. That's very different than actually grieving the end of a relationship.

The next step is to get support. I cannot recommend this more. You need someone to process this with. You need a coach or a therapist. And here's why. When someone leaves you, when a relationship ends in a significant way for you, you will be obsessed with it. You will be dominated by thoughts about it in your mind all the time and you will want to talk to everyone you know about it and you will try and process it with them and they will get very tired of listening to you and they will offer you terrible advice.

So, as soon as you can, get a coach or a therapist and get yourself in some kind of program for an extended period of time so you can not just process your feelings, but talk about it for a straight hour as you will need to do. You will need to hear your thoughts out loud. You will need to ask questions. You will need to express yourself. You will need to notice all your angry thoughts, any thoughts you're using against yourself.

And a coach or a therapist will be able to help you pull out the thoughts that aren't serving you, that are just railing against the other person or yourself, which isn't going to move you forward. You will move forward in your life when you process pain and when you hear yourself communicating what's going on in your brain and you consciously decide to change it.

You won't be able to do that if people are giving you advice or they're getting tired of listening to you tell this story or they're agreeing with you or commiserating with you. That is not what you need. You really need to be in the presence of someone who can hold space for you.

There are many opportunities to buffer here and when we're in pain and when we feel powerless, it's very tempting to buffer our emotions. It's very tempting to drink alcohol, to start dating lots of people right away, to overeat, to hide and to buffer watching Netflix and that sort of thing.

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I want to encourage you to not do that. I want to encourage you just to allow the pain to be there, to allow the process of being a human to evolve you, to actually experience the experience that you're having.

If you have been left, that is what's real. And you can use that to make yourself stronger. You can use that to love yourself more. You can use that to show up in an elevated way. Or you can use it to destroy yourself by booze and food and porn and escaping. And so, make a conscious decision there between those two.

And then, the next thing I want to encourage you to do is what I'm calling an identity power grab. And what you do when you're in a relationship often is you start establishing your identity in relation to this other person.

And especially if you've been married for many years, decades, you have an identity associated with it. You're this person's wife, this person's husband. You have the same group of friends. You have kids together. You have experiences. You have history. You have a life together.

And when you've come to the position where somebody's left you after you've established a long life, you need to take your power back. You need to take your identity back. And so, I call it an identity power grab because you get to decide who you are and who you want to be now.

In almost all relationships, we lose a sense of our identity in the other person because we are incorporating our wants with theirs. And we are accommodating their desires and accommodating and compromising in ways that we may not even realize that we're doing.

And so, when a relationship changes, you can really step back and go, "Wait, let me reevaluate all these things in my life. How many of these things was I doing because I was in this relationship? And how many things do I want to stop doing or do I want to change or where do I want to go or what do I really want? Do I even like this house? Do I even like this city? Do I even like these people? Do I even want to keep the same friends if I'm in a different relationship?"

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Or if it's a job where you've been fired, do you even want to stay in that line of work, or is this an opportunity for you to maybe do something else? You can ask yourself all those questions and make decisions to get your identity back.

When you make decisions, your power is released. Your power in your life is released and you are able to take back any kind of powerlessness you feel if this other person has made a decision against your will.

And you can say, "I want to have these kinds of flowers and I want to drive this kind of car and this is what I'm going to eat and I'm no longer going to do these other things," like bringing that back to yourself and deciding with that decision power who you want to be is going to be incredibly important during this time.

By the way – and this is kind of a sidenote for anyone, even if you're not being left – revisiting and having an identity power grab in all your relationships, I think, is a fun practice to do. I don't recommend you do it all the time because sometimes if you're doing an identity power grab, it's hard to find some want-match common ground.

But if you've been in a relationship for a really long time or if someone is behaving in a way that you don't like or if they've left you, it's a real good opportunity for you to kind of go back and say, "Would I choose all of these things again? And if not, what do I choose now?"

The next thing that has been very helpful for many of my clients – and this is especially true for my clients who have been left and yet they share children with this person, so they need to go on having a relationship with this person that they're furious at for leaving them. And they want to be able to raise children with them in a compatible way but they've gotten so angry and there's been so much disruption in their relationship that it's difficult to do.

And so, what I recommend that they do is write the manual for that other person. And I have them sit down and say, "What is it you want this other person to do? How do you want them to behave? What do you wish they

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would do more often? How do you wish they would talk to you? Do you want them to stay with you? Do you want them to take the kids? Do you want them to pay you a certain amount of money?" Everything.

Just write down everything. If you could create the operating manual for this person, what would you have them do so you could be delighted and you could be so happy?

And then, what you're going to do with that manual is you're going to let it all go. You're going to recognize that you don't have power over another adult. They have complete free will with their life. You can ask for what you want. But my guess is, if they're leaving you, you've probably asked them to stay if you don't want them to leave, and they've probably said no.

And so, you start to feel the powerlessness you have over someone else's agency, over someone else's free will. And so, it's important for you to empty that out of our brain, empty out all the things you want them to do, all the things you wish they would recognize, things that you do that you think they should do, "Well, I don't act like that. They shouldn't act like that."

And really make sure that it's clear and documented. And then let it all go. Do whatever it takes to release that manual, that operating manual back to that person. And come to terms with other people get to be who they are. They get to make their own decisions. They get to live their own life.

And their decisions may affect you. Their decisions may be in your C-line. But you are responsible for the rest of that model. And when you aren't managing your own thoughts because you're so busy trying to get them to change and behave differently, you lose all the power in your own life and you will start to feel so helpless.

The more you try to control other human beings, the more helpless you are going to feel. And the more you're going to try and control them. And that's how we end up in these deep spirals of pain, because we're trying to control how the other person behaves so we don't have to feel the grief, so we don't have to feel the loss, so we don't have to feel the anger. Instead of simply letting the other person live the life that they're choosing to live,

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they're going to anyway, and processing that emotion and monitoring and managing the rest of your Model, the rest of your thoughts.

That being said, once you have gone through those first four steps, once you have grieved and cried and felt your emotions, stopped beating yourself up, and you've loved yourself and you've taken so much good care of yourself, once you've gotten support and you have a good therapist or you have a good life coach who's on your side, who's helping you work through your own thoughts on this, who's helping you get your power back, after you've done your identity power grab by really deciding again everything you want for yourself and your life, then you've written your manual and you've written down what you wish they would do and then you've let it go, then and only then do you start planning your future.

You start planning where you want to go, what you want to do. You start giving yourself 30, 60, 90-day goals. Where can you focus all this excess energy that you're going to have now that you're not in this relationship? And you start picking goals that command your attention, that will require you to do something difficult, that will make you feel proud of yourself, that will feel true to your true desire, what's in your heart, what is it you actually want to do over these next months and years?

I can't emphasize how important it is to actually write it down, to actually put down on paper the timeframes, the result you want to create, why you want to create it, and to spend as much time as you can in your future, to be pulled and defined by your future instead of by your past, to recognize your future as your property, to do with what you will.

And you may want this other person in your life and they've chosen not to be in your life, so then what? Then you have a new circumstance to create from. What is it that maybe you thought about doing a long time ago that you gave up on? What if you could be or do or have anything you want that isn't this other person? What else is there for you?

How might this be happening for you in some ways? How might you use this as a springboard to the next level of your future? When you live from

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your future, when your future defines your A-line, when you are living into a vision of yourself, it gives you purpose. It gives you power. It gives you action. It gives you something to focus on other than the fact that somebody left you and you didn't want them to.

Write down all of those things, all of those goals, and put timelines on them and put them on your calendar. Now, listen, I will tell you all, there will be days you don't want to get up. There will be days when you've processed so much grief you don't know if you can keep going. This is not new.

People have been in relationships and had their heart broken many, many, many times. It's part of the experience of evolving as a human. Some people had their heart broken after a year. Some people have their heart broken after 30 years. Some people have their heart broken after 50 years.

But each person who processed the pain and utilized it in order to make themselves stronger and go to the next opportunity for themselves can look back on that heartbreak and see that it was just part of their life and it did pass and that their personal happiness wasn't destroyed in the process, that there are so many more opportunities for growth and truth and love.

Do not let someone leaving you define you in a negative way. Have it define you in a positive way. Have it be something that turned out to support you because you had to rely on you.

One of the things that can be very helpful is to complete the relationship. I know for me in my divorce, one of the things that was really important is that we completed the marriage part of our relationships so we can move on with the parenting friendship for the rest of our life part of our relationship, so having a completion was really important for us. And I recommend it for you. And it doesn't mean you have to do it with that other person. You can just complete it personally with yourself.

Keep asking yourself, what can you control? And then ask yourself, what can't you control? And then be willing to let go of everything you can't control.

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What is it you want now? What can you create now? As you heal and go through the process of competing the relationship and you see the light, you see the future, you see the possibility, ask yourself, what can you create? Who can you be? What do you want? And then step into that next version of yourself.

It's a process you. You have to go through the pain. There are stages of it. But when you come out of it, you will either have used it to make yourself stronger and love yourself more, or you can use it to destroy yourself.

The other person doesn't have the power to make that decision. Only you do. You've got this. You can handle this. You can come out stronger on the other side. Have a beautiful week, everyone.

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