

Ep #414: Thought Audit



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With Your Host

Brooke Castillo

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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.

Well, good morning, everyone. Right now, I'm on my walk again, where it's very noisy and loud and the sound quality isn't that great. But I'm inspired and I have ideas in my head. And this is where I usually get my ideas for a podcast.

But today, for some reason, ideas are coming so fast and furious, I can't type them fast enough. So, I just jumped on here to go ahead and record this podcast.

And the idea is, having a thought audit. And one of the reasons why I was thinking about this today is I am very aware of what's going on in my mind when I wake up in the morning, where my thoughts go. And it usually is very indicative of what discipline I'm using in terms of my life and my mind and the buffering I'm doing and the indulging that I'm doing.

So, I want to give this to you as kind of an opportunity for you to do the same auditing on yourself, to see where you are. Not in a way to judge yourself or be critical of yourself. But just as an awareness tool.

So, let me just cover briefly what buffering and indulging is, so you understand what I mean by that, in case you're not a long-time listener. Buffering is when we take action in order to avoid feeling something.

So, we'll go and eat or go on social media or watch porn or overdrink or take drugs. There's lots of things that we do in order not to feel. And some of those things may seem like healthy things. Some people use exercise for buffering, for example, or work for buffering.

And so, it will seem like it's a positive thing. But any time you're doing something in order not to feel, it's to buffer away that feeling.

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Indulging is what we walk about when we allow ourselves to indulge in nonproductive emotion, where we kind of obsess in worry or in anxiety or in self-doubt in a way that gets us spinning around and around, not moving us anywhere. We end up feeling like victims and we feel bad and then we feel sorry for ourselves for feeling bad because we're indulging in the emotion of feeling sorry for ourselves.

So, this is something all of us do on the regular. We try to avoid feeling, or we indulge in emotion that's not serving us, which is not the same as processing emotion. It's actually just feeling and reacting to an emotion in a very nonproductive way.

And you'll know the difference because when you're processing an emotion, you're allowing it to be there in a way that connects you with yourself. And when you're indulging in an emotion, it actually connects you with some kind of blame game with the external environment.

So, the way that I know where I'm kind of at in terms of managing my mind is when I wake up in the morning, the quality of thoughts that originate from the beginning and what I spend my day thinking about, my brain is this amazing tool that I can use to create in the world, that I can use to come up with new ideas and come up with solutions and help people and coach people.

And it's the most precious thing that I have in order to love people and be there for them. And when I use my brain in that way, I create so much positive momentum for myself that it's almost like a train in my brain that just keeps perpetuating solutions and love and ideas and creativity.

And when I wake up in the morning, I have to write stuff down and think about what I can do to increase all of those things in my life. And those are my highest quality thoughts.

And sometimes, what happens is I get into a buffering, indulging spiral and then that's what I wake up with and think throughout the day, are very low-quality thoughts that don't create any momentum. They just spin around on themselves, perpetuate buffering, perpetuate blaming, perpetuate inaction.

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And if you can just allow yourself to be aware of this pattern that you may have as well, you can change it gently and you can redirect yourself.

And the way that I recommend that is just doing a thought audit, just eavesdrop on your own mind and watch yourself thinking. And maybe take a gander at the level of quality your thinking is at.

Are you thinking negative thoughts about someone else? Are you thinking gossipy thoughts? Are you thinking about when you can get, you know, your next yummy treat or your next drink or when you can get on social media? Or are you perpetuating competition and jealousy through social media? Are you indulging in feeling sorry for yourself and blaming?

Just notice it as a level of quality of thought that you're having. And the way I like to think about it is, don't try and aggressively change your thinking. It's almost like you have to gently move your brain like you're moving a boat rudder just over here a little bit. Let's just turn away from thinking about that.

I think a lot about when I was younger and I used to obsess about my body and about food and about what I was going to eat and about what I did eat and about my thighs and how my body looked and how much I weighed and how much body fat percentage there was and how many calories were in every single thing that I ate.

And I used this precious brain of mine, this amazing tool and device to go around and around about my own weight with myself. and I see now that my brain could have been put to much better use. It could have been used to create things.

Instead, I was basically beating the crap out of myself and also using my brain to loop on itself and feel sorry for myself. So, I see that period of my life as being unnecessarily unproductive. I read every diet book there was. I tried to figure out calorie counts in everything. I just feel like of all the things I could have used my brain for, that was not a very good productive use of it.

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I don't regret it. I don't beat myself up over it. I just notice when I'm doing that now. So, for example, if you wake up in the morning and you think about the night before or you think about the day before and you try to find things that you did wrong the day before or things you wish you hadn't said or what you think other people thought of you or how many likes you got on that Instagram post or why that other person got so many more likes than you did and why aren't you as pretty as them? That kind of level of thinking.

Just notice, where is that thinking getting you? And you might want to, when you do an audit of your own thinking, is just grab one of those thoughts and just see what it's actually creating for you in your life and see how that lower level of quality thinking is usually an unconscious program that's running in the background, that's easy to lock into, that's easy to pattern because your brain is very good at it.

And then, notice when you audit your brain at the highest quality level, what is your brain, the exact same brain being used for?

I love the idea that tools can be used to hurt other people, like a hammer can be used to hurt someone, or it can be used to build a house. And what are you using your brain for? As a tool, what are you using your brain for in your life, as a contribution to yourself or to the people that are around you or the work that you're doing? And how much of it is being used against yourself? How many of those thoughts are used against other people, blaming, indulging, and buffering?

And how many of those thoughts are really creating and loving and producing what you most want to produce in your own life?

And I will say that there have been periods in my life, even recently, where I've had weeks at a time that are so unproductive, that are just not producing at the level that I want to produce, and are obsessing and thinking about things that are never going to get me anywhere.

And I try to gently steer myself away from that because I see that it's not productive. But it's also very – that woman just ran by me. She had her music on and she was singing at the top of her lungs. Get it, girl.

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So, I just see that it's not going to get me anywhere. But it feels, in some weird way, comforting to obsess about it. And so, I notice myself just wanting to go over and over situations in my mind or go over and over beating myself up for a certain reason or feeling bad about something for a period of time.

And we have to be aware of that because it's illogical that it feels good in some way. It feels familiar. It feels normal. And so, we actually end up producing results we don't want, which perpetuates more thoughts about that thing.

So, an easy question to kind of help us get to the point where this thought audit would be helpful is to ask, what do you want to use your brain for? What do you want to be thinking about? What is the best use of that tool today, right now?

Is it obsessing about how your house isn't clean or you ate 40 Oreos yesterday? Is that helping? Is that using your brain for the best purposes of your life? Or do you want to be thinking about how you can create something that could help people, create something that could help yourself, create thoughts in your mind that can make you feel worthy and important and loved by your own brain?

The brain has the power to create all of that for you. So, when you do this thought audit, it's kind of like a thought download. So, just let all the thoughts pour out. Do not judge them. Do not edit them. Do not try and fix them. Just put them all on paper.

And then, as you go through and kind of qualify them as high-level quality thoughts, don't be tempted to judge yourself. Don't be tempted to begrudge yourself because your thoughts aren't good enough. That's just a whole other thought on top of a bunch of negative thoughts. Don't do that.

Just be curious. Be interested. Notice and sit with it for a minute. And then get a new sheet of paper and say, "In a perfect world, in my life where I could choose and there were no involuntary thoughts, this is what I would

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have my brain thinking about. This is the thought that I would be having involuntarily,” and write them down.

Now, that will take some creativity. That will take some courage. “I love you,” could be one of them. A thought that you’re thinking about yourself, “I love the world. I love the people in it. I love this opportunity. I am up for these challenges. I’m excited about solving problems. I’m excited about living into the purpose of evolving my life. I want to help people. I want to help myself. I want to accept everything about myself in a way that’s loving and kind and productive.”

Just let your brain come up with the best thoughts it could possibly think. And listen, this is a skill. This is a practice. This is something that you may need to really focus on establishing because you may not have any practice doing this. This may not be something that you’re accustomed to doing.

And if you do it in a way where there’s no pressure, where you don’t have to do it right, where you don’t have to come up with flowery thoughts, it’s just, if you could choose to program your brain, if you could put in – do you remember those CD-ROMs that we used to put in our computers, open them up? What if you could just a CD-ROM, an audiobook of thoughts into your brain, what would you want them to say?

And the thing that I think is important and has been really important to me, is to have that CD-ROM be in your own voice. You talking to you about you and your life.

Oftentimes, when I ask someone, “What is your relationship like with yourself? What is your opinion of yourself?” when I’m coaching someone – and way more often than I would like, they put their head down and they shake their head and they say, “Not good.”

Now, listen, that’s okay. That’s okay. Human brains. Not a big deal. And do you want to do something about that? That is completely within your own power to change, to make different, to have the quality of your thoughts be

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at a level 10, to practice thinking thoughts that actually serve you, that you could start believing.

Now, the other piece of this that I think is important is that there are a lot of practices out there that encourage affirmations or pretend positivity. Now, those of you who understand the Model know that that doesn't work. Because you only know if the thought is, quote unquote, working if you feel it in the F line. You have to believe it in the T line to feel it in the F line.

So, when people say to me, "I believe this thought," and I can see the effect, I can see their experience of the thought in their body, I know that they're not feeling it. I know that they think they're believing it, but they don't feel that they believe it.

And this is an important distinction between thinking high-quality thoughts that you can believe versus saying affirmations that you don't believe. So, after you've created this thought audit and you've written a list of high-quality thoughts that you want to put in that CD-ROM of your brain, you have to actually practice believing them.

You have to actually sit with them. And you might have to sit with them just enough so you can believe them. Maybe you're not going to believe that you have the most beautiful body in the world. But maybe you believe that you have a body that is useful, a body that is healthy, a body that gets you from space to space.

And maybe you work up to thoughts that you can believe and you have aspirational high-quality thoughts that you're working towards.

I can't imagine a more useful practice for us to do than to program our brains with the exact thoughts that will get us the feelings and the actions and the results that we want in our lives.

We don't just watch our brains and judge them. We watch our brains and decide to change them if we want to, decide to have a different perspective.

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I go on a walk every day. I'm actually on my walk right now talking to y'all. And recently, I've been doing a lot of, like, quiet walking where I don't have an audiobook playing, I'm not talking on the phone. I'm just watching myself think. I'm just watching what my brain does when it's just observed and not necessarily supervised.

And as much work as I've done and as much as I understand my brain and as much thinking as I've done on purpose, it still goes wayward. It still obsesses. It still wants to buffer.

I gently bring it back. I gently direct it with creativity. And that's the last practice that I think I want to share with you, especially those of you who are entrepreneurs and creators and are wanting to create new combinations of things in the world, giving your brain a powerful question to answer, to contemplate, to work on is a very good use of your brain's energy.

How can I love more? How can I help my clients lose weight? How can I help my clients feel better? How can I help my clients stop judging themselves? These are questions I ask myself all the time. What can I do? How would I be used? What are my talents that are underutilized right now and how can I use them more?

And your brain will go to work to access all the resources, to filter all the inputs, to come up with answers for you. It is a magic machine in there. The wisdom that can be created by your own brain when you're having high-quality thinking, high-quality thoughts and you're not judging yourself is astounding.

There are people that I coach all the time that tell me they're not smart enough. I say, "Listen, it's not about that." Your brain and your intelligence is not about your creativity. It's asking. It's putting different combinations together. It's producing what your brain is meant to produce.

When you tell yourself, "I'm not as smart as that person, so I can't create what they're creating..." good. You're not meant to create what they're

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creating. You're meant to create what you're creating. What does your brain want to create? What is possible in there for you?

When you're not judging, when you're not having low-quality thoughts, when you're not indulging and when you're not buffering, what is possible for you? I want you to find out. Give yourself that opportunity. Give yourself that choice.

You have a beautiful, amazing brain in there. See what's possible when you create a nurturing, nourishing environment for it to create for you. That tool is yours. It doesn't matter how much money you have. It's the most priceless thing you have, your brain.

Everything that's ever been created, manmade creation as made from a brain. What will yours do when you do a thought audit and you direct it consciously? I can't wait to find out. have a beautiful week, everyone. Talk to you soon. Bye.

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