

## Ep #423: Proactive Relationships



### Full Episode Transcript

With Your Host

**Brooke Castillo**

## Ep #423: Proactive Relationships

You are listening to *The Life Coach School Podcast* with Brooke Castillo, episode 423.

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 friends. How are you? I'm back in Scottsdale. I brought all the kids with me. When I say all the kids, you may be confused. I have many adopted chosen family members in my life, which is basically my children, Christian and Connor, and all of my extended children.

This summer, it will be Camo, Mason, Eyob, Zach, Stephen sometimes, and Jared sometimes. And we are about to do project employ-the-children and I have asked them all to come and spend the summer with me to help me create an amazing social media presence.

And as many of you know, I haven't done a lot of very personal stuff on social media, not a lot of behind-the-scenes, not a lot of kind of what we call personal posts. And so one of the things that we wanted to do is really up-level that and start adding that to our social media at The Life Coach School. And we're also about to start a TikTok channel.

So it's going to be a fun summer hanging out with the kids, showing you all behind the scenes, showing you what it's like to live my life, have some rich people shit behind-the-scenes stuff that we're always laughing about, and see a little bit more of my personal side. So I'm looking forward to that.

I am loving Scottsdale. It is so gorgeous right now. Everything is blooming. So you don't think about things blooming in the desert, but they really do bloom. And it is gorgeous here.

So I wanted to create a podcast today called Proactive Relationships and it's because so many of my friends recently have seemed to be struggling in their love relationships. And I feel like I've been doing a lot of coaching and a lot of advice around relationships and marriages and dating relationships.

## Ep #423: Proactive Relationships

And I feel like this is something that I am exceptionally good at when it comes to being really proactive and conscious in the relationships that I have. So I wanted to share with you a little bit about my philosophy there, and how I approach relationships, and how I coach other people to approach relationships.

So there's two ways to be in a relationship. There's proactive and reactive. And reactive is really how we act in relationships to other people's actions. So if we are reactive in relationships, we're waiting for the other person to do something so we can react to it, instead of being ahead of whatever they're doing and really being conscious and making a decision and being proactive.

So for example, if you are being reactive, or what we could call passive in a relationship, you may be waiting for someone else to make all the plans in the relationship, to ask you to go out and to do things, to ask you to change, to ask you to show up in certain ways, to ask you to do things to "make them happy."

And I've heard a lot of people say things like, "I didn't do that because she didn't ask me to," or, "I didn't even think about doing that," or, "I didn't even know that she would like that." And that's because - if you're saying that, that's because you're in a very passive stance in your relationship.

You're waiting for someone else in the relationship to tell you what they want or tell you what to do. And I want to recommend that you turn that around for yourself, and that you start being proactive, not necessarily only for what they want, but also for what you want. And I'll break it down for you.

So the first question I want you to ask yourself is, what are your expectations of you? Not what are your expectation of the person in the relationship, but what are your expectations of yourself in the relationship? How do you want to be?

And I've said this to a lot of, I would say my guy friends recently, like, how do you want to be as a boyfriend? How do you want to be as a husband?

## Ep #423: Proactive Relationships

How do you want to be as a man in this person's life? And the answers that I have received are, "Huh?" Or, "That's a really good question, I haven't ever thought of it that way."

And so I want you to think about this. What kind of wife, husband, partner, friend do you want to be? And what are you expecting of yourself in that relationship? I feel like it's very different when you set expectations for yourself, rather than having someone else set them for you.

I feel like when we have a sense of our own agency, we feel like we are showing up for not just the other person, but also for ourselves as the highest version we can be of ourselves. So when I'm in a relationship, I always expect myself to be self-aware and I always expect myself to love as well as I know how to love.

I feel like every relationship is an opportunity for us to bring more love into the world and to love someone in a way that maybe they have never been loved before. And so I ask of myself that I show up in a way that distributes, shares, and becomes love in that relationship.

So ask yourself, is that an expectation that you have of yourself? I expect myself to be on time, to communicate, to be respectful, to show up with energy, to not complain, to be willing to hold my side of a conversation, to be thoughtful about maybe making plans or creating opportunities for fun.

I expect myself to show up dressed and presentable and ready and clean, with my hair brushed, in a thoughtful way. So those are just some of my expectations of myself and how I consistently meet those expectations for me.

I expect myself to tell the other person the truth and to be as intimate as is comfortable for both of us. I find that relationships with the most intimacy are always amazing, are always the best relationships, in my opinion.

The second thing you want to ask yourself is what do you want to do for this other person? And what's so interesting about this question is I think many of us really want to do a lot for other people but we don't plan ahead,

## Ep #423: Proactive Relationships

and we don't think about it, and we're not conscious enough about it to actually do it.

It's almost like we procrastinate on our relationship. We wait until something's gone wrong, or the person is needing something before we react. And we don't take a proactive stance on what could I do for them on our date coming up on Friday, or what could I do for them, I know they have this big presentation that they're going to do, or what could I do, I know they're having a long week, or they've been challenged, what could I do for them?

And there's three variations of this that might be helpful. Actually, there's more than three, but one of them is - the question could be, what do you want to do for them and what do you want to do with them? And give yourself maybe a week at a time. What do you want to do for them this week? And what do you want to do with them this week?

I can't tell you how many times I'll say to someone, "Hey, what do you want to do with this person you are with?" And they'll be like, "Oh, I would love to do this," and I said, "Well, have you planned that? Have you thought about that? Have you looked into that?" And they'll say, "No, I've been busy."

And it just takes a minute. I would love to take them to this restaurant, I would love to go with them to the zoo, to a football game, to a baseball game, to a beautiful dinner, for a walk. What is it? Give yourself a minute. What would you like to do with them and for them?

I think there's something so extraordinary about somebody calling me and saying, "Hey, I would love to do this with you. Would you like to do this with me? Let's go do this." For me, it's such a subtle thing but it's so thoughtful from my perspective because I'm usually so proactive in relationships, I'm usually the one making the plans.

So when somebody kind of thinks through and has a plan for me, I don't know why, it's just super touching for me. And then ask yourself this question. What do you want to do with them now and what do you want to do with them later?

## Ep #423: Proactive Relationships

So many plans that could make extraordinary experiences need to happen significantly ahead of time. And so when you ask yourself, what do you want to do with this person now, you may say let's go get some lunch, or let's watch a movie tonight, or let's go to dinner tomorrow.

But what would you like to do with them later, maybe a month from now, a year from now, maybe three weeks from now that you could thoughtfully plan ahead? Again, there is something extraordinary for most people when someone has taken time to plan something ahead of time.

Has anyone ever given you something and then they say something like, "Oh, I've been planning this for a year, I've been planning this for weeks, I've been planning this for months for you?" There's something amazing about that. This is something you really put some time into, some thought into.

And it doesn't even have to be a lot of time. It's just time ahead of time that seems to make things very meaningful. I'll also say that planning amazing experiences is so much easier when you have a lot of time. You can ask anyone on my team, when I try and plan something last minute for me or my friends or my loved ones, it's always so much harder.

It's more expensive, it's harder to get in, they have to work so much harder. But if I say, "Hey, I want to take my friends to this comedy club and then out to dinner at this restaurant late in July," they have plenty of time to plan an extraordinary evening. And then when we get to that evening, it's so extraordinary and it seems like it took a lot of effort, and it didn't because we planned it way ahead of time.

So the two questions are, what do you want to do for them? What do you want to do with them? What do you want to do now? What do you want to do later?

The other thing I want to recommend that you do is you sit down and have a conversation with this person and ask them, what are the types of things that you would love to do with me? What are the types of things that you

## Ep #423: Proactive Relationships

would love for me to do for you? What are the types of things you'd like to do now? What are the types of things you would like to do later?

Being in that space with someone to kind of provide a space of inquiry where you're showing interest into what they actually want is a very intimate thing to do, a very proactive, intimate thing to do. Now, I want to give you a word of warning.

I don't think you should only do things they want to do. I think you should also do things you want to do and that you plan ahead that they don't know about. And maybe sometimes you'll hit, and sometimes you'll miss. But I think for many people, the surprise of something is really fun. That something that they didn't tell you that they wanted to do that you just planned that you thought they may like to do I think is fun for people.

But I also am always exasperated when someone's super upset for what someone did for their birthday. It would have been so easily solved had the person just asked, hey, what do you want to do for your birthday? What can I do for you for your birthday?

And you can always sprinkle in surprises, especially if the person loves surprises and wants you to be thoughtful ahead of time. Just give yourself some time to really think about what is it that they've told you that they love to do that you could maybe add a cool spin on, or you could create some surprise around.

The third question is, what are your expectations of them? And listen, it should be more than nothing. And stay with me. It should be more than nothing, and your happiness should not be tied to it. So it's okay to have expectations of people, it's okay to have expectations of loved ones in your life.

And I believe it should be a conversation where you tell the person what your expectations are. Now yes, this is somewhat of a manual that you're going to have for the person. We all do. We have expectations of the person that we want them to deliver on.

## Ep #423: Proactive Relationships

And we only get into trouble for two reasons. One is we don't tell them what those expectations are, we don't set them up to win, and then we're very frustrated when they don't do it, which is insane. You should always tell people what your expectations are of them.

And the second part is don't determine your emotional life based on whether they follow through on your expectations or not. One of my expectations that I have with most everyone is I want you to tell me the truth about what you genuinely want to do.

I want to be in a relationship with someone who does what they want to do. I don't want someone to be in a relationship with me who is doing a bunch of stuff they don't want to do all the time for me at their own expense. That doesn't mean that every once in a while in relationships, we aren't going to do something for the other person that we don't want to do.

But ultimately, we want to do it because we want them to experience whatever it is that we're doing for them. So it's important that you tell yourself the truth about that. I am doing this thing for this person because I want them to have this experience and it's more important than me not doing it.

That is very different than doing something at your own expense, and then being resentful about it. So tell the person that you are in a relationship with what your expectations are and why you have those expectations. And then also, if you're very smart, you will tell them you do not have to do any of these things for me to be happy. I am responsible for my own happiness.

Now, there may be dealbreakers. You may say, "My expectation is that you stay faithful to me. My expectation is that you come home on time. My expectation is that we move in together, or that we get married, or that we have children." Whatever those expectations are, there may be some that are dealbreakers.

So this is why it's very important to communicate them upfront what your expectations are, because if there's a dealbreaker, solved upfront. You



## Ep #423: Proactive Relationships

want to get it solved before you get in too deep. You also want to know where your want matches are.

So when you both sit down and express your expectations to each other, you're going to say I expect you to be on time, and you love being on time. Boom. I expect you to be faithful, and you don't want to be with anyone else. Boom. I expect that we'll get married someday, and you want to get married. Boom. This is amazing, look at all these want matches.

But then you'll also maybe find some that aren't want matches. I really expect you to spend all day on the weekend with me, I just want to be with you all weekend because I don't get to see you during the week. Well, that's not something that I'm going to follow through on because my weekends, it's really important that I go hang out with my friends, or that I have time to myself, or that I go hiking with my hiking friend, whatever.

So you'll find where your want matches are, you'll find where they aren't, and then you'll also find your dealbreakers. And I can't emphasize how important it is to categorize these as a team. Here's where we have want matches, here's where we have non-want matches that are agreeable to us, and here is where we have dealbreakers.

Get the dealbreakers discussed ahead of time. And you may change your dealbreakers, you may decide that they're not dealbreakers once you've had a discussion, or you may decide that that's it. If you can't follow that expectation then I'm out. And I'm not going to follow that expectation so I am out. And then you have them very clear.

The biggest issues I see are a lack of communication on expectations and then pure rage, frustration, and reaction when someone isn't meeting your expectation that they didn't even know that you had, and we're never going to agree to.

Or someone has told the other person that they have a want match, they told them that they will fulfill the expectation, and then continues not to do it. And that's a non-want match, and that may be a dealbreaker. And so that's why it's so important that you be honest about your expectations.

## Ep #423: Proactive Relationships

So once you know what your want matches are, go back to suggestion number two. If you know that you love to do something and you know that your partner loves it when you do that thing, plan to do it. Plan to do it now, plan to do it later, plan to do it with them, plan to do it for them. Put yourself in a proactive mode. It's the easiest thing in the world.

This is what I think is so fascinating. I have people say to me, "I think people just want to be with you because you make them happy, you tell them all these wonderful things all the time." Like yes, and it's not hard. I just tell people the truth about what I see in them that I think is extraordinary. It feels great. I feel like I have lots of people in my life that do the same thing with me, so it's just a love fest.

I miss you, I love you, I love that you do this, I love that you're winning, I love that you're succeeding, I love that you're getting through this challenge, whatever it is. Celebrate each other.

And the last one that is really important for you to be able to do in a relationship is to ask yourself the question, how do you often habitually react? And do you want to change it?

So if you are someone who maybe is anxious in relationships and you notice that sometimes you fly off the handle when your expectations aren't met, or when you don't know what the other person's expectations are, you start getting frustrated, you haven't heard from them, you start making up stories, kind of like I was talking about in the last podcast.

And do you then react? And in what ways do you react that may be harming your relationship? And when you make a list of these things, when you really sit down and look at, okay, I am reacting and this is the negative impact this is having, and here's how I want to be more proactive in my relationships.

So one of the things that is really important in many relationships is setting expectations around communication. And so for me, it's really important that I let people know, especially friends in my life, that I'm not a very good texter. I don't text back right away. And that it doesn't mean I don't love

## Ep #423: Proactive Relationships

you, it doesn't mean that I'm not interested in what you had to say, it doesn't mean that I don't want you to text me.

What it means is that I'm not someone that's on my phone all the time. I don't like to be texting when other people are in my presence. I like to be present with the people that I'm with. So if you send me a text and I'm with someone else, I may read that text, but I'm probably not going to respond to you right then.

And it may take a couple days, then I actually may totally forget. And so I set expectations with my friends. Hey, if you text me and you want a response and you haven't heard back from me, please just keep texting me. It won't bother me at all. And if it's important to you that I respond, that's the way to get a response from me.

And if you want to talk to me on the phone, please just make sure you text me first so we can figure out a time that works because if I'm with someone else, I probably won't be answering the phone. Just really clear expectations.

This is especially important when you're dating someone. What are your expectations around texting? Are you a good texter, meaning do you text back right away? Do you acknowledge texts? And when somebody can explain to you the type of texter that they are and how they're going to respond or not, you will save yourself so much drama.

If someone says, "I'm not a good texter," you won't make up stories of they don't like me, they're mad that I texted them, they're wondering why I'm bothering them, they don't want me to talk to them anymore. We can make up crazy stories.

And this has happened to me where I didn't text someone back and I totally forgot, and then they were super upset and thought I was really upset with them, and nothing could have been further from the truth. They text me back and said, "Hey, do you think we should talk about this?" I had no idea what they were talking about.

## Ep #423: Proactive Relationships

So had I been more clear with that person, “Hey, just so you know, I’m not really a responsive texter,” that would have saved a lot of drama. So what are your habitual ways of reacting? And how do you want to change those things?

How do you want to - if you’re someone that gets anxious when someone doesn’t text you back and you start freaking out and making up stories and then ghosting them, or blocking them, or texting them craziness, maybe that’s something you want to change.

Or if you’re someone that is always snapping or getting resentful or yelling, maybe that is something that you want to change so you can be more proactive and more preventative with things that may cause you to yell if you’re someone that yells.

If you go through this process with your relationships, you can be in much more control over yourself and how you show up in a relationship. And I think that’s such a beautiful thing. I think most of us want to be the best partners we can be, be the best friends we can be. And one of the easiest, most simple ways of doing that is being proactive, thinking ahead, setting expectations and asking for expectations.

All of these things prevent reactions. Understanding want matches is like, the most delightful thing. Two of you who have similar want matches can just exponentially increase the joy in your life by doing the thing that you want to do, that you know they want you to do as well over and over and over again.

And understanding that your expectations of your partner may not be something that’s a want match for them, and not taking it personally, and having communication that sets those expectations based on who you want to be in that relationship, and how you know that you are, and what you want to work on, and how you want to maybe be less reactive.

I have done all these things in my own relationships, and I’ve seen relationships change with just these simple steps, just these simple things

## **Ep #423: Proactive Relationships**

that we can do to be proactive, to plan, to show up for the people that we love. Have a beautiful week everyone, I'll talk to you soon. Bye.

Hey, if you enjoy listening to this podcast, you have to come check out Self-Coaching Scholars. It's my monthly coaching program where we take all this material and we apply it. We take it to the next level and we study it. Join me over at the [TheLifeCoachSchool.com/join](https://TheLifeCoachSchool.com/join). Make sure you type in the [TheLifeCoachSchool.com/join](https://TheLifeCoachSchool.com/join). I'd love to have you join me in Self-Coaching Scholars. See you there.