

## Ep #433: The Art of Feeling Bad



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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 hello, my friends. Welcome to the podcast. It has been an epic, epic couple weeks since I recorded a podcast and I just want to tell you a few things before I get started.

The first is I turned 50 years old. I had the most incredible, amazing birthday with some of my best friends. And we did a photoshoot with David Yarrow. If you want to see some of that, you can check it out on my very brand new Instagram account, @therealbrookecastillo.

Yes, I started my first social media account all by myself at the age of 50. And I'm posting every day. If you'd like to check it out, I'm doing Rules to Live By that show clips of my daily life. So I am on fire, I'm excited, I am 50. Let's go.

Today, I want to talk to you about the art of feeling bad. And I think that it's underrated. I've talked a lot on this podcast about what life is in terms of being 50:50, and in terms of coming in to this human world, coming to this planet and being kind of duped into believing that we're supposed to be happy all the time, and being trained to believe that we're aiming to be good all the time, and we're aiming to be happy all the time.

And when I discovered the concept for myself that life shouldn't be about always being happy and always being good, it should be a balance of those two things, and we should have a balance of positive and negative emotion. And even though our thoughts cause our feelings, that does not mean that we want to feel good all the time.

We do not want to be in some toxic positivity, pretend, people-pleasing perfection. We want to be humans who are balanced on the planet. And we

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want to feel the full range of what it is like to be alive, which means the full range of emotions.

And as I have been doing a lot of study lately on emotions, I have been fascinated by the interplay between physical pain and emotional pain. And I've talked about that on the podcast before. And talking to lots of my friends and lots of my clients about how this interplay happens in the brain, and how the brain actually can cause physical symptoms of pain as an alternative to emotional pain.

And if we can recognize the errors in terms of repression of emotional pain, we may possibly have less physical pain. If our brain isn't trying to distract us from our emotional pain because we're actually processing it, we may be able to release some physical symptoms of emotional pain. So that's what I want to talk about today.

I want to talk about the art of feeling bad. I want to talk about how we can get better at feeling bad. Okay, as I'm saying this, there's a little deer eating my flowers. I'm in Colorado, and these deer are not afraid of me at all and they like to eat all of my flowers. And they're so cute. I sometimes let them.

Okay, I digress. So, let's talk about and review the concept of 50:50. Half of our emotions will be positive and half of our emotions will be negative. And we can view that on a continuum throughout our entire life, which I really actually enjoy doing, or you can review it on a continuum of an entire day, or an entire week.

Whatever way is most useful for you to think about it is the way I want you to think about it. The way that serves you the most. One of the reasons why this concept has been so life-changing to so many people is because they have started to give themselves permission to feel negative emotion and not to feel bad about themselves for having it.

In fact, recognizing that that is normal. And I want to take it a step further and say not only is it normal, it's important for us to learn how to process, learn how to feel, learn how to be in emotional pain in a way that serves us and serves our life, instead of taking away from our life.

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So let's talk about what happens when we don't do this well. And what happens when we don't do this well is we start to feel negative emotion and we start to react to it, indulge in it, or repress it, or escape from it. Repressing and escaping from it are kind of the same thing.

So I just want to talk briefly, when you start feeling a negative vibration, when you start feeling urges, when you start feeling compulsions to get out of negative emotion, I want you to just be aware of that. Just notice it. Just notice that you are rejecting 50% of your life. You're rejecting the part of your life that is negative, that is painful, that is uncomfortable.

And when you do that, when you cover that up with some buffering, maybe you pick up your phone, maybe you go eat something, maybe you drink something, maybe you pop a pill, maybe you watch porn, whatever it is that you do, reading romance novels, whatever it is, you go to the place that is away from your current reality and your current emotional life.

What's important to remember is that emotion is not going away. It's simply just being pushed away. It's being repressed and you are escaping it. When you are done with your escape, that emotion will still be there and you will probably also have now the consequence of the buffering, of the escape, the negative effect of that will now be compounded on top of the negative emotion.

So one of the things that is very simple to think about as an idea is when you start to feel negative emotion, you start feeling a compulsion or an urge to escape it, just stop. Let the emotion be there. Let the urge be there. Let the discomfort be there.

And one of the ways - here is the art of allowing it to be there - is to witness it. To become the observer of it. To watch it from the outside. And the way that we do that is by describing it. Because when you go into your intellectual mind to describe an emotion, you get some relief from that emotion.

And you notice yourself experiencing that emotion so you recognize that you are not it. You are the pure energy that is experiencing it, but you are

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not it. And that is a very important observation and distinction to make. Because when you can watch yourself have an emotion, you don't feel like you're at the mercy of it.

Here are some tips. Say, "This is," and then name the emotion. You might want to get an emotion list off the internet. If you're one of my coaches, you'll have a copy of it. If you're in Scholars, you'll have a copy of it. Look at what is the emotion that I'm experiencing and then just say, "This is," and name it.

This is shame. This is frustration. This is pain. This is grief. This is loss. This is longing. What is the emotion that you are experiencing? Name it. Then the next step is to describe it as a vibration in your body. Describe it to yourself as you are observing it.

I feel it in my chest, I feel it in my stomach, I feel it in my limbs, I feel it in my heart, I feel it in my throat, I feel it in my eyes. Where do you feel this emotion? What is this emotion?

And once you've really kind of embodied the emotion and described it, then you can ask yourself, what is the thought causing it? And if you notice that the thought causing it is something that you believe, that is something true, that is something valid...

So for example, if you've lost a pet, if you've lost a loved one, you may be feeling grief. You may be feeling sad. And if you recognize that the thought is, "I will miss this pet, I will miss this person, I already miss them, I wish they hadn't died," whatever, those might be thoughts that you want to be having. Genuinely want to be having and want to be feeling.

And in that case, just keep opening up to the emotion. Now, other times, you're going to start processing the emotion and observing it and feeling it, and you'll notice that the thought causing it is not a thought you want to be having.

Maybe, "I'm not good enough, or this will never work, or I'm failing," or a thought that's just not useful. Or, "That person doesn't like me, or that

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person doesn't care, or nobody likes me," or whatever. And if you notice that the thought you're thinking is not a thought that is serving you, just notice it. Don't try and change it right away.

Just be like, "Huh, I wonder why I'm thinking this. This thought is not serving me." And what I do at that point is I just say, "This is a thought error. This is a thought error. This is a thought error." That's it. And as I say that, it releases. It relaxes. It doesn't grip onto my brain so hard.

And the emotion that I'm feeling seems to lose all of its intensity. It's just a sentence in my mind causing a vibration in my body. It is a thought error. It is not a thought I want to be having, it's not a thought I believe that is true, it is simply a thought error. That's okay. I can let it go now.

Now, if you find yourself having an emotion you don't want to be having and you have a thought that you don't want to be having, be very careful not to resist it or to indulge in it. Very often, we start getting mad at ourselves for thinking thoughts and we start pushing them away and getting angry, or then we feel hopeless and then we just indulge in the emotion.

I'm just depressed, or I'm just anxious. We kind of give ourselves over to it. We don't want to do either one of those things. We don't want to resist it, we don't want to indulge in it. Even when we know that it's a thought error, we may be tempted to do that. And when we resist and when we indulge, we prolong it.

It's kind of counterintuitive but what we need to do is allow space for the thought error. Allow space for the thought to be there, allow space for the feeling to be there, and more importantly, allow space for the observation to be there without resisting it and without indulging it.

It's like a curiosity that we develop. We don't want to judge our emotions as one being better than another, or one being right or wrong. We want to be open to understanding ourselves, to being curious about ourselves. And when we start judging, we don't get access to our own thinking and why we're thinking the way that we are.

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So if we're curious and we're like, "Huh, I'm having a thought that I'm worthless, I'm having a thought that I'm ugly, I'm having a thought that I'm not good enough," and then when we have that thought we feel shame or we feel ugly or we feel inadequate, and we don't resist it, we don't indulge in it, we don't feel sorry for ourselves about it, we just notice it and allow it and experience it.

And then when we can say a thought error, this is just a thought error, there is a process of releasing it that is almost effortless. It's a simple letting go. We can be curious and thoughtful and kind with ourselves and let it go without having to resist.

One of the reasons why I really want to encourage you to practice this skill is opening up to it, acknowledging it, and releasing it is it will prevent you from reacting to it. If you remember in the Self-Coaching Model, our thoughts create our feelings, and our feelings drive our actions.

And if we are having an emotion and we are reacting to that emotion, if we are acting out that emotion that is caused from a thought error, we are going to be creating results we do not want in our lives. We're going to be creating unintentional results that may end up compounding our negative emotion.

The same is true if we're trying to escape or repress an emotion. We want to make sure that we don't escape, we don't repress, we don't push away. We want to simply allow, simply be in the space of being a human being who has certain emotions, who experiences certain emotions in their life.

This is something that we are not trained to do, we're not really open to doing because we don't watch other people do it, we don't watch our parents do it. It's not a skill that has been developed.

And one of the problems that I see as we kind of become more efficient as humans is there's too many ways to escape. I feel like the downside of our capitalistic society is we are always trying to find ways to give more pleasure.

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There's all the food and all the social media and all of the entertainment is invitations to escape emotions, to repress them, to get away from them. And so we don't learn the skill of actually processing them and opening ourselves up to them and experiencing them without reacting.

A lot of times when I say to a student, "Hey, I want you to learn how to process your emotion," what they interpret that is a reaction to the emotion. So if they're angry, they feel like feeling it means they act it out, they yell at people, they scream at people, they put their foot down. They don't understand that an emotion is just allowing a vibration to course through your body.

It's not reacting to it. It's not repressing it. It's not escaping it. It's just being with it in that mindfulness place of observing yourself be a human. And I am really dedicated and motivated to help young people really learn this skill earlier rather than later.

I tell this story often of one of my friend's sons coming to me and saying - he was trying to get off drugs. And one of the things that he was trying to do was figure out how to live life without them. And I told him, I said, "The reason why you don't want to live your life without drugs is because you don't want to feel your emotions."

But the reason you don't want to feel your emotions is because you never learned how. And when you learn how to feel them, what you recognize is they're not that bad. Once you learn the skill of processing a negative emotion, feeling a negative emotion, of not judging the negative emotion, right?

Because that's what happens. "Oh, I shouldn't feel bad, I should try to feel better right now. There's something wrong with me if I feel bad. I'm bad if I feel bad." And when we get those kinds of messages, then we actually get afraid of our own emotions and we don't experience them in the way that we need to in order to function at the highest level.

When people come to me and they say they don't have to process negative emotion, they don't experience negative emotion, I tell them I don't think



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they're living their life big enough. They're not challenging themselves enough. They're not asking themselves to evolve.

When we are living our lives in a way that is asking us to grow and evolve and to chase our dreams and to get what we want in life, we are going to run up against challenges that will bring up that negative emotion. That is not to say that we don't want to have pleasure, that we don't want to experience positive emotion.

One of the most important things that I've been talking a lot about lately is I have a program called Stop Overdrinking. And the reason I call it Stop Overdrinking is because when you are drinking in order not to feel, there will never be enough alcohol.

When you are trying to escape a negative emotion because you don't know how to process it, and you're doing that day after day after day after day, you are going to be overdrinking. Now, if you want to drink because you want to enjoy yourself or you want to have a cocktail or something like that not as a way to escape an emotion but as a way to enjoy the presence of your friends and share in a cocktail or something like that, it's a very different thing.

And that's not to say that you should or shouldn't do that. That is not for me to say for you. But for you, you want to make sure that anything you do isn't against your own will. What is it you want to do? And is your brain overriding you?

And if you're doing something against your own will, then you know that you're trying to escape an emotion. If you're making a conscious choice and you can take it or leave it, and you often do leave it, then you know that it's simply something that you have balance with and that you're possibly using to enhance your life.

This is true for food for pleasure, for social media for pleasure, for TV for pleasure. So just be honest with yourself and notice, is this compulsive? Is this an urge? Is this a reaction because I don't want to feel? Or am I willing

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to process and feel my emotions on the regular and this is just something I'm choosing to do in moderation as something that balances out my life?

When you develop the skill of not indulging in emotions, non-reaction, non-resistance, non-escape, you will often feel more negative emotion. But in total, it will be less because you won't be feeling bad about feeling bad.

You won't experience half of your life as something that you constantly need to be getting rid of, constantly need to be escaping from. You will have a life that you will accept includes all the juicy, positive, wonderful things that you get to experience in your life, and all the negative experiences that are part of being human.

Frustration, anger, resentment, pain, loneliness, discomfort. What if you could open your life up to all of it? What if one of the reasons why we are here is to experience the fabric of every single emotion? And the more we put ourselves out there and the more big our dreams are, the more people that we interact with, the more experiences that we have, the more positive and negative emotion that we're going to have.

And if we can develop the skill of observing and feeling and processing the bad ones, we will be willing to live bigger lives. Learn the skill. Practice the skill of feeling bad. And when you do that, watch your entire life explode. Have a beautiful week, everyone. I'll talk to you next week. Take care. Bye-bye.

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