

Ep #464: Solve Your Problems



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With Your Host

Brooke Castillo

Ep #464: Solve Your Problems

You are listening to *The Life Coach School Podcast* with Brooke Castillo, episode number 464.

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, beautiful friends. You might be able to hear some water in the background. That is a fountain that is going into the pool that is on the land of Cabo in Mexico where I am right now with my son, Connor, and Mason to watch Christian play in a golf tournament. It is gorgeous here this morning. The sky is perfectly blue. There are palm trees everywhere. I can see the ocean. I'm not mad at all today.

But I woke up this morning, I'm getting some work done. I'm going to have some meetings and record some podcasts. And then go play some pickleball of course. And I've told my son that it's required, pickleball is required as we travel. And then we're going to go hang out with Christian. He starts his tournament tomorrow.

So what I want to talk about today is solving your problems; start solving your personal problems, solving your professional problems. It doesn't matter what kind of problems you have. I want to talk to you about solving them because the work that we do with the Model, one of the reasons why I love it so much is it really can solve any problem that we're dealing with.

I did a program years ago when I first started with the Model and it was called How to Solve Any Problem and it was basically how to take any problem and run it through the Model and understand problems at a different level. And so I wanted to record a podcast about that as something that was a little bit more succinct that you could reference whenever you're dealing with a personal or a professional problem. So let's jump in.

The first thing that you have to ask yourself is what is a problem? Because how would you even define what that word means in relation to your life or in relation to your work in the knowledge of the Model? And so basically the

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first step is really understanding that we are the ones that create problems in our minds. A problem isn't a problem until we have a thought about it. So the first step that we really all need to do is to separate out, whatever the problem is, we need to separate out the circumstances from the thoughts because a problem is a mixture of circumstances and our thoughts about those circumstances.

So if we can separate those out, that's a really good first step in understanding what the problem is and recognizing that the problem is based on the way that we're thinking about it. Now, I just want to have a note here. Many times when I teach this part of the curriculum in terms of problems people think then, well, if I'm the one that creates all my problems I should never create problems in my mind. And that is really far from the truth.

Problems are, and I'm going to talk more about this later in the podcast, problems are the way that we live our life, solving problems, creating our own problems and then solving them is how we evolve as humans. Problems are a good thing and they're a very good thing when we understand them consciously and we don't create them unconsciously. So remember your circumstances alone are never a problem. They're only a problem when we start thinking about them and comparing them to maybe another ideal that we want or something better that we want. This is a beautiful thing.

This is how we have solved many atrocities in the world is by thinking about circumstances in a way that creates a problem that we want to solve. So once you've done that, once you've separated the circumstances from the thoughts you want to consciously go in and define the problem. And how you define the problem will have a large impact on the solution and your ability to create the solution. Remember, you're creating the problem in your mind with your thoughts. That's a good thing. But you also are creating the possible solutions.

So if you're mindful and thoughtful about how you describe and define the problem then you will set yourself up to be able to create a much more

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impactful solution. So let me give you an example. I always encourage everyone to define the problem as simply and as positively as you can.

So when you think about complex problems or you think about what you would say are big problems or painful problems or traumatic problems. The more we mix up lots of different other problems with the problem, add a lot of drama to the problem, create a lot of blame and frustration and unprocessed dirty pain into the problem. It's much harder to understand it and to be at peace with a solution for it. So you're deciding if something is a problem or not and you're also deciding how to describe it. Once you've done that then start thinking about how to solve it.

Many of us don't deal with our problems consciously, we just buffer against those problems. We push them away and we ignore them but if we could look at them and say, "Okay, here are the circumstances, here are the thoughts, here is how I have been describing the problem. This is how I want to describe the problem and these are the possible solutions." All of a sudden we've put ourself in the watcher mode of our own life. We've started to witness our life from a perspective of wisdom instead of being at the effect of or inside of the problem.

We kind of want to step out of it so we can define it and then start getting creative to solve it. So one of the ways that you can solve problems very quickly oftentimes is by simply changing your thoughts about it so it's not a problem. If you think about your life and your brain and how it tends to go to negative, you will realize that you're creating a lot of problems unnecessarily that aren't actually problems. And if you catch them soon enough you can simply decide that something is not a problem. I'll give you an example.

Let's say I ask you, "What is your problem?" And you say to me, "My best friend is inconsiderate, she didn't remember my birthday. Now, this is a problem for me." So all of a sudden you have created a problem in your mind with the circumstance of your best friend forgetting your birthday and what exactly she did or didn't do. And your thought that she shouldn't have forgotten your birthday and because she did she's inconsiderate.

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Now, in this situation you have a problem for sure with your best friend but you could immediately eliminate this problem by simply deciding that it's not one. You could just say, "My best friend forgot my birthday, it's no big deal, not a big deal at all. I know my best friend loves me. I know she's busy. It's not a big deal that she forgot my birthday. That's not why I'm best friends with her because she remembers my birthday and best friends for all these other reasons." Simply, that would never be a problem for me.

If someone forgot my birthday, that would never be a problem ever. I would never create that into a problem but I have coached hundreds of clients on that being a huge problem and what they make it mean when someone forgets their birthday. The other way you can solve for a problem like that is just to change your thoughts about it by turning the responsibility away from the other person on to yourself. So you could say, "I should have reminded her it was my birthday. I forgot to remind her. I could have reminded her and told her what I wanted for my birthday.

And then I could have been wished a happy birthday from her and I could have gotten what I wanted because I know that she wants to wish me a happy birthday and I could have set her up for success." Immediately we have taken something that could be a painful, hurtful, problem that would require maybe you telling your best friend how you want her to behave in the relationship. And now we've turned it around and made it so it's not a problem or it's a problem that we can solve, that we have control over, by just simply reminding people when we want them to remember our birthday.

It's so much easier. If it's really important to you that people remember your birthday, remind them. I never understand this. You want someone to remember your birthday, tell them the day before that your birthday is coming up. Tell them for a whole week before, send them a message to remember it. Make an announcement, "Hey, just so everyone knows, my birthday's coming up. Facebook's going to remind you but I'm reminding you ahead of time." Whatever it is, take care of these things ahead of time so they don't become problems and change the way that you think about them.

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So that's just one example. There are so many, many, many problems that we can solve immediately by simply changing what they mean and our thoughts about them. Now, that's not true for all problems, we can't, nor do we want to, sometimes just change our thoughts about them. But that's our option number one.

Option number two is when you go in and you define the problem, you separate out the circumstances from the thought and you define the problem as simply as possible then you can ask yourself, what was the cause of this problem? And one of the reasons why I recommend this is that I watch a lot of people trying to solve symptoms of problems and making the symptoms of a bigger problem the main problem. And they spend a lot of time continually solving symptoms of problems when they could just solve the cause and it would never happen again.

So once you've simply defined the problem and you've asked yourself, could I just change my thoughts about it and the answer's been no. Then the next step is to ask yourself, what is the cause, what is the main cause of this problem and how do I solve for that simply? Symptoms of problems may have to be solved as well but I highly recommend that we all slow down, especially when I'm at work.

When I'm working with people on my team I always slow down and say, "How did this happen? What was the cause of this and how do we prevent this in the future so we have less problems? But also how do we solve most simply for the biggest cause of this problem?"

Now, I want you to understand that as you solve problems and as you go through the process of uncovering and living a conscious life and solving for problems you may be tempted to believe that somehow you'll run out of problems. That you'll get to the point where I've solved enough problems, there shouldn't be any more problems. And there's a lot of frustration that comes when that's not true, when you grow bigger in your business or you get promoted in a job or you finally find the love of your life and have children and not everything's perfect. There's still a ton of problems.

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I think the way that we think about life in general and the way we think about the problems that are presented in life for us to grow and evolve and utilize problems the better we're going to be at solving them. So I like to think the thought that problems make me smarter, they make me more creative, they make me more experienced, they make me more evolved. The more problems that I deal with and the more problems that I think about and the more problems that I solve, the more evolved I become as a human being.

And if that is true, if problems are simply the weights that I'm lifting in the gym, then I don't have to constantly be trying to avoid problems. I don't have to constantly be trying to hide from my problems, I can embrace them. Because here's what I've seen in my own life, that as soon as I solve a big problem in my life it creates a new different problem. Once we solve for problem A over here then all of a sudden problem A is now causing a new problem called problem B and that's good. We're evolving our problems. We're getting more material to work on.

The world to me is the playground; the life I have is the playground. The evolvment is happening within me even though I may be solving a professional problem or a problem that doesn't relate to me directly. I'm still the one that's becoming smarter, more creative, more experienced and the more evolved because I'm embracing and simplifying and solving problems.

So when you look at your life and you uncover what are the problems and you eliminate the ones that are caused just by your mind and just from unquestioned thinking the problems that you're left with are really the curriculum for your life. And if you approach problems kind of like puzzles or games or opportunities you're going to be able to see yourself I think and the world in a completely different way. Now, I want to make a really important distinction here when it comes to the problems in your life.

A lot of times the way that people try to solve problems is by eliminating them. And I want to make sure that you understand the difference between solving a problem and eliminating a problem because eliminating a problem

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is sometimes backing away from an opportunity that could really, like I said, make you smarter, creative, more experienced and more evolved as yourself. And so let me give you an example.

Let's say the problem that you're experiencing is at work and the problem is you're not making enough impact. You feel the work you're doing every day is not making enough impact on the world. And so you simply quit the job. There is a problem, we haven't solved the problem, we've just eliminated it. We've eliminated the job that you were in where you weren't making an impact. And I'm not saying there's not times when you should or shouldn't quit your job.

I just always want to encourage you to define the problem much more specifically than that; first of all, separate out the circumstances from your thoughts. See where there is any room to redefine the problem but then also ask yourself, are you just trying to eliminate this as a problem or do you want to try and solve this? And you'll know that you've solved it because you've created something which is the solution that didn't exist before, the opportunity that didn't exist before.

It's the difference between doing a puzzle or leaving it in the box. That puzzle's hard, it looks confusing, it looks like it might be stressful. I don't know if I'm going to like it when it's done. So I'm just going to leave it in the box. I've now eliminated the problem. It's not a problem, I'm just not doing it. The puzzle being in the box is no longer a problem.

But if it's something that you want to challenge yourself to do and you would love to have that puzzle done and complete and you know that it'll be difficult then it's simply approaching it, helping redefine it, and approaching it from a way where the solution can become easy and even fun for you. So instead of saying, "I'm not making enough impact with my work, I am quitting the work." I could say, "I'm going to really look at what it means to make an impact. I'm going to really define that for myself."

And you can look for the opportunities to be creative, to challenge yourself, to find a way to make an impact in the current environment that you're in, in

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a way that could be fun and exciting. So it's simply recognizing that, sometimes, the more challenging the problem, the more creative and awesome the solution.

And I really spend an inordinate amount of time thinking about all of the awesome things in the world that were created because of problems. The problems were presented and the innovation that came to solve them is how we literally as humankind evolve. And many times we can look at problems and complain about them and try to eliminate them and not try and solve them, just walk away from them but then we haven't utilized, I think, the opportunity to take a problem and mix it with our amazing, brilliant, beautiful brain and see what we can come up with.

If you think about, there are problems that we are going to experience in 10 years that we can't even imagine right now. We are going to create so many more problems because of solutions that we've already created. Even just look at cars. Cars are a solution to a problem. Having cars on the road, it's a solution to a problem, an amazing solution that may just evolve.

But creating cars also created huge problems that now we need to solve that we wouldn't have even had that problem, the emissions, we wouldn't even have that problem if we didn't have the solution. So its solution creates another problem, creates another solution, that is how we evolve and hopefully in our personal lives, in our professional lives, the problems will become more challenging, they'll become more complex, they will require more of our skill, more of our creativity and more of our experience.

But this is why the more experience we have solving problems, the higher level problem solver we are, the more powerful we can be, the more, I think, creative we can be because we can have more experience and more resources to draw from when we're trying to solve problems.

Now, I was sitting with one of my, I will call her my Godchild, she's my niece but not really but she is. And so one of the things that I was talking to her about was money and investing money and trying to give her the challenge of understanding compound interest. And how much money her

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money could make if it was in a CD. And I presented this problem to her and I said to her, I'm like, "This isn't a problem that you're going to solve here at the dinner table.

This is something that you're going to have to sit down and study and maybe Google, maybe ask your teacher, maybe understand how money works and how it works when it's in a CD and what happens when it keeps compounding." And she kept trying to just guess at the answer. She's like, "Well, is it this? Well, is the answer this? What is the answer." And she kept trying to figure it out right then and there. And I thought a lot about that afterwards and I thought - we just want the solution. We want the answer without going through the process of solving the problem.

And the truth is, is if we don't go through the process of solving the problem, we don't understand how to solve that problem again in the future. So for example if I asked her, "How much money will you make over the next eight years on this amount of money", and she had guessed at the answer and got it right, she would be stoked because she would have the answer but she wouldn't know how she got it. She wouldn't have gone through the challenge of trying to figure it out and really try to understand that solution.

And I do think so much of the way that we are educated to have the right answer and to have it quickly and to know that the right answer comes from someone else who tells us what the right answer is, is the opposite training that we all actually need to be innovators and to come up with new solutions and new ideas and to be willing to explore our creativity by getting it wrong a lot of the times on the way to the solution.

So it's just another thing to consider when you are trying to solve a problem. Because I say make the problem as simple as possible, that doesn't mean the solution will be as fast as possible. Sometimes a solution to the problem is something we have to work on and practice and try and show up for. And that, my friends, I think is the point, that is the point of a problem in our life.

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So for those of you who really want to do this work, I highly recommend you sit down and write down all your problems. What in your life do you think is a problem? And if you have a goal that you're trying to achieve, the obstacles between you and that goal you could treat as problems. You could say, "This is in my way, this is a problem." And then ask yourself the difference between the circumstances and the thoughts and then ask yourself, how can I define this problem in a way that either eliminates it as a problem completely because it wasn't ever one, it was just in my mind.

Or takes a problem I really want to be a problem and helps me think about a solution and then how can I look at this problem in a way that I know will evolve me as a human, that will be weights in my gym, that will be the curriculum in my life for me to be to the other side of it. If you take two people that have been alive, let's say for 30 years, the person that you're going to want to hire for a job or the person that you're going to want to help you with a job is the person I think that has solved the most problems beforehand in that area.

The better they are not just at knowing what the problems are and how to solve them but the skill of being a problem solver, of looking at everything as a challenge, as an opportunity, not giving up, creating easy solutions that maybe don't come fast but are easy to move towards in our minds. And when one solution doesn't work, creating a new one, creating a new one, creating a new one. The more solutions you can create, the more ideas you have, the more creativity you have around problem solving the more you're going to be able to solve additional problems in the future.

Don't try to just eliminate problems by taking action. You can eliminate some problems by changing your thoughts, but by quitting, deleting, rejecting, hiding, buffering you're not growing when you're doing that. So ask yourself, am I growing when I make this decision about this problem? And if the answer is yes, keep solving because some of the biggest problems simply defined create the most elegant, amazing, innovative solutions.

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Alright my friends, go out there and solve all your problems this week and I'll talk to you next week. Take care.

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