

Ep #481: Take Responsibility



Full Episode Transcript

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.

Hi beautiful friends. I'm in Arizona today. It's 116. Is that even real? Is that even possible? Yikes. I leave today to go to New York to hang out with my bestie Tonya, so I'm very excited about that. It's definitely not as hot there but it's humid there so it's all a tradeoff.

It's exciting, we just came back to repack basically because I can't live in Arizona in the summer, and Bend, Oregon seems to be the answer for me in the summer. It is gorgeous there. So if you haven't been there, don't go there because the houses are very expensive and I might want to buy one there. But what a beautiful, beautiful place to visit.

Alright, today we are going to talk about taking responsibility for everything that happens in your life. Too many people out there blaming each other and this is something I have been trying desperately to teach my kids their whole life and to do myself my whole life, and it's something I want to share with everyone because of how empowering it can be.

When you have opportunities, when you have options, when you have the experiences that you have in your life, and you can own them thoroughly and completely, you will feel like so much more of a powerful person. Your life is not just happening to you. It's like a co-creation between you and your life.

And when you can own almost everything, you can't own the stuff that just happens in the world, all the circumstances in the world, but you can definitely own your experience of it, it will change how much you create, I promise you.

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Look at every situation in your life as if you own it, as if it is yours, how you react to it. Maybe it's a diagnosis, maybe it is an opportunity, maybe it's a situation with a person that you meet. No matter what it is, own it instead of feeling like you're at the effect of it.

Now, do not misunderstand. This is in no way the same as blaming yourself for it or beating yourself up for it. There is definitely nothing useful about blaming yourself, and I've done a podcast on this, the difference between blaming yourself and taking responsibility for it, and they're very different energies, very different thoughts, very different approaches.

Whenever a situation happens in my life that I would deem as negative or positive, I always know that the majority of the situation and how it will affect me is how I think about it. And that is how I own it. That is how I own my power around it.

And when I can look at how my choices and my actions create results in the world, it makes it so much easier to be a human on the planet. I think the whole point is to have a world that isn't perfect, have a world that is 50:50, and to interact with it as a 50:50 person, and to experience that way, and to create an absolute mess and absolute magic.

And when you can see your life as an opportunity, as a curriculum to find out more of who you are, to choose more of who you are, you start looking at "negative circumstances" as ways to experience yourself. And what if the point of life is to experience ourselves in a 50:50 situation? What is the experience of Brooke Castillo in this moment right now? And if I take responsibility for how that experience will be, I will be at my most powerful.

Now, let's give an example of a situation where maybe I am responsible to put on an event, let's say. I'm putting on a party. And the party goes terribly bad, and one of the reasons why the party goes terribly bad is because some of the guests come and they get too drunk and they have a fight, and everyone gets scared and everything's a mess.

So in that moment, I could say, "I had no control over this, this had nothing to do with me." I could blame the two people that get in a fight, and I could

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spend the rest of the day simply feeling sorry for myself. Or I could take responsibility for my thoughts and my actions that led up to the event, and also for my thoughts and actions that I take away from it.

And that's a pretty extreme example where I can find a lot of my own responsibility in that I don't blame myself, but I also don't blame other people and leave myself feeling like a victim, or leaving myself feeling vulnerable.

The same is true when someone gets a diagnosis and they're trying to navigate the hospitals and navigate the doctors and figure all of that out. And it's very easy in those situations to focus on what you can't control and what you're not able to do, and how scary it is, and how you're at the mercy of what's going on with the diagnosis and what's going on with the hospital and what's going with the doctors, versus really seeing, okay, this is what I can control, this is what I am responsible for, this is the experience that I want to have.

And this is extraordinarily important when you have failed at something. And I always love the idea that you're either winning or you're learning, and for me, failure is always learning because I take responsibility for my own failure. I don't try and blame other people for why things didn't go the way I wanted them to go.

And when I do that, I learn something. When I blame other people, I don't learn anything. I don't learn anything from other people's mistakes if I simply blame them. And I don't learn anything from my own mistakes if I blame myself in a way that just beats myself up and doesn't evaluate the why of it.

If you own your power by taking responsibility for your life and where you are right in this moment, you will feel a sense of accomplishment, you'll feel a sense of gratitude, you'll feel a sense of compassion, and you will also feel a sense of power, even if where you are is not where you want to be.

Because if you own that the reason why you are where you are is because of you, then you can be somewhere different because of you if that's what

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you want. When someone blames you, which is kind of the flip side of this, when someone chooses to blame you for something that they've done in their life, they've created in their life, something that's happened in their life, I want to make a recommendation.

Because I think a lot of times, my students will listen to the first part maybe of this podcast where I say to take responsibility of yourself, and they will want to apply that to other people as well. They'll say, "Well, I'm taking responsibility for everything that happened in this situation, so I would like you to do that too."

Well, many times, if that other person isn't listening to my podcast and isn't interested in what I have to say, they will blame you. They will blame you for the thing that you would like to blame them for, but you're taking responsibility for it. And this makes it very, very difficult to maintain a sense of responsibility.

So this happens to me actually quite a bit. When I notice that someone has failed and they come to me and want to blame me for their failure. And I always have compassion because I get it, I understand it. I understand why someone will want to do that, but I also see how powerful they are making me and how powerless they feel.

And so what they end up doing is trying to make me less powerful by putting me down and blaming me and criticizing me and ridiculing me and all of that to even out this imagined power structure that we've created in our own minds.

So when somebody blames me for that, I try to find it in me. I try to find where they're right. I try to own that in that moment and have compassion for what they're doing. Because a lot of times what happens is when someone blames you, "You need to take responsibility for the thing and not blame me," but don't fall into that trap.

Continue to take responsibility. So not only are you taking responsibility for what you've done and where you are in your life and that thing that happened, but when someone blames you, instead of blaming yourself and

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beating yourself up or allowing them to beat yourself up, find where it's true.

Byron Katie always said when I was really studying her work, she always used to say, "Find the one percent of it that is true," and I can always find it. I can always find it. I can see how you would see that, I could see how this could be true, I could see how I could have done that better. I can see what I can learn from this situation without then responding and blaming you for blaming me.

Find the projection that you are doing. Don't focus on the projection that they are doing. We're all projecting our thoughts onto other people. Projecting our judgments onto other people. And a lot of times it's something that we have within ourselves that we're seeing and criticizing in someone else.

That's also true when we're admiring someone and loving someone and seeing something fantastic, typically it's because we recognize that within ourselves as well. So when someone is projecting onto you, it is very tempting to not take responsibility for that. And I know it seems counterintuitive and I know that many of you will be reactive and be defensive and not what to do that, and I get it.

But I want to teach you that if you take responsibility in that moment and say, "Huh, I hear you. I can see why you think that. I can see that within me." And you notice it. Maybe that feels like you take them off the hook, or you're not punishing them in a way that you should, and I'm not saying any of that.

If you want to tell that person what for, and if you want to set up a boundary, if you don't want to spend time with that person, that's fine. But I just want you to have the opportunity to try on taking responsibility for whatever it is they're blaming you for because the power is there to own that and to swallow your pride.

I recently had some situations where some people were blaming me for some things that were going wrong because of some interactions that we

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had all had. And I noticed myself, first of all, wanting to blame them and beat up on them in my mind, second of all, blame myself and beat up on myself, and it took a minute.

It took longer than a minute if I'm being fair, it took several hundred minutes, and I asked myself, where am I responsible for this? What have I created that led to this situation? And I found it.

After I did this, I thought back on how switching my mindset from a victim mentality to someone who really took responsibility for their life and for everything in it completely changed everything. And I want to offer that you do this inventory on yourself to recognize from your past how this has been true so you can then project it into your present and onto your future.

And the best way to do this is to create a way of thinking that identifies everything that is "good" that happened to you in your life and everything that is "bad" that happened in your life, and when you do that inventory, how can you take responsibility for each of those things? Can you see your responsibility in every single one of them?

And the reason why I tell you to look at the positive things as well is, first of all, many of us don't give ourselves enough credit for the great that we've created in our own lives and in the world, but second of all, it helps you see that the power to create something negative and the power to create something positive is the same power.

It is the same agency. It is the same thought, feeling, action, result that you are creating in your life by interacting with the world the way that you do. So once you do this inventory and you look at it, it will be much easier - and one of the, I think, coolest ways to unpack some of these contradictory things that we have in our own mind is to think about fights that you had with someone or arguments that you had with someone in the past that no longer has any juice behind it, no longer has any triggering effects to you, and notice, "Yeah, that's where I could take responsibility."

And then as you move forward in your life, notice when someone blames you or a situation comes up or you think you've failed, just notice your

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resistance, your defensiveness, your shame. Notice any desire that you have to disconnect. Just notice it. Take a deep breath and then open to it. Say yes to it. Find it.

What's the worst that can happen? It is my responsibility that this accident happened, it's my responsibility that this failure happened, it's my responsibility that this mess happened. Not blame but responsibility. Even just the way that you say that to yourself will make you feel empowered.

It may make you feel shame and resistance and fear and defensiveness, but it will also make you feel powerful because you created it, you can uncreate it, you can fix it, you are a powerful human being. Don't ever use it against yourself but only for yourself.

See it as a way to connect to yourself and to the other person and to the situation and to the world and to your life. Remind yourself to tell yourself you are on your side. When you take responsibility for your life and every single thing in it, every single situation and every time someone comes at you, you will keep moving forward, you will keep making decisions, you will keep showing up, and you will get better at being a responsible human being who takes full power available to them in this life.

So have a beautiful week my beautiful friends, and take responsibility for all of it. Not just some of it. All of it. And see what happens. Talk to you next week. Bye-bye.

Hey wait, don't go. I have another Example of Awesome starting right now. Enjoy.

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Brig: Hey guys, excited to bring you another interview. This time with a long-time coach and I love to say friend, TaVona Denise. TaVona, please introduce yourself and tell us what you do.

TaVona: Thanks Brig. Thank you for having me, thank you for being my friend.

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Brig: Thank you.

TaVona: I'm TaVona Denise, I'm a Master Certified Life Coach and trauma-informed business coach with a specialty in launching and helping you create businesses, in particular group programs that you love to sell and deliver.

Brig: So good. So good. Okay, so I want you guys to know, I just asked them to get on and I don't tell them what I'm going to ask them. So just like a friend, right?

TaVona: Exactly.

Brig: When I was thinking about you and one of the things that I love about you is your staying power or your resilience or your ability to play the long game. You literally came in to play the long game. What comes up for you when I say that?

TaVona: Tenacity. That's what I think of. And my name is TaVona so I remember being a kid and playing a game like what word, what adjective describes you that goes with the first letter of your name and I always chose tenacity. So maybe it's one of those things where I built that belief about myself as a tenacious person, like TaVona is tenacious, she has staying power.

And when I think about the long game, I plan to be a coach for at least 20 more years, and so what I'm going through right now or what I went through last year is just a blip in the grand scheme of things. So all of that comes to mind when you mentioned playing a long game. We got to play the long game and the short game in business.

Brig: Yeah, because you certified back when they did this on phone.

TaVona: Oh my gosh. Yes, January 2014 was my first call. It was on teleconference, FreeConferenceCall.com. I don't even know if it's still a thing. And we couldn't see each other, it was telephones. I don't know how we didn't talk over each other but it was that long ago. And as a matter of

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fact, I think Brooke did my sales call, she and I. So I've been here for a minute.

Brig: Right, but it wasn't until 2019 that your business really made a turn. For people who have goals and who have been sitting on their goals and just haven't been able to see the evidence of it, what do you think was the thing that helped for you to make that turn in 2019?

TaVona: I think when you talk about the long game, I always knew I was going to be a millionaire. And I just kept telling myself, "Okay, it might not happen when I think it is, but it's going to happen." And so in 2019 I really made a decision.

And it's probably going to suck to anyone that's listening because it's like, you just made a decision? You can just do that? And I want you to think about how you feel when you truly decided something. I can feel it in my body when I know I've decided and I'm never going back, or I'm not doing this thing ever again, or I am doing this thing.

So for me, in 2019, I got serious and I was like, "No, I am going to be a full-time coach, this is going to be the only thing I do." I have a background in physical therapy and I said I'm not doing that anymore, and I'm giving myself three years. And I did it. From the point that I made a decision, I did it in about 18 months.

Brig: I love that because what you said is there was a part of you that knew, no matter what was going on between 2015 and 2019, you kept saying no, I know. But in 2019 is when you made the decision. Why do you think it took you so long to go all-in if that's the decision, like how we want to phrase it, or to make that decision? Why do you think it took that long?

TaVona: That's a good question. I know we're not supposed to say I don't know but I really don't know why it took me that long to really decide. There were some things that I had to learn, to understand, to be - maybe I just had to be uncomfortable enough.

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I think at that point I had a successful physical therapy contracting company, it was making over six figures, so I think it was difficult for me to decide to do something that was super uncomfortable like starting a business, learning new things, putting myself out there was very emotionally uncomfortable where I was already sitting in a place of comfort.

I knew what I was doing as a physical therapist, I knew how to run the contracting company, I knew how to get the contracts, I knew how to read the room. I knew how to do all of that. So it was like asking myself to leave a place of comfort over there to go do something scary where I don't have the authority, where I don't really know what I'm doing, where I'm really unsure of myself.

It's uncertain, the path is not paved, and I think unconsciously, I was saying, "Why would I want to do that? That feels horrible." So I would do it a little bit and I would get just enough uncomfortable and be like, "Nope, I'm good."

Brig: So good. So what you're saying is the difference was what happened when you got to that little bit of discomfort, what made that change in 2019 because I'm sure you still faced that little bit of discomfort. That was the decision is like, I'm going to feel this anyway?

TaVona: It got to a tipping point I think where I was more uncomfortable. I had gotten to a place where I was bored actually as a physical therapist. I have done all the things except academia and pediatrics in physical therapy. I had the company, I was in management, I had done all those things, and I was just a little bored I think. So that became more uncomfortable than stretching myself and learning different things and putting myself out again and again.

Brig: So good. I think the same thing happened for me when I left nurse anesthesia, CRNA, to go to coaching. One of the things - same thing. Two things were I had a call room that I worked 24 hour shifts, so I used to tell myself, "You got this cute little bed, you have a recliner, you got a 60-inch

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TV, this is life.” You go to work, but if they don’t need you, I’m chilling in my call room.

And there were some nights where I could sleep all night and then there were some nights where I was working all night and I never saw my call room. But instead of seeing that, all of a sudden, slowly but surely, I started seeing it as this is my prison. This is a very nicely decorated jail cell. I started seeing it a little bit differently.

And to your point with the bored, maybe you listeners can understand. I started saying, “But what is this going to feel like five years from now?” It wasn’t that I’m just bored now, but can I - I really future tensed that to, but five years from now, what is this going to feel like? And it’s like, can I do this another 20 years and will I be happy with myself that I did? I don’t know what comes for you with that.

TaVona: Oh, 100% because at that point I think maybe I had 16 years in and I was thinking to myself, I knew - I was holding two things in my hand. I always knew I was going to be a millionaire and doing it as a physical therapist wasn’t going to be the answer, and then there was I don’t see myself doing this at 65 as a physical therapist in the hospital lifting patients and all of that.

So when am I going to get myself prepared, get my act together so that I’m not still doing this at 65 saying I didn’t think I was going to be doing this at 65?

Brig: Okay. Now, I know a lot of coaches - I’m going to change it a little bit, just a little bit. We celebrate the person that does it their first year and they make six figures, or anybody who goes out and does a goal and then they’re successful on their first attempt.

But what I like about you is that long game. You literally, “I’m going to be in here intentionally staying with it,” and you have this ability to fight through and keep fighting for it. I’ve watched you as your friend do this. How does that transfer to you helping your clients do the same thing? Why does that

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benefit that you went through that experience? And if you can say that, how does that help your clients? Because I know it transfers.

TaVona: Because I know this too shall pass. And it's never over until you win. So whatever you're dealing with now, a year from now, we're going to be laughing about it. Just like you and I laugh about the level in which we invest and the amounts that we charge and the amounts that we make. Two, three years ago, that was inconceivable to me. And now it's just like, "Oh, I only made such and such this month."

Brig: Literally, you just blew my mind with that thought. It's not over until I win. That right there, literally, it's not over until I win, and when you know that for your clients, when they want to give up, I can imagine you're like, "What are you talking about? It's not over. We haven't won yet." So good. So, so good. Okay, anything else? Any last words on your long game?

TaVona: I think that's it. It's not over until you win. If you don't remember anything else, it's not over until you win. And if you have the desire for something, it's supposed to be yours.

Brig: Yes. Because Brooke says there's winning or learning. So if we didn't win, then we learned, and we take that learning and then we apply it back, and then we keep repeating until we win. I love that. And you're just such an example of that and I love you for that and I'm so glad you're my friend. How can they get in contact with you? Tell them all your stuff.

TaVona: Well, it's easy. You can find me everywhere @TaVonaDenise because I just have a really unique name.

Brig: I love it. Alright guys, it's not over until we win. Anything else? Nope, not over. Literally, any excuse, anything, nope. Did I win? Nope. Not over yet. I love that. Okay, thank you.

TaVona: Thank you.

Brig: Bye.

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