

Ep #491: Feel Harder



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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.

Hi beautiful friends. Today I want to talk to you about feeling harder. This was the topic that we chose for our Mastermind event. And we have all of our speakers and coaches coming in and talking about what it means to feel harder.

And I prepared my keynote on this topic and basically the title of it is Feel Harder, Suffer Less. And I'm in the process of preparing to deliver that and we're working on the slides and making sure those are all finalized. And I can't stop thinking about how important this is that I want to share with my larger audience who maybe aren't coaches and need to know about feeling harder, suffering less, and processing emotion.

And I especially wanted to share a personal example that changed my life recently. And I would say I've had these turning points in my life that change everything forever immediately. I've probably had epiphanies like that, I don't know, seven times in my life. And I talk about them a lot.

One of them was when I first heard Byron Katie say that thoughts create feelings. That was like, "What is happening?" But this was one of those moments for me. This was one of those epiphany moments where I understood myself on such a deeper level and in such a deeper way that I felt in the moment my life change.

It was an epiphany that made my life change in that exact moment. It was very, very cool. So let me tell you kind of what happened. So all of you know, because I can't stop talking about it, that I have been playing pickleball. And I'm fascinated by my fascination with pickleball, but

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obviously I'm not the only one in this country that is losing their mind about pickleball.

But for me, my ambition is always channeled into a certain area. And for so long it was channeled into my business. And when I first started playing pickleball, it was really just for fun. I was hanging out with my friends. But then I became very ambitious. I want to get better, I want to play, I want to go and be in a tournament, I want to learn how to play better.

So I got kind of obsessed with it. I want to play every single day. And my boyfriend now, he kind of started at the same time. We started dating right when I started really getting into it, so I was always like, "Hey, let's go play, hey, let's go play." And he wasn't that into it. He still isn't as into it as I am.

He's not as crazy as I am about it, but he likes to play, likes to play with me. He's really good at it. And he's tall and he has this huge wingspan, so it's really hard to get a ball by him, and I'm always playing with him as a partner. But when we travel, if there's not open play somewhere we'll play against each other and he's just really good to play against because he makes me get so much better.

So we started to get, I would say, about three months in, we started getting pretty good. So we decided that we were ready to go and play at this open play where it's mostly advanced, more advanced players. And we knew that everyone was going to be better than us, but we kind of wanted to go and play anyway to help us get better.

To play against better competition would help us get better. So we started going and playing. And we would play and just get destroyed like, 11-0, 11-0, 11-0. And as we played, we got a little bit better. And as we started getting better, I really started to want to win.

And I was really focused on winning and I wanted to practice and we went and took a lesson. I'm like, let's try and get good enough so we can at least have some wins at this open play court. And there were a couple times we

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went out there and we would be up maybe 7-0, 8-0, and I'd be like, "Oh, we're going to win this game." And then the other team would come back and beat us.

And this one day, this was months ago, but this one day we were up 8-0, they came back and beat us because we were just making consistent mistakes. And I was so mad. I mean, furious mad. And mostly at my partner. Mostly at E. We'll call him E.

Mostly at E because of course, in my mind, it was his fault. I knew logically it wasn't his fault but every point that he missed, every mistake that he made, I just felt myself getting madder and madder and madder.

And we got in the car afterwards, I'm like, "Do you even want to win?" And he was so hot. He's like, "What? How can you even ask me that?" And I was like, "You know I'm very competitive and I like to play at a competitive level and I very much want to win."

He's like, "Yeah, so do I." And we just couldn't even talk to each other, we were both so mad. The whole rest of the way home from pickleball we did not say one word to each other. And I later apologized. I was like, "Okay, I need to get a grip. What is going on?"

But this became a little bit of a pattern for me. And here's what's great. When you have self-awareness and you understand that how the Model works and that your thoughts create your feelings, you can stop at the A-line. So I never really overtly would get mad at him anymore but I would just seethe on the court. You know what I'm saying?

I would feel my emotion but I wouldn't say anything to him about it, but he could feel what I was feeling. And I would tell him, "Listen, I just need to process this rage, this anger, this mad, whatever is going on with me, I need to just let it out and I need to experience it and I need to process it because I don't know where it's coming from and I've got to figure this out."

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And this went on, I'm going to say, for maybe three months. I had been trying to figure out my emotions around this game and trying to win. And here's why I knew that it wasn't just, "Oh, I want to win and isn't that fun and I'm just competitive."

The amount of emotion and the amount of feeling that I had that burned so hot in me didn't match the situation. And that's a really important tip for all of you to know. If you are in traffic and you are in a rage because someone cut you off, that's a great example of the emotion not matching the situation.

I had a friend a couple of weeks ago say something to me that was kind of mean and I felt myself - you know when you're a little kid and you feel your face - you're about to cry but your face can't help itself? It's like a little toddler, it just goes into the frown-y face and you just start crying? That happened to me the other week and I was like, "Wow, I'm about to cry because of what someone just said to me."

This emotion does not match what this situation is. What is going on? And as a little side note, my friends, I want to tell you that I just watched an Instagram with Brené Brown and she was talking about how in midlife, all of our stuff is coming up for us.

It is time to heal anything that isn't healed and to understand anything that you don't understand about yourself, we're going to bring it up so you can work through it. And this has really been true for me. And I think midlife is such a great time for this because I feel like our hormones are a little bit on edge. And so everything is kind of coming to the surface, so it's a great opportunity.

So the other day, I'm going to say, maybe seven days ago, we played in a game and I was so mad and E was like, "I feel anxious when I'm playing with you." He's like, "I don't want you to get mad at me if we're losing," and it was compounded because we're here in San Diego and everyone is so good and they have this pickleball here that's called aggressive play.

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It's a two-hour open play where it's aggressive. People are so intense and so aggressive and I'm like, "Let's go, let's play," so they just kept beating - they were beating us so badly and I was just getting more and more mad.

And I would go on walks trying to figure this out, I was talking to my friends, I was getting coached on it, trying to understand. And when people say to me, "Oh, it's just a fun sport, can't you just go out there and have fun?" For me, that was kind of cringey. It's like everybody gets an award and everybody is having a good time.

That's fine if you're not wanting to win and obviously I was on the other extreme of that, but I like a competitive game. I like to go out there and you have a good competitive game and you're a little bit bummed if you lose and you're a little bit happy if you win. Nothing like what I was experiencing though.

So we decided to go play. There's this really cool place here called The Hub in San Diego and we were going to meet a couple of my colleague friends that live in San Diego that are in the internet marketing industry. They're speakers and they have businesses like I do, and we're like, "Let's go play pickleball. That'll be so fun."

So we hooked up to go play some pickleball and me and E were playing against these two guys, and they were tennis players. They weren't really pickleball players, and so I thought, "Oh my gosh, these guys don't really play pickleball, we're probably going to destroy them. We're probably going to have to mix up the teams," whatever. I was wrong, my friends.

We went to play them and they beat us the first game, and then they beat us the second game. I was like, "What is going on?" Now, we weren't playing very well and they were way better at the shots than I expected. Because they're tennis players, they have a lot of those great long shots and they're both really strong.

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And so we were at The Hub, they have a bar, so they were having some cocktails and some White Claws, Trulys? I don't know what was happening. But anyway, by the third game, both these guys had drinks in their hand while they were playing us. And I felt myself get so mad. Not at them, but just so mad that we weren't playing better.

And I hear in myself, in my own brain think, "Oh, they're not even taking this seriously." And in that moment - now mind you, we're playing pickleball for fun. It's friendly. We're not in the Wimbledon here. We're not trying to win a competition for anything, but we're all competitive people and we all want to win, and we've been talking some shit for sure before the game and friendly stuff.

But in that moment when I heard myself think, "They're not even taking us seriously," I realized what it was. And I think it was really helpful that I was playing against guys who are in our industry, who are in the internet marketing business, online coaching industry because it all came flooding in.

And I had this huge epiphany moment and then I all of a sudden relaxed and chilled out and stopped being mad at E and stopped being so mad at myself. That was the other thing is I was just constantly getting so mad at myself if I would miss a shot. It was ridiculous.

And in that moment I was like, "Oh, that's what this is." And I just felt like because I had stayed present with so much anger and was allowing myself to feel it, I felt in that moment it all drain from my body. And I literally have not been angry at a pickleball point since because I had this realization about what was going on.

And here's what it was. When we got in the car, when we were leaving, I was telling E, I was like, "Listen, I just had a moment where I had such a huge realization, and here's what it is." In my life, as a businesswoman, I have always been fighting to be taken seriously. I want to be a contender, I

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want to be a worthy opponent, I want to be someone who's invited to play in the game.

And my whole life I've felt, no one's fault but my own, that I haven't been taken seriously as a woman. There are so many rooms, mastermind groups, and rooms, and learning opportunities that I've had in this industry where it's been mostly men who are the teachers teaching me how to create a business, how to market a business, how to sell, how to make money basically.

And 20 years ago, coming into this industry as a life coach and as a woman, I was kind of, "Oh, isn't she cute? Isn't it fun?" I was mistaken for the assistant a lot of the times, people were very pandering to me, just not taking me seriously, not even asking for my opinion or offering any really sophisticated advice to me as I was coming up in this industry.

And I never processed that inadequacy that I was creating for myself, and the approval that I was seeking, and the worthiness that I didn't have, that I didn't bring into my working life as a businesswoman. And I hadn't realized how much frustration and anger I had because I couldn't be heard and I wasn't taken seriously and I didn't get what I felt were the opportunities that I could do.

And I think as an entrepreneur, when I didn't win, when I didn't succeed, when I didn't create at the highest level, I was not just disappointed because I couldn't help my clients, but I was disappointed because I couldn't find a way to be taken seriously, and to be in that room and feel like I was worthy to be in that room because I was able to get results too like everybody else.

And it's so ironic to me that pickleball is almost the exact same setup. It's mostly men that are playing at the higher levels, they're very aggressive, they don't really take me seriously because I wear a very cute pickleball outfit, which by the way, the comparisons between pickleball and business is so fascinating.

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I was playing with another girlfriend of mine who dresses really cute in a really cute pickleball outfit. I'm all about the cute Lululemon and all the other brands, the Eleven, all the brands of pickleball outfits. My girlfriends have, for my birthday this year, bought me pickleball outfits so it's really fun.

But I was playing with her and we were playing against a couple guys and I could hear these women on the sidelines saying, "Oh look, it's pickleball Barbies." And that pissed me off too. And normally I do not get offended, I don't get mad about stuff like that, and I'm like, "Why did that make me mad? Pickleball Barbies." And it was the same thing.

As I've been coming up in the business, there have been groups of women on the sidelines that I feel like kind of jeer at me and make fun of me and put me down or complain about me or whatever, and so it's like trying to get the guys to take me seriously and trying to get the girls not to be so mean to me and say all these mean things. It's such emotional childhood that I was in that I didn't even realize.

And the amount of anger it was perpetuating in my life was insane. And so because I allowed it to be there, because I didn't avoid it, because I didn't beat myself up over it, because I didn't act out on it, I just kept processing it, I just kept letting it burn through me, I just kept letting it be present and trying to understand it, I was able to have this huge epiphany, and I'll tell you, it dissolved all of the anger and turned into so much self-compassion for myself and so much pride for myself.

And understanding that what's very interesting for me is now kind of in this industry, as I've become more and more successful, people do take me seriously. They do want me to come into the rooms with them, they do want to ask my advice and they never think that I'm the assistant anymore and people know who I am.

I feel like I earned the right to be taken seriously. I think that's what I had been thinking. But the truth is I was always taking myself seriously. I didn't

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need them to. And the fact that I was trying so desperately to have other people take me seriously made me have so much compassion for myself.

And wanting other people to cheer me on and support me instead of put me down and criticize me, it's okay. It's okay if people are jeering from the sidelines. It's okay if people are putting me down. It's okay if these guys don't take me seriously because there are times when people just don't see me coming on the pickleball court too, which is really fun.

They're like, "Oh, here comes pickleball Barbie," and then I'm able to play and be taken seriously. But the truth of the matter is whether they take me serious or not is irrelevant if I'm taking myself seriously, if I'm believing in myself, if I'm showing up and asking the questions and offering the advice, instead of waiting for other people to give it to me.

And I will tell you that that feeling of pride and compassion and love that I have for myself, replacing that anger and that rage has changed my life. And it was only in this one concentrated area of pickleball that I was able to identify it.

And the funny thing was is because I couldn't figure it out in business, I never had an opportunity to see it clearly in business, it was always there, it just followed me into my next ambition. And I was able to see it so clearly there.

So the best ending of the story is I have literally had so much more fun, E has had so much more fun, he's less anxious playing with me, he feels like we can have more fun and there's more opportunity for us to even get better. Because it's so funny, as soon as I had that epiphany on the court that day, we won the rest of the games.

I was able to relax and show up in a way where I wasn't trying so freaking hard to do something that was so unnecessary. So I will definitely continue to try and win, but from a place of love and compassion and fun, instead of from this place of I matter and you should notice that I matter, because

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that's really coming from a place of I'm afraid I don't matter, I'm afraid I'm not worthy of being taken seriously, I'm afraid that I'm just going to disappear into this world of people that are better than me.

And I know I'm not alone in this. I know so many of you women entrepreneurs feel the same way. I know that so many people in general feel like we're invisible, we don't matter, and we can't get any kind of acknowledgement from other people. And the reason is because we aren't giving it to ourselves.

One of the things I want you to really understand about this feeling harder thing is anger is one of those emotions that a lot of us try to just get rid of, or feel like it shouldn't be there, or feel like it's bad and that we need to meditate it away or something, and I just wanted to use this as a demonstration that because I was willing to feel it and stay with it and be present with it and process it, I was able to figure out what was causing it.

The unconscious thought that people don't take me seriously, that I'm not worthy of being taken seriously is what was causing that for the past 20 years, y'all. And it took a game of pickleball. Now this is one more reason why y'all should be out there playing pickleball.

Took a game of pickleball for me to see that that was there and let it all go. And let go of so much frustration and agitation and anger that I had in my heart about myself and towards myself that I can now replace with compassion and love.

And I don't need them to take me seriously and they can all jeer from the sidelines and put me down if they want and call me pickleball Barbie if they want. I'm still going to show up and be the best version of myself, and I'm going to keep feeling my feelings as hard as I possibly can with an open door for any emotions that want to come through.

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And as long as it wants to say, I'm going to stay with it long enough to understand it and heal it and move on. And I really hope you all will try this and do the same.

Have a beautiful week everyone, I'll talk to you next week. Bye-bye.

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