

Ep #493: Remember Your Future



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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.

What's up beautiful friends? I am currently in the most beautiful place in Italy called Positano. I'm recording this - well, it's kind of a funny story. I was recording this on my balcony overlooking the ocean and the beautiful view when someone came out on their patio right next to me.

I'm sure we're not amused that I was recording a podcast, so I have now come back into the hotel room to record it. But we are in Positano, it is so pretty. We just went to Sorrento. Before that we went to Mykonos and we are on our way to Milan for fashion week, and then we're going to go to Lake Como.

So we're in Europe for about three weeks, we're working while we're traveling, and just really enjoying the gorgeous weather, the gorgeous people, places, all the amazing things that we're doing right now.

So today I wanted to talk to you about remembering your future. One of my very good friends told me to read a book, Benjamin Hardy's book called *Be Your Future Self Now*. She knows how much I love talking about my future self, talking to my future self, doing all sorts of future self things. So she thought I would enjoy this audiobook.

So I haven't read the whole book so I can't recommend the book necessarily, but there was an exercise that he recommended that I do in the beginning, which I did. It was actually super powerful and I wanted to talk to you about this process and how important I think it is for all of us to be doing future self work.

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To clarify, I think a lot of times when I recommend people do the future self work that we teach in our Get Coached program and we also teach in our certification, I think a lot of people are under the misunderstanding that that would mean that we aren't in the present moment if we're in the future moment.

I do want to clarify this. I know I've clarified it before but I want to clarify it again. You can't actually be in the future and you can't actually be in the past. You can only be in the present moment. So even when you're doing your future-self paced work, time is just a construct so you are in the present moment generating present emotion. So your future self work isn't actually work that's taking you out of the present moment.

It's using your brain to construct ideas and tell yourself ideas about your future that generate feelings and actions now. So that's a really important differentiator because I think people are afraid like, "Oh, if I go to my future too much I miss out on my present," and that is true when we start believing that our future life is when we're going to be happy, or we start thinking our future life is when we'll feel worthy, or we'll feel complete, or that's the thing that we're supposed to get to because it's better there than here.

That can actually create a lot of anxiety and pulling us out of being present, being here, being focused in this present moment and staying within our bodies. And so I just want to clarify that this work isn't anything like that. I have an exercise that I do that's very similar to the exercise that's recommended in this book, but he has a different take on it that made me think about it in a different way that I really want to share with you.

So just to review, if you listen to my podcast or you've done work with me on the future self, one of the things that I find really important is to imagine and create who you want your future self to be, and where you want to be in five years, where you want to be in 10 years, where you want to be in 20 years, and to have a very clear perception of who that is and to be that person now.

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If you spend a lot of time imagining who you want to be in your future and creating that vision for yourself, you can access wisdom on how to get there and how to get to that place. That is something that I teach pretty consistently and I have a lot of exercises that really help you become the person that you want to be in your future, and I seriously recommend that we do this as much as we possibly can so we can be conscious creators of our own life and decide where we want our life to go, instead of letting life just happen to us.

But in this exercise, the way that he presents it has a little different twist in the sense that he wants us to imagine ourselves 20 years from now, so we go to the place where it's not just we're visualizing the best life that we could possibly have, but we're visualizing ourselves 20 years from now.

And so for me, I'm 51 years old. For you, however old you are, imagine yourselves 20 years older. So for me, I would be 71 years old. So you go to the place where you're 71 years old and you start imagining your life then. And for me, I imagined myself physically, I imagined myself mentally, I imagined what might be different in my life.

I thought about how old my kids would be. Christian would be 42, Connor would be 41, what that would be like in terms of would they be married, would they have kids, what they might be doing, thinking about my friends 20 years from now, thinking about my parents. Just really imagining my life 20 years from now, from kind of that different perspective. Not just imagining who I want to be, but imagining my age and what would have changed around me.

So I asked myself the questions, what's different? And then I asked myself, what have you accomplished? And what does that feel like, those accomplishments? And what things, if any, might you regret?

And spent some time in that space, from that perspective. And for me, it was kind of a trip of an exercise to think about everyone, not just myself aging 20 years but everyone and everything, and thinking about my

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business will be 40 years old at that point, and everyone that I work with will be 20 years older. Will we still be working together? And what will that be like?

So anyway, that was such a trip to think about. And so the exercise that he has us do is have that future self come back and give you some advice. And the advice is a little different from the work that I've done before. The advice isn't necessarily, oh, this is how to get to your perfect life, this is how to get to your best life.

But it's coming back and kind of giving you a heads up, like make sure you do these things, and here's how it's different, and here's what you might regret. And the way that he describes this story in his book is really great. I highly recommend you listen to it because basically, he has young kids when he does this exercise.

So it really made him think about enjoying each moment with them while they're young in those formative years, and really spending the time and energy to be connected and be with them and pay attention to them and talk to them in their little voices at that point in their life. It was really beautiful the way that he described it.

And I was thinking about the same for me. Are there people that I want to spend more time with because I have more limited time with them? Limited time in this way, when I think about my kids and I think about they're going to be married possibly and they're going to have their own families possibly, and right now, they're so independent and single and they really enjoy spending time with me and they want to hang out with me all the time.

And I'm their main family, me and their dad are their main family. So the time that we spend together is so important. And really just thinking about my life right now and taking care of my future self. I was talking about this with my boyfriend and I said, "What would your future self say to you?"

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And he was like, “Stretch.” I was totally laughing. I’m like, “Oh my god, isn’t that true?” As we get older, we get so much more stiff in our bodies. If we just stretch and started stretching every single day from now until we’re older, we can remain so much more flexible. And I think not just physically but also emotionally, and keep working out and lift weights and maintain your body mass and enjoy your life. Truly enjoy where you can each moment because it’s so precious.

I recently had a very shocking experience in my life that kind of messed me up really hard for several days. There was a woman that I had met at a conference that I had hung out with. This was two years ago, hung out with at this conference pretty much the whole time we were there. We got to know each other, she was a very successful entrepreneur.

She was in the MLM business and had made a tremendous amount of money in that, and then had also opened up a bunch of other businesses, one including a car dealership. She was just such a cool woman and we had so much fun, and we went out at night and we just had this amazing experience and hung out together.

It was really funny. She had posted - I remember this specifically. She had posted a picture of us on her Instagram and a whole bunch of people on her Instagram were like, “Oh my gosh, you know Brooke Castillo?” She had written me after the conference, she was like, “Oh my gosh, who are you? I didn’t even realize you were someone that everybody already knew.” I thought that was hilarious.

We just totally hit it off. We had such a good time. I was with my friend Aprille and the three of us just hung out and had so much fun together. And I hadn’t really been in touch with her since, hadn’t really talked to her. A couple years ago when I met her I wasn’t on Instagram, so I hadn’t been following her or anything like that.

And Aprille had sent me a message and said, “Hey, did you hear what was happening with her?” And I looked it up and I looked up her Instagram and

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she had been diagnosed with stage four colon cancer. 34 years old. I was like, "What are you talking about?" None of any of that made any sense to me.

How can that even be true? And from the time that Aprille told me about her cancer and what was going on with her and the time that I started following her, it was a matter of five days before she had passed. And it rocked my world. It really affected me in a way that not a lot of things have. And I think it's just that realization that we all get sometimes that life is so precious and that all this nonsense that many of us deal with does not matter at all. None of it.

And spending time and energy thinking about the little things that we worry about and the little stories that we make up in our head and the surface-level petty grievances that we have about our own lives and our own bodies and our own aches and pains and the inconveniences that we have to deal with in life, none of that matters.

And really thinking about what it must have been like for her, this healthy, young, vibrant woman who had just met the love of her life and wanted to get married and have children was never going to have the opportunity to do any of that. It really made me and this exercise that I had just done, it really made me stop and pause and really get serious about what do I want to do to take care of me? And what does that look like?

Because if I don't take care of myself and I don't take care of my health, and even if I do, like in her case, you still don't have any control. But what do you have control over? And how can you be the best caretaker to yourself and to your health and to your life that you possibly can?

So if in an instant your life is taken from you, you have done what you wanted to do. And I look at my life at 51 years old and I know a lot of you are young who are listening to me. I get emails from you all the time, you're very young, you're introduced to this work at such a young age, and that makes me so happy.

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Because I look at what I have done in my life and what I have created and the work that I've done and the beautiful children that I've raised and the relationships that I have and I feel full and complete in so many ways. And yet, there are so many other ways where I want to make changes and do things differently and show up better and that makes me happy. That makes me feel like my purpose is still very strong in the things that I want to do.

So for some of you, this might be a challenging exercise to have your future self come back to you and give you some advice now. So one of the ways that I've taught my students how to do this is basically what would you go back and say to yourself 20 years ago? What would you say in order to have the exact life that you wanted now? What could you have started doing then consistently that would be amazing for you to know now?

I, for one, just so we're clear, would tell myself to start playing pickleball. Think of how good I would be at pickleball now if I had started 20 years ago. I don't know where I would have played, there weren't that many people playing then, but I would definitely have started playing then.

What other things could you start learning, start doing, stay consistent at? When I think about myself 20 years ago, that's when I started my business. And I've done pretty well for myself in the sense that I've taken care of me now, my past self really took care of my future self in a lot of ways.

But there's other things that I would tell myself and I would have advised myself to do consistently that aren't even that hard that would be amazing things to have in my life now and to be experiencing right now. So how do we do that for our future self?

Having my 71-year-old self come back to me and kind of give me a heads up like, "Yo, make sure, don't forget, remember, this is what's going to happen in your future." And I think the main thing for me, a pretty significant thing is that between 50 and 70, the amount of control I have over my body aging quickly is tremendous.

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When you look at the variety of healthy and unhealthy bodies at age 70 and the choices that those people made to take care of their bodies or not, the effects of that are tremendous. And I know that as my body ages, there are a lot of things that I don't have control over, that I won't be able to be a predictor of. But there are so many that I do.

And so I think for me, that was the most significant heads up. And we have to balance that also with the knowledge that we have limited time on this planet that we're all going to die and that we're all going to age and that we're all going to change. And what is the point of our life?

It's certainly not to try and stay young forever and to never age because that's not realistic. That's part of the process. But in 20 years, how can we balance out taking care of ourselves and our health and also enjoying our lives and showing up for our lives and living an adventurous, amazing, big, huge life?

What do you need to know to get there in the way that you want to get there? What do you need to appreciate more in your life now? What do you have in your life now that you may not have in the same way in 20 years? And if you listened to your future self and really listened to her, how would it change how you presently and consistently act in your life?

The other piece of this that really I think affected me was it's not just our lives that are precious and fragile in so many ways, but it's every single person around us could be gone in any instant, in any moment. There are so many things that happen in this world that we can't control.

And is there anyone in your life that you would regret not having said something to, or done something with, or connected with in some way? And one of the things that I did after going through this experience, both of these kind of future self and losing my friend experiences was really sitting down and writing down every single person, including myself, who is precious to me.

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And if I knew that I wasn't going to have them in my life, is there anything I would want to say or do that I haven't already done? And making a list of those things, and really pushing away all of the BS, all of the nonsense, all of the surface-level shallow stuff that death really does take away when someone's dying. All of a sudden none of that stuff matters. What do you want to do? What do you want to say with that person?

And also, what do you want to do and say with yourself? We aren't promised 20 years. But if we happen to get those 20 years, what do we want to do with them? So when we're 71 or 81 or 91, we can have accumulated 20 years of that consistently doing for ourselves.

It's a mind-altering experience that I just had and I've made a lot of decisions, a lot of actions based on just that one simple mind exercise, so I highly recommend that each of you do it. Remember your future. Don't forget about it. And take care of yourself in your future.

Alright my beautiful friends, have an amazing week. I'll talk to you next week. Bye-bye.

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