

Ep #496: Goal Cost



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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. How is everyone doing? I am a little overstimulated right now. It is 5:03am in the morning, it's pitch black outside and I have just been lying in bed thinking about this podcast. I had already recorded the entire thing and now I have so many more ideas that I want to include in it, so I'm re-recording it.

I was going to go back to sleep and then wake up and do it but I couldn't, so that's what's up with me. I am excited I guess about this podcast today and the ideas that I have in it. One of, I think, main sources of inspiration and thought fodder is you all, all of my students, all of my clients who want to achieve big things in their life, who want to explore their own capacity and see what they can create and what kind of treasures they have inside of them.

And I've been coaching a lot lately in Get Coached and there's a theme for some people that comes up that's around goals and around whether I should keep going after a goal or should I give up on this goal, this goal isn't working for me, I don't think I can achieve this goal, I think the cost of this goal is too high basically.

And it's got me really thinking about how I can best help everyone achieve what they want. And I'm trying to model off my own goals that I have achieved because I've achieved some pretty amazing goals for myself and have overcome a lot of the obstacles in the way, and I really want to get better and more professional and more amazing, even though I think I'm pretty good so far. I want to get even better at helping other people blow their own minds with their own achievements and dream realization.

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But I think in order to do that, I need to make sure that the philosophy and the thought process around goal setting and goal achieving is set up in the right way. And sometimes when I talk to and coach my students, I realize that the way they're thinking about their goals is really hurting them in some ways. And not physically hurting them obviously, but hurting them in achieving them as quickly as they possibly could.

So I wanted to come on here and review some ideas on goals and goal cultivation and possibility, and I wanted to talk about a concept called goal cost. And it's basically the costs that we need to pay in order to achieve our goals, and the types of costs that we're willing to pay, and the types of costs we shouldn't be willing to pay.

And I think when we approach setting goals, if we do the cost analysis before we start, we're not going to be surprised when that bill comes due. And we're going to anticipate it. And I wonder if too many of us spend too much time on thinking about the benefits of the goal and the benefits of achieving the goal and don't necessarily focus on the cost of achieving the goal, and also, the benefit of the effort to achieve the goal.

So that's what we're going to talk about today. I'm going to try and put it in a step-by-step process for each of you so you can sit down and do this process with your own goal that maybe you already have set, or with a goal that you want to set.

Every goal is going to have a cost associated with it. This is a good thing. This is a great thing. And I wish maybe we could use the word - instead of cost, you could think of it as an investment that will give you a very positive return.

The reason why I think the word cost is powerful here though is because I do think sometimes people start their goal without anticipating the cost and then when they start incurring the cost, they're very surprised and very frustrated by the fact that there is a cost associated with it that they didn't anticipate.

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And so this will help with that for sure. And you have to remember that the brain - if you think about the motivational triad, the brain doesn't like any cost. It likes to preserve energy and it likes to focus on comfort and only positive things. It wants to stay in the cave and be safe. It wants to survive.

So you have to literally coach your own brain through any cost that you might incur to achieve the goal, and it has to be worth it to you. So that's why I'm going to show you this process. It's like a cost-benefit analysis for your goal.

One of the warning signs that I want to point out to you that many of my clients bring to me and don't even realize that they're doing is there will be moments 100% in your journey to achieve a goal where you are going to want to quit.

And you have to have a process for deciding whether or not you will quit or not, whether or not it's worth continuing and you want to overcome how you're feeling, or if you legitimately think the cost is too high and you want to stop achieving your goal, you want to go toward another goal, or you want to change your goal. And I think that's a process you can establish ahead of time with your prefrontal cortex so you're not trying to make that decision when your brain is freaking out and you're in survival mode that's completely unnecessary.

So a client will come to me and say, "This is just too hard, this isn't working, I just don't know if I should continue to try and do this." Let's use the example of weight loss. A client will come to me and say, "I've been doing this, I've been trying this, I've been on this protocol, I have been really trying to process my feelings and I'm just having a hard time, I keep overeating, this isn't working, I don't know if it's worth it."

Whenever a client comes to me with something like that and I look at the effort towards the goal and I see that the effort towards the goal isn't aligned with achieving the goal, I know that we need to understand and talk

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about the benefit of the goal again, or what is the reason why you signed up for this goal and what is the benefit.

But also truly understanding that the cost of the goal, the payment for the goal, the currency for the goal is not being paid, even though it may feel like it because there's a lot of frustration and there's a lot of overwhelm. Just because they're feeling that way doesn't mean that they're paying the cost of the goal.

In this situation, the cost of the goal is not overeating. It's actually experiencing emotion. And so when they come to me and they say, "I'm still overeating," I understand that giving in to that and the food that they're eating is not incurring the cost that would be required to be incurred to achieve the goal.

And when we understand that, we can go back to, "Okay, here is what we're going to have to do. Here is what we're going to have to commit to it. Here is where we're going to have to sacrifice, this is where we're going to have to be disciplined, this is where we're going to have to be uncomfortable. Are we willing to incur the cost to achieve the goal?"

And many times, when my clients understand it from that perspective, they're like, "Oh, I started feeling this way and thought maybe that was something was going wrong and therefore I didn't follow through." So that's a great way to anticipate any kind of obstacle that's going to be ahead of you and adjust for literally paying the price, paying the cost to achieve your goal.

Now, a lot of times when I say something like, "Hey, you're not incurring the cost or you're not paying the money or paying the price for the goal," people are like, "Yeah, I don't want to."

And I'm like, "Okay, so think of it as an investment in the stock market. You can't get paid returns if you're not willing to invest the money, right? You can watch the returns in the DOW, you could say, oh my gosh, there's a

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10% return over this year, but I wasn't willing to put my money in, so therefore I couldn't get that result. I couldn't get that dividend. I couldn't get that interest paid on that. If you're not willing to invest the money, there's no way you can get the return."

So understanding the cost of something doesn't mean it's a bad thing or a negative thing. We don't go around going, "Well, I want to make money in the stock market without putting any skin in the game." We don't do that. I mean, we may say that but we know that that's not realistic. But yet with our goal sometimes, we don't calculate and commit to the investment of the cost in order to get the returns.

So I feel like when the benefit of the goal, the promise of the goal is the most strong, which is usually at the beginning, that's when we need to also understand the cost. So our motivation is high, we are already planning for how we're going to handle and overcome and invest in our own goal, and anticipate and know that yes, the effort that we're going to put in is the cost.

So here's the process I want to recommend that you go through as you're writing goals, or even those of you who, maybe your motivation has waned for a goal, this is a really good process to go through. So step one is really asking yourself, what is the point of this goal? Why am I achieving it? Why am I putting myself in this position to stretch myself and to grow and to put extra effort that I'm not currently expending in my life?

For me, and I know a lot of you have adopted this philosophy and I think it's a very helpful one, for me, goal setting is not about the end game. It's not about cashing in at the end because I am very clear because I've done this with weight loss, I've done this with drinking, I've done this with my business, I've done this with money, I know that it's not better there than here.

I know that for sure in terms of life is always going to be 50:50. I may eliminate a bunch of problems by achieving the goal, but I'm going to have

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a whole bunch of new ones that I couldn't have anticipated so my life is still going to be 50:50.

But for me, the point of setting big, audacious, impossible goals is I want to grow, I want to expose myself to life, I want to explore my own capacity, I want to live the biggest, most expansive life, the most abundant life I possibly can. I want to see the corners of who I am. For me, that is the point of the goal.

And I understand that the benefit of that to me is worth the cost. We'll talk about the cost in a minute, but that is step one. You have to understand, what is the point of the goal for you? And the bigger meaning that you have for achieving the goal for you personally, the more motivation you're going to have.

So if I set a goal to make \$100 million and that's the only reason is I want to spend \$100 million, I promise you, that is not going to be enough motivation. It's way too shallow, it doesn't have any purpose behind it, and it's way too easy to give up on.

Most of us - I mean really, if your goal is just to buy stuff, which is a lot of times you'll hear me say, "I love money," and what I really mean by that is I love money more than I love stuff. I love to be able to play the game of life, to use my mind and my ideas and the value that I create in the world to produce money by using everything that I've learned about my mindset, attraction, abundance, creation.

For me, that's what it's about. It's a game. It's the game of life. It's playing with reality. And it's doing impossible things that blow my own mind. That's what my goals are about to me. So that's what makes it continually be interesting. I don't care about the stuff at all. And most of us actually don't. When it really comes down to it, we're not willing to sacrifice anything in terms of effort just for stuff ultimately.

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So for you, what is your why? What is the point of your goal? And make sure you really understand your motivation behind it, and then weigh it against the cost.

The second question that you can ask yourself is what will be the strategic byproduct of attempting this goal? And I really like to use the word attempting the goal because I think a lot of times we get confused and we say what are the strategic byproducts of achieving the goal. And while you're on the journey, you want to be having byproducts, you want to be having benefits, you want to be seeing some return on your investment as you're going because if you have to wait until the very end, it's much more challenging.

I'll use another example with investments. So there's many kinds of investments that I do with my money, but one of them is investing in something for a long return where I'll invest in a building that's being built and it's going to be rented and then eventually sold, or I'll invest in a business that's going to be built and eventually sold.

And in an investment like that, there is no return in the short term. And in fact, it's just constant - they keep asking for more money and you keep having to invest more money. And an investment like that is much more challenging to put my money in and stay committed to than say, a stock that keeps paying me a dividend where I'm getting paid constantly as I go through the years in that investment.

And so I really want to encourage each of you when you set a goal to anticipate what are the strategic byproducts that you are going to create for yourself by attempting, not achieving, attempting and efforting with that goal.

So for example, you're going to learn more, you're going to get stronger maybe, you're going to meet new people, you're going to establish a state of discipline, you're going to understand yourself more. All just by attempting the goal.

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I will tell you, there are many goals in my life that I have set that I haven't achieved, but I'm so glad that I set the goal, I'm so glad that I had the goal because in attempting it, it led to something amazing. It led to something different. We don't always have to achieve the goal to experience the incredible benefit from it.

I've heard people say to me, "I set this goal and I didn't achieve it so it was such a waste." And I'm always helping them explore how it wasn't a waste. How making the decision to set a goal and putting the effort into the goal and even quitting the goal all creates a benefit in your life, a strategic byproduct in your life that you can utilize to move on to the next thing.

The next question you want to ask yourself is, what are the tangible and the intangible benefits of this goal? What are the things that I'm going to literally achieve and get in my life, maybe it's weight loss, maybe it's a healthier body, maybe it's more energy, but then it's also a sense of pride.

If I'm making a significant change in my body it's a sense of pride, it's a sense of control, it's a sense of understanding. Whenever I'm trying to help someone achieve their goal of weight loss, one of the main things that I want to help them understand is that they don't have an overeating problem, they have an under-feeling problem.

And for me, one of the benefits of my weight loss was truly learning how to feel my feelings instead of eating and instead of buffering. That was one of the most amazing benefits. Also, my weight loss journey gave me a foundation and a structure for achievement, for goals, for understanding how to achieve what seem to be impossible.

I learned a skill. I learned the skill of discipline, I learned the skill of believing in myself, I learned the skill of commitment. So many benefits that I achieved from just attempting that goal, let alone achieving it.

Now, once you have all of your benefits documented, once you have them all written down, you want to explore how you feel and how important they

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are and set yourself up for the next question, which is, am I willing to pay the cost of this?

For me, one of the benefits of goal setting, goal attempting, and goal achieving is I find it very fun. I find it very enjoyable. I think that it is invigorating to commit to something insane. And I actually like telling people about my goals and I like attempting them and I like the obstacles, I like everything about it.

And for me, that benefit is one of the most important pieces of any goal that I set. I have to be having fun while I'm doing it. And so when I start exploring the cost, I have to weigh it against, is it going to take away anything that I value in my life? Because there are some costs I'm not willing to pay, but there's a lot of cost that I am willing to pay.

And you'll be the same. You'll know, "I'm willing to pay this cost but I'm not willing to pay that cost." So that brings us to the next question, which is, what are the tangible and intangible costs of setting, attempting, and achieving this goal?

I like to start with the most obvious, which for business would be money and time, for weight loss would be pleasure from food is going to be one of the costs, excess pleasure from food, and time, and effort in terms of mental effort. And truly, comfort.

I think one of the biggest costs for most goals is giving up our comfort, is giving up the coziness of the cave. Are we willing to venture out into that cold brisk air in order to find out and explore other terrains of our own life? Other possibilities, other dimensions of our own life.

And I think it's important to make that decision ahead of time because when we don't anticipate that chilly air, we don't anticipate being out there all alone, when we get out there, we're like, "Wow, where's all my benefits? Why am I experiencing this right now? I'm going back in the cave." Most people do go back in the cave. Most people do not incur the cost of

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achieving amazing goals and incur even the cost of attempting amazing goals.

When I look at the cost, one of the main costs for me of most goals is that I may not achieve it. And I think that is something that is not considered enough. So when you set a goal for yourself, you have to consider the cost of achieving it, but you also have to consider the cost of not achieving it. What is the cost if you don't even set the goal in the first place? What are you costing yourself if you don't attempt it? What are you costing yourself if you don't achieve it?

It may be health, it may be a certain body size, it may be a certain amount of money, it may be a certain amount of growth in your own life. So there is a cost to achieving, but there's also a cost to not setting, attempting, or achieving a goal as well. And that is something to consider for sure.

For most goals, the costs are going to be significant in terms of mental effort that is going to be required, that wouldn't be required if you didn't set the goal, and the discomfort of growth and anticipating that, and really writing down specifically what that would mean.

Some other costs may be, I'm not going to be able to spend as much time with friends, I'm not going to be able to spend as much time surfing the internet and being on social media, I'm not going to be able to spend as much time, in some cases, with my family, I'm not going to be able to vacation as much while I'm attempting this goal, I'm not going to be able to go out to eat as much, I'm not going to be able to lay around as much, I'm not going to be able to eat gummy bears as much.

Whatever it is for your goal, knowing ahead of time the sacrifices that you're going to have to make, the effort that you're going to have to put in, what you're going to have to give up in order to achieve that goal. And then once you have these two lists, you have all the benefits and the point of setting the goal in the first place, and then you have the cost, you have to sit there and say, "Okay, is this worth the cost?"

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You want to look at the cost and know, if I pay this price, will I get the benefits of attempting the goal? And look at it in terms of attempting. If I attempt this goal by paying all these costs, this isn't even about achieving it, will I get the benefits of attempting it?

And if you look at it that way instead of achieving it, you're going to be able to trick your brain and talk your brain into working towards the goal at your own benefit and not at your own expense. That is a very important distinction. What costs are you not willing to pay?

For me, I am not willing to pay any cost to my values at all to achieve a goal. I'm not willing to pay the cost of my health. So working really long hours, I'm not willing to do it. Not getting sleep, not willing to do it. For me, if there's too much travel or too much public speaking or a lot of extroverted energy that I'm going to have to expend, I'm not willing to do that. I just know that I don't enjoy that. If it's going to cost me having fun in my life, I'm not willing to pay that cost.

Now, it doesn't mean that these costs can't be looked at and evaluated and adjusted. We can adjust our activities so we don't have to pay certain costs so we can still achieve the goal, and that's important. But you need to know when you look at this cost-benefit analysis if you're willing to pay the price that it's going to require and that you're being honest about what the costs are to attempt the goal versus not attempting the goal.

And if the benefits of attempting the goal are good enough and they usually are, they usually are, expending that effort, developing the discipline, having the growth, learning the content, learning about your own brain, learning about how to do something, the excitement that comes from living a life on purpose and consciously and creating something new, even if it is just your own day, even if it is just your own life, is usually worth it.

And when you look at it that way, you're not going to constantly be evaluating yourself against whether you've achieved the ultimate goal yet, or even whether you're close to achieving the ultimate goal yet. You're

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going to evaluate yourself on am I benefiting from the attempt? And am I truly paying the cost in order to get the benefit? Have I put the effort, the money, the time in, in order to get a return on my investment?

And if the answer is yes, you keep going, regardless of how long it takes and regardless of whether you've achieved the goal or not. And if when you look at that cost-benefit analysis and the cost is too high and you are paying the cost, you are putting in the effort - and only you know if you're doing that.

Many times when I ask my clients, "Hey, what have you done really tangibly to achieve this goal?" They're saying, "Well, I've just been really frustrated and really doubtful and really scared," which feels like effort but it's not. Have you really taken the steps to pay the cost to make the investment? If the answer is yes and the cost is just too high, I'm not willing to do this, then that's when you change your goal, when you're being really honest with yourself.

But I would say that if you take the time upfront, nine times out of 10, you're going to recommit to paying the cost of attempting the goal so you can get the benefit of attempting the goal. My life is filled with benefits, not from goal achievement but from goal attempting.

And sometimes, the price is failure. We are going to fail many, many times along the way to your goal and that is a cost that you might have to pay along the way. You may be trying to build a business, and many times you may try to make a deal or you may try to get a client or a customer and you may fail at that, and that is the cost.

The cost is the rejection, the cost is the frustration, the cost is the lack of money that you don't get from that client and the effort that you put in. But what is the benefit for having attempted it? What did you learn? What did you feel? What did you overcome in order to just put yourself in that position?

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Do not underestimate the power of that benefit. That is what you will accumulate. All the benefits you accumulate from your attempt, from failure, from all of that is the ingredient to ultimately achieving your goal. So take your time to do a cost-benefit analysis on your goal and commit to paying the cost of the attempt.

I highly encourage you to think about your goals in this way. And be very, very careful and deliberate about any kind of consideration of quitting your goal. Do not do it haphazardly. If you are going to consider quitting on any goal, you need to sit down and do this cost-benefit analysis and be super honest with yourself.

Do not quit a goal because you feel overwhelmed and frustrated because that feels like effort. Sit down and ask yourself, have I really given myself the investment that is required? And if not, my friends, let's get to work.

I hope you love this cost-benefit analysis as much as I do. I was willing to wake up at 5am to share it with you all. So go and do this on all of your own goals and set the biggest most audacious goals you can and start attempting them now.

Have a beautiful week everyone. Talk to you later.

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