

Ep #497: Negative Self Noise



Full Episode Transcript

With Your Host

Brooke Castillo

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You are listening to *The Life Coach School Podcast* with Brooke Castillo episode number 497.

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.

Well hello, beautiful friends. How are you? I'm good. I'm so good. I have been home in Scottsdale from my trip and I have just been working like crazy. It's kind of fun when you're working on the road, because the way that my job has been, obviously, I can travel a lot because I can work from anywhere, which is amazing. But to be home at my desk with all my equipment, with just everything in place to be able to work with ease is so nice.

So I've just been working like crazy. I've been sitting at my computer doing lots of work and also playing a lot of pickleball. One of the things that I couldn't really do when we were traveling abroad was play pickleball. They don't really have pickleball in Europe. They have a sport called paddle ball, which is, I think, much harder. Paddle ball you can hit the ball off of a wall and then over the net, which we could not figure out.

We spent a lot of time laughing. The paddles are totally different and the surface is different. We kept trying to play pickleball on paddle ball courts, so that didn't work either. But now that we're home, we are back to playing pickleball. The weather in Scottsdale is great right now, so we're able to play and we're having so much fun.

I'm actually leaving next week for a couple days to go to pickleball camp. Yes, my friends, I am going to pickleball camp. I could not be more excited. I had no idea that in my 50s I was going to discover a whole new world to be excited and ambitious about. Plus, pickleball is actually super fun. Meeting all sorts of interesting, amazing, all ages, types of people.

And that's one thing that's really cool about pickleball, is it's so inclusive for anyone who is healthy enough to play, physically healthy enough to play.

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There's so much skill involved that I've played with people who have lots of injuries who are still able to play and kick my butt.

So anyway, pickleball. I'm so excited about it. If you haven't played, you have to go try and play. If you want to know a secret, you can play if you remember at Lifetime Fitness, they have pickleball there. So you can go and do like a beginner class if you're brand new, or have someone take you out to a public court where it's free and at least hit the ball around. We did it with my whole team last year. Actually that was this year when we all went out and played. It was so much fun.

So today we're going to talk about negative noise, negative self noise. And the reason why I wanted to do this topic is I've done a couple calls in Get Coached lately where they had themes, like every person I coach kind of has the same theme. And one of the things that has been coming up a lot is there's a lot of negative noise that's in our brains that has been there for a long time that we don't even notice that it's negative.

It just seems like we're relaying the facts. It seems like we're just observing the world, but really we're judging the world and ourselves in a very negative way. So, often what I'll tell my client after I've coached them is I'll say, "Watch this back. Watch this recording back so you can see your own brain at work."

And it's actually a really powerful way to be able to understand yourself because you see yourself talking, and in your mind you're just telling me what's going on. But when you watch it back, you can see how everything has maybe a negative tinge to it. And that's not your fault, it's your brain's fault.

Brains are always looking for danger. They're always looking for negativity. They're always trying to keep us alive. But if we're not conscious of it, we will start to really see the world with very foggy, dingy colored glasses. And that's not going to help us when we're trying to stay motivated to our goal or motivated for our life or positive about our life.

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So I want to bring to your attention, every single one of you listening, that you have some negative self noise. And that is that noise in your brain that is telling you negative things. It's telling you negative things about yourself and negative things about your life and negative things about the world.

Now, we sometimes want our brain to tell us negative things. I know that sounds crazy, but it's important to make that distinction because otherwise we get into this web of toxic positivity that isn't authentic. And that has never been what I've taught anyone, because it doesn't work, right?

Telling yourself everything's great, everything's great, everything's great, everything's great, everything's great when your brain is really saying, "No it's not. No it's not. No it's not. No it's not" is not going to be useful. Positive affirmations are good if you want to believe them, and you do. But they're not good if you don't believe in them.

So in much of the coaching that I've done, a client will have experienced something negative, like super negative. Like maybe a spouse has cheated on them, for example. And they come to me and they're like, "I am just having so many negative thoughts and negative feelings about this and I want to change them."

I say, "Do you? Do we want to change our thoughts and feelings about something like that? Or do we want to actually just process the pain of it, the negative pain of it?" Right? Sometimes when we look at the world and the atrocities that are happening in the world and the pain that is happening in the world, we want to have negative thoughts about that. And we want to feel the pain of that.

Now, the difference is when I use the word noise, I'm talking about unconscious negative thoughts. The unconscious rattling of the brain, okay? I'm not talking about negative thoughts and feelings that we choose to have on purpose when terrible things happen.

It's very important that we acknowledge when someone gets hurt, we want to have a thought that that sucks. When something happens in our life that we didn't want to have happen, that we didn't have any control over, having

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a thought “this sucks” can be very relieving. Processing the pain of that can be really powerful. You don't want to have something happen in your life and be like, “This is fantastic. I'm so glad that I got this diagnosis,” right? But we also don't want to create unnecessary suffering.

So one of the best ways to access your own negative noise is to do what I call a thought download. And this is basically where you take all of the negative thoughts that are in your brain and you put them on a piece of paper. Or you can put them on your computer or on your phone if you prefer. The point is to get them out of your brain to see that you are separate from them, to see that they're not simply just reality, and to evaluate them.

Which one of these negative thoughts do I want to keep? And which of these negative thoughts do I want to change? Which ones are causing me clean pain that I want to process and which one of these are causing me unnecessary suffering that I don't want to deal with? And sometimes you'll change them and sometimes you'll just notice them and they'll disappear.

Let me give you an example of negative noise. I went to the doctor to get a physical and they gave me an EKG which is basically, if you've never had an EKG, I hadn't, they put these little stickers all over your body and they attach these little cords to them. And they measure the electrical pulses that go through your body. I have so many doctors, students and clients who are cringing at me right now. I love you, doctors.

And I went into my primary's office and she ran the test and she said, “Hmm.” The nurse practitioner ran the test and then she said, “I'm going to have to have the doctor look at this.” I'm like, “That doesn't sound good.” So she went out, had the doctor look at it and then came back and she's like, “I need to redo it.” And I was like, “Okay, why? I don't like the sound of this.”

So then she redid it and the doctor came in and said, “Hey, yeah, I'm going to need to refer you to a cardiologist, your EKG is not normal.” Then my brain decided to start thinking against my own will. You guys know this,

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catastrophizing, my brain is very good at it. My brain does this for any reason.

If I text my child and he doesn't text me back within five minutes, my brain comes up with every single reason why he didn't text me back and none of them are reasonable. None of them are good. Everything includes some form of atrocious death. And the same thing happened to me when she told me I needed to go to the cardiologist because my EKG wasn't normal.

Immediately I was going to die. Immediately. I went straight to it. I didn't even know really anything about what that meant. I barely know what a cardiologist would do with an EKG. I was Googling, which I highly advise against. Every time I Google anything about my health, I end up with leukemia. I don't know how that happens, but I'm sure that I'm going to die immediately.

It's really not a good idea for people like us to try and figure out what is wrong with us on Google. That's not to say that we shouldn't do our own research and we shouldn't advocate for ourselves, because I absolutely believe that we should. But in this case, the negative noise was taking over.

And she told me that I probably wouldn't be able to get into a cardiologist for several weeks. I was like, okay, I don't know if I'm going to be alive in a couple of weeks to see the cardiologist, so we better make this happen sooner. So Caroline, my assistant, who is ridiculously amazing, got on the phone, found an amazing cardiologist that I could get into within a couple of days and I was only going to have to deal with this for 48 hours.

But I will tell you, the noise that went on in my brain about everything that could have possibly happened, and everything that I've done wrong in my life with my health, and everything that I do was just insane, right? It was just crazy. And I call my friends to talk about this with them and they're all very reasonable and they're very, like logical. And I'm hysterical, right? In my own brain, it's so amazing the noise that can be created by one thought. One stimulus created that.

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By the way, I went to the cardiologist, he did the EKG, it showed the exact same thing. And he just said it's abnormal, but it's a normal abnormal. You're perfectly healthy. There's nothing wrong with you, there's just a couple of things that would normally show up on an EKG that aren't showing up here. But it doesn't mean there's anything wrong with you, the primary physician always likes to double-check with the cardiologist just to make sure.

So I was like, oh my God, I cannot believe the amount of drama that my brain created over something like that. It was really, really powerful. Other examples that have happened with my clients are sometimes it is something more significant that maybe you do go to the cardiologist and maybe there is something wrong. Maybe there is a diagnosis. And the brain just goes nuts. It just doesn't help, right?

If you get a diagnosis that is “negative,” your brain's job is to keep you alive. And so it is going to freak the eff out on purpose. And you have to understand that that is noise that is not going to serve you in getting healthy and healing and taking care of yourself. And so if you can get that noise out of your head and onto paper, you can evaluate it from a much more conscious decision-making skill set.

So I had to write everything down. And it went on and on and on and on and none of it was logical. Being able to look at it from inside my brain, outside my brain I could see like, that is not true. We are jumping to a lot of conclusions of death before we've even got the information that we need. And so that was able to calm me down.

And it also gave me the strategic byproduct of understanding and having compassion for my own brain. I love my brain so much. I think it is the most valuable asset in the world. I love to think about it like that. When all of us have a brain, the brain is the most valuable asset anyone can have, right? It's better than anything you can purchase, period. It's the most extraordinary thing.

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And so sometimes because our brains are so negative, we're tempted to not like our brains. But the one thing that I love about my brain is that it can analyze itself. It can think about what it thinks about, it's so extraordinary. And it can create. All of creation from the human perspective comes from the brain. But the brain is also very primitive in some ways, in terms of always wanting to try and protect us.

So there's examples like that, where there's some significant thing that happens in the world and then it sets off negative brain noise. But also on a typical Tuesday you can have a lower grade noise going on that you're not even aware of. And I think this is more insidious and scary if you don't acknowledge it, because it will send you on a plane, on a reality, on a track, on a dimension that is unnecessary.

I was coaching a woman and she was constantly talking about how she wasn't good at something. She wasn't good at this and she wasn't good at that. And she was just telling me, like just for my information. Like, just so you know, I'm not good at these things. And I pointed it out to her, and I said, "Do you think it's useful for you to constantly be saying that you're not good at these things that you need to do in order to achieve your goal?"

And she's like, "Well, I'm just not." I said, "Right. I'll let you think that if you want, but I just don't think that it serves you. You may have evidence that that is true, but you probably have evidence that it's not true. And maybe all of this negative thinking isn't serving you." And one of the ways that I like to present this to my clients is, would you ever say that to someone else?

Even if it were true, would you say it out loud to them? Let alone call them every single day, seven times a day and tell them that? Because that's what you're doing. Would you be like, "You know, you're not really good at this, you're not really good at this. Hey, friend, you're not really good at this. Oh, me again, you're not really good at this." Would you do that, even if it were true? No. Why not?

It's not useful. It's not powerful. It's mean and hurtful. And so when you take back your choice, which is what's so brilliant, the brain will think thoughts

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on purpose, but it will also change thoughts if you use your higher prefrontal to control your lower primitive brain. And you can understand that you don't have to keep thinking things that aren't serving you well.

You can, of course, choose to think negative thoughts that do serve you and do incorporate your values and what you want to be upset about, of course. But there are things that aren't useful for you to think. Anything that is super judgmental about yourself and who you are and how you perform is usually not necessary or useful. And we have a lot of it.

As a coach, I can see it so clearly in you. I can see so clearly the inflicted pain and suffering that you cause is completely unnecessary, just by subtle little thoughts. I'm not good at this. I'm not a good person. I suck at this. I don't know how to do this. I'm stuck.

And then all the negative thoughts we have about other people's thoughts about us, that's a whole other like full download. They don't like me. They think I'm stupid. They're going to criticize me for doing this. I'm embarrassed because they saw this, that or the other thing.

By the time we're done with our day, we've had so much negative noise in our own brains, we don't have any reprieve from it. And we wonder why we're so stuck and exhausted and frustrated. So much of it is just from this negative noise.

I can't emphasize how important it is to give yourself some time to access it. Avoiding your negative noise and pushing it away out of your conscious reality is the last thing you want to do. You want to bring it to your consciousness so you can make conscious decisions about it. There are single thoughts that can get lodged in your brain that you aren't conscious of that can affect your whole life.

For many of us, it's some version of I'm not good enough. I don't deserve this in my life because somehow I'm not worthy. And if we don't uncover that thought, if we don't pull that thought out and change that on purpose, we will go down the rabbit hole of negativity towards ourself and judgment

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towards ourself, and probably a lot of buffering that will perpetuate this idea that we're not worthy and that we're not good enough.

The simple exercise of writing down thoughts, and one of the things that I do is when I'm driving or I'm walking, I listen to myself think. I eavesdrop on my own noise. And I see I'm being pretty negative. And one of the clues, one of the tells that you know that you're being negative with yourself and that you have negative noise is how you're thinking about other people.

Projection is real, my friends. So when you think about people on the internet, or when you think about people on social media, or you think about your neighbors, or you think about people in your job, or people in the world. If you have a lot of negative thoughts about other people, chances are nine times out of 10 you're probably having a lot of negative noise about yourself too.

Clean up the negative noise. Clean it up in your life by acknowledging it, looking at it and deciding consciously to change it. It doesn't serve you. It's always going to be there. It's kind of like dust, you have to clean it out every week from your house, and you have to pay attention to it. If you start getting a little bit lazy, you start getting a little bit unconscious, that negative noise will reappear. You won't even notice that it's there and it will start to wreak havoc on your life.

And you do not want to let this happen. Watch your negative noise. Watch it when you get a big trigger that ignites it. But also watch it on a regular day. Watch it when you wake up, that stream of consciousness, what is it saying? And is it saying what you want it to say? Because you can program it to create the life you want.

All right, my friends, go pay attention to your negative noise. Have a beautiful day. I'll 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, I'm excited. I have another feature coach that I want to introduce you to. Her name is Cathy and I'm excited about this talk, because I've got some questions. And I happen to be able to have a ringside seat to some of her transformations. So we're going to talk about that.

And I think everybody who's listening is going to be able to benefit from this. So introduce yourself, Miss Cathy, and tell us all about you.

Cathy: Hi, everyone. I'm Cathy Council. And I am a Master Certified Life Coach with The Life Coach School. And I coach women on how to look good naked, get fit, and enjoy the foods that they love at the same time.

Brig: I love it. How to look good naked.

Cathy: Yes.

Brig: I love it, right? Okay, so I'm glad you said you're a master certified coach, because you actually were in my group. So I actually was able to have a ringside seat to the process that you went through. For those of you that don't know, as a master coach, you pick a project that stretches you, that helps you to grow. So what project did you pick and why?

Cathy: Okay, my project was to complete 90 dares without buffering and to document the experience. And the goal was to free myself to experience my feelings, the full range of emotions.

Brig: Now, why was that a big thing? Because what does that even mean? Like for someone listening it's like the goal was actually, like you did these dares so that your feelings would come up, emotions would come up. And why was that important?

Cathy: That's a great question. So that was important because I have a tendency, if you think about your top three feelings on any given day, I was either in sort of this neutral, vague state of what I called matter of fact. Or I was in some form of anger. Frustrated, irritated, annoyed, fury, the full range of anger emotions.

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Brig: So, in other words, the matter of fact was kind of like I was stuffing or numbing or not experiencing it, or what I call like, it is what it is kind of.

Cathy: It is what it is. It was a level of acceptance, but it was also a level of detachment. It was like, it just is what it is. And I would just call that matter of fact, and move forward from there. But how I know that it wasn't fully neutral is because it would also come with this low level irritation that was always simmering at the same time.

Brig: So good. So why did you pick that?

Cathy: I chose that because I recognized that I can't stay angry all the time. And it's exhausting. So that was probably like a byproduct of me being in some form of irritated, negative emotion, running through everything. Even as I'm achieving my goals, weight loss goals, fitness goals, I'm knocking everything down, business goals, but then I would have this low lying irritation and not really enjoying any of it. Or I could only enjoy it so much, and then the irritation would be back.

So I wanted to get to a place where I could fully enjoy the things that I was accomplishing. But also sort of that neutral feeling also felt very detached and almost as if I wasn't present with myself. So I wanted to be more present, even in the full range of emotions that I knew were there because anger is there, and anger comes secondarily to my other emotions.

Brig: Right, right. So in other words, you wanted to check into your life a little bit more and be present with it. But it's so interesting that you're like, but in order to check in, I literally had to open myself up to feel my emotions.

Cathy: Yes.

Brig: And then I'm sure people are like, uh-huh.

Cathy: Yes. And what made this a challenge is I became so adept at functioning in anger. So anger, for me, was a power emotion. I got things done. I can accomplish. I move forward. I take risks. And it was all being

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driven through anger. So, whereas a lot of people may say, I don't want to get angry, I'm scared of my anger, I actually embraced it.

But I recognized the negative side of it was the drain I felt on the other side.

Brig: Yes.

Cathy: Right? There was this negative backlash, the exhaustion, the drain, the disquiet of not enjoying all of my hard work. So I wanted to solve that.

Brig: Okay, so what was the result? What happened?

Cathy: Yes, the result was I really expanded my emotions. And the key was really putting in this piece about not allowing myself to numb. I had also gotten very good at selective numbing of emotions so that I could function and keep moving forward.

So removing the ability to numb and actually sitting with the emotion in the discomfort of my body and spending time figuring out. I literally would look up words for emotions to try and figure out which emotion is this, so that I could expand my vocabulary for what I was feeling.

Brig: Yeah.

Cathy: And I kept track of all of those emotions as they came up, like how often I felt them.

Brig: So good. Like you literally took this, because I watched you take this project with so much curiosity and honesty and vulnerability. You just shared what you were going through, where, and what was coming up. And you expanded your vocabulary, like you really took this project on. And I know, because I watched you, all the benefits of it, but how has this helped you help your clients in your area?

Cathy: Yes. Okay, so this is wonderful because a lot of my clients come to me with this generic feeling, which is actually a negative feeling of, I don't feel like it. I don't want to. But they don't actually have the expression of what it is they don't feel like. And so by me also learning to find the words

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for the emotion I'm feeling, identify it in my body, learn the nuances in the different emotions, it was like "I don't feel like it" became much more specific.

One particular client that I'm thinking of where hers was grief, she didn't want to experience grief in any form. But it was for things that had happened years ago, but she couldn't identify it now that she had this low level grief humming through her that was sending her to buffer with food.

And so we were able to kind of get at it as, you know, start very basic. Are you sad? Are you neutral? Is it bad? Is it uncomfortable? And just keep going until we got to a point where when we identify, is it grief? And she was like, that's it. It's grief.

And being able to experience the emotion and then allow for it and explore why you don't want to feel that emotion and understanding that you can experience that emotion and allowing it to come through like the waves of an ocean. Yes, it's going to come but it's going to hit the shore and it's going to recede and you will still be standing there.

So that has helped me tremendously because a lot of my clients have this emotion, which they don't even realize is an emotion of not wanting to do something. And what's beneath that? That's our shortcut. I don't feel like it and I don't want to are the shortcuts in our language around these emotions that we don't want to experience.

And so being able to get under that and having that experience for myself has helped tremendously with my clients.

Brig: Okay. So let's go back to you because you were like, I got a lot done with my span of two emotions. It is what it is and anger. Are you getting more done? Less done? Like what's the result? Now that you have learned how to feel your emotions and are willing to feel all of them, like most of my clients, right?

Cathy: Yeah. Yeah, so I would say right now I am getting the same amount done, but this is also the time of the year where I'm sort of planning into

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next year. And I'm getting the same amount done. But what is different is the amount of energy that it is taking me to get things done.

And so I don't have as much fatigue on the other side. And I have more ideas, which I also thought was something that was blocked, like my ability to have new and fresh ideas. But I have more space now, so the ideas are coming and I'm able to see them.

Brig: Yes.

Cathy: So that is what's shifted. But as I'm looking forward to my new year, my planning, it's like, oh, I have so much more space, I can do so much more. I can already anticipate that so much more is going to get done in the new year because I am not experiencing this anger and then the backlash of the fatigue that comes with it as I push through to get things done.

Now I'll just be getting things done, and allowing the emotions to just come and go as they happen.

Brig: I love it. Like a lot of my clients, one of the things we work with is anger is like a simmering emotion for a lot of my clients. And I kind of describe it as like, we're going uphill, but we're going uphill carrying boulders. And everyone else is flying uphill and we're mad. And it could be that we used to have to carry the boulders, but actually we can let the boulders down.

It's still uphill, right? But it's like when we process our emotions and name our emotions and do that work and get in touch with our emotions, I think now we have the privilege of experiencing our emotions.

Cathy: I can totally agree with that. And it's like, because I'm into fitness, it's like training with really heavy weights. And then when you put the weight down, you realize how much buoyancy you actually have. But it might have been necessary for a time to use the weight to build the muscle to get that strength.

Brig: Right.

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Cathy: But then when you put it down, you get the speed and flexibility and agility. And you want that as well.

Brig: It's like training with a vest on.

Cathy: Yes, with a weight vest. Right, exactly that.

Brig: So good. Okay, well tell people how to get in contact with you. If you want to learn how to look good naked, Cathy is your girl. And, secretly, I'm going to call you out, she is literally the get it done person. She loves getting it done. So if you want to get it done with your weight loss and your fitness journey, she's your girl. Tell them how to get in contact with you.

Cathy: Yes, so you can find me on Instagram or Facebook, both at Cathy Council Coaching. That's Cathy with a C. And I also have a website, which is cathycouncil.com.

Brig: Okay, and council is spelled council, C-O-U-N-C-I-L.

Cathy: N-C-I-L, not the other way.

Brig: All right, well reach out. Amazing. I can tell you that it was an honor to watch you go through this process. And I knew that this was going to be so beneficial for you. And I'm so glad that you're reaping the benefits of it. And I can't wait to see you release all that energy and put it to work. Amazing work, free yourself up and just get more creative and do more.

Cathy: Yes. Thank you so much, Brig. It's been a pleasure.

Brig: Thank you. All right, bye guys. See y'all next time.

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