

Ep #498:Influence



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With Your Host

Brooke Castillo

Ep #498: Influence

You are listening to *The Life Coach School Podcast* with Brooke Castillo episode 498.

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.

Hey, gorgeous friends. What are you up to? I am sitting on a bed in the Ritz Carlton in New York, looking at Central Park. And when I say looking at Central Park, I'm looking kind of over Central Park at all of the fall colors. It is one of the most extraordinary views I have ever had in a hotel room. It is gorgeous.

I am kind of laid up here since I went and had a crazy laser treatment on my face. They do this thing where they basically burn off the top skin. It's like this laser treatment and your skin on your face scabs up and turns brown and then falls off. It's super attractive, not.

But anyway, so I've been in here just chilling out, looking at this gorgeous view, doing some work at the Ritz Carlton, New York in the fall. It's crazy, yesterday it was like 80 degrees and today it's overcast and cold, but beautiful. I have loved New York this year. This is my third time here this year and I have just been loving it. I like to come back and visit here when I can.

Let's talk about influence. And let's talk about where you're being influenced and make sure you're doing it consciously. I recently went and hung out with my friends, Alex and Leila. And Alex always blows my mind with – I mean, they both do, actually. But Alex blows my mind with these little one liners that he has. And one of the things that he recently said that I was like, “What?” “If you want to change your life, change the people you compare yourself to.”

And my mind literally exploded because it really made me think about how much we use life comparison to determine our emotional life. And I watch

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clients do it all the time, they compare their lives to some idealized version of their life that they think is the life that they're supposed to be living. And they cause themselves so much unhappiness because of it.

So basically, what they do is what many of us do, right? We have this idea of the good life, right? And it's typically some ridiculous version of you're born healthy and loved. And your parents parent you properly and they're happy and they stay together. And everyone stays healthy and no one is a hot mess. And everyone treats each other properly. And we do well in school, we don't do any drugs. And we don't have any problems with any of our relationships.

It's ridiculous what we compare our lives to. And so many times I'll have a client and they're like, it wasn't supposed to happen, or this shouldn't have happened. And I'm always like, oh, shouldn't it have? According to who, right? Like, according to this version that we have of our life.

Well, if everybody kind of has this idealized version that we've created, in our mind, where does that come from? Where does this idealized version come from? And for so many of us it comes from, it's like a composite of all these different expectations that we've been socialized to believe that are real and true and that's how life should be.

And I talk so much about this. I talk about how we're socialized and how we're educated and how we are brought up to believe certain things and to tolerate certain things and to expect certain things based on the people that went before us, and how important it is to consciously question all of the things that really influence us and the decisions that we make about the lives we want to have.

One of the topics many of you know that I talk about a lot is gender and the differences that we're socialized to believe about being a woman versus being a man. And especially for me in business and being a very successful and very wealthy woman and the messages that I've received around that growing up and also now that I've achieved that.

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It's kind of funny as a side note, as I've been kind of holed up in here I was watching, I think it was on Prime, the show Supermodels. And I'm just trying to look real quick to see if it was on Prime. But anyway, you can look it up. It's called Supermodels and it's basically all of the supermodels from back in the 80s talking about their experience of being supermodels. I actually really recommend it, it's really interesting to see how they used to do modeling versus how they do it now.

And they talk about how their pictures were taken and they couldn't be touching them up or editing them or putting filters on them or anything. They had to do all of the photography right there in the studio. Naomi Campbell's journey as a Black model is really fascinating to listen to and her experience and her attitude and how she kind of navigated that time. How they all did together and how they all supported each other.

It's really, really good. But one of the interesting things about it, there was this one comment in there where someone sits down, I think it's the woman that – I can't remember her name, but I think it's the woman that runs the modeling agency. And she basically – Eileen – and she basically sits down and the guy interviewing her says, “You're a very powerful woman. I know that that's not a very feminine word to use to describe you, but it's true.”

And I was like he said what? Powerful is not a very feminine word. And he was kind of like apologizing for using the word powerful to describe her and her influence in the modeling industry. And I'm like, dude, that wasn't even that long ago. How is this a thing? How is a woman being powerful non feminine?

And so you think about when you grew up, like even my parents, growing up with that level of influence, that level of socialization, that level of expectation, you're going to end up with certain belief systems because you're swimming in the water with it and you don't even realize it.

All the diversity and inclusion training that I've done has really helped me understand so many of the underlying messaging that we are not even aware of that happens in this world. And that has been, I think, one of the

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coolest things about becoming a better human, is just becoming more conscious. Becoming more aware of what we are influenced by, positive and negative.

And so I wanted to record this podcast to have you kind of go back to this question. Who are you comparing yourself to? And who is influencing you? And if you're not doing this consciously, you could end up with a life that you don't even care about. You could end up with a life where you're striving for something that doesn't even matter to you.

I don't think there's anything wrong at all with comparing yourself to someone, as long as you're using those comparisons as a way to inspire you, as a way to make you feel amazing, as a way to make you grow, versus as comparing yourself in a way that makes you feel badly. So think about that question.

As soon as I heard Alex say that I'm like, huh, who do I compare myself to the most? And who do I let influence me the most? For some of you, this is a pretty powerful question. For some of you it may be your family of origin, your parents. For some of you it may be your best friends.

For me, the answers were my best friends, for sure the most influential, my kids, my boyfriend and the books that I read. The people that I read books from, I think have the most influence on me. And so I need to be very conscious about that. I'm very careful about making sure that I want to be influenced and that I'm surrounding myself with stuff that I want to influence me.

One of the ways that I kind of manage to monitor this with myself is by watching myself pick documentaries. I love watching documentaries. By the way, side note, I'm onto side notes today. Juul, J-U-U-L, the documentary on that, I think it's on Netflix, is so fascinating. And one of the reasons why I highly recommend that you watch this documentary about this building and falling of this business, the vaping business, the Juul vaping business is, first of all, I think the documentary is so well done in presenting both sides.

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It doesn't create a big villain and a big victim. It shows how everything's kind of 50/50. And it's very rare that you will see a documentary without such a strong agenda. And this one, I think, does a really good job of not having an agenda, of just presenting kind of the dilemma and the issues that came up as this company tried to build itself and tried to get funding and tried to do advertising.

Fascinating, especially if you love business as much as I do. One of the fastest growing companies there ever has been was Juul. And them going up against the big cigarette companies and how that affected them, really, really interesting.

But when I'm selecting documentaries I'm always wanting to know like, what do I want to have influence me? Do I want to watch this documentary and be influenced by it in a positive way? Or do I want to resist it? And so sometimes I notice like if I'm watching a vegan documentary about going vegan, I can feel myself resisting wanting to watch that because I don't want to go vegan.

Or if there's one that's about conspiracy theories or something like that, I feel myself having this resistance up front and not being open to it. Not wanting to believe it, not wanting to be influenced by it. And I think it's just important that that resistance is conscious, that you're really thinking through, okay, is this something that I'm choosing not to believe on purpose? And do I like my reason for not doing it? Okay?

So who do you compare yourself to? If you want to change your life, change who you compare yourself to. And a lot of times, we end up comparing ourselves to people who aren't doing as well as us if we're trying to feel better about ourselves. Or we compare ourselves to people that are doing way better than us if we want to feel bad about ourselves. And I just want to offer that we can compare ourselves to other people in a way that inspires us.

And look also at who you're letting influence you. One of the best ways for you to do this is to look at your Instagram feed. What are the influences

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that you are allowing into your mind on a daily basis? And who do you want them to be?

I will tell you, one of my favorite things to do is to find energetic ass-kicking entrepreneurial women in their 50s and older who are taking care of their health and doing well in business. That is who I want influencing me. That's who I want talking to me all day, every day.

By the way, oh my gosh, side note number three. I was listening to masterclass.com, which is also amazing. Totally enjoy listening and learning on masterclass.com, I've been a member since the very beginning. But there is a lesson in there with Whitney Wolfe Herd, who started it.

And she started Bumble, which is the dating service where the woman gets to reach out to the man first, okay? That's the whole thing, if you don't know what Bumble is. I know Bumble very well. When I was dating, I was very much into Bumble. It was amazing, I loved it. Love her.

So as I'm watching her talk about money and talk about purpose and talk about value and talk about creating a ruckus and dealing with the haters that will come along with that and all those things, I'm like, this is a woman that I want to allow to influence me. I want more of her in my life. I want to be more like her in my thinking, be more like her in my growth, all of it.

And it made me think, okay, so when we're thinking about the people that we want to have influence us, we have to think, is this a person that I want to think more like? Is this a person that I want to act more like? Does this person have things that I want to have? Does this person show up in a way that I want to show up? And if the answer is yes, then yes, we want this person to influence us.

And so it's really cool. So it's like then you can go and follow people on social media, and then that person on a daily basis can have a little bit of a dose of influence on you. And there's also maybe people in your feed that you haven't really thought that they're influencing you in maybe a negative

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way. Maybe in a way that you don't want to be influenced. Maybe in a way that you just thought was funny, but you hadn't thought about consciously.

And you have to remember, the more you get exposed to certain things, the more normalized they are. The more desensitized you are to those things. And so you have to be aware, if you're going to follow something like that, that you do it with a conscious mind.

I don't think any of us, especially politically, should just be focused in one area or one thought process. I think we should expose ourselves to all the different ideas and be well versed in all sides of things because that's why I mentioned in that documentary there's so many different perspectives that you can be influenced by. And I think having a wide range of that is important. But doing it in a conscious way, where you're like, "Yes, this is how I want my life to be influenced."

So the first way is all your social media, which is where we're spending so much time. So it's very important that you know who's in your feed, who's influencing you, what are you reading in there. And the groups that you're hanging out with in social media. Are you hanging out with a bunch of groups of people that are complaining about stuff, whining about stuff, saying mean things about other people and to other people? Just because you're not doing it doesn't mean you're not influenced by it. So evaluate all of those groups.

The next one is the people that you spend time with. Here's a great question to ask yourself. When you think about the people that you spend time with, what do those people think about you? How do they feel about themselves? What are their standards for their life? How do they behave? Are you inspired by them? And do you inspire them? And the way that you'll know that is by what they say to you and how they treat you.

This seems so simplistic, but I want – I did this exercise. I want you to do this with the people that you're spending time with, okay? And that's spending time with on the phone, spending time with in text, spending time with in your mind, spending time with in-person.

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It's not just in-person, these are your main influences. And what they think about you, what they think about themselves, how they treat themselves will have a huge impact, a huge influence on you. Think about your friends, your families, your co-workers.

And then I wrote this note to myself, I said, do a person with proximity audit. So proximity is people that are close around you physically that you may not think of as someone that you've chosen to influence you, but maybe they are. Maybe you have an assistant or an employee or the person that works, like for me, at the restaurant that I go to all the time, or the person that I'm playing pickleball with or against. The people that are helping me take care of the things around my house. All of those things, how are those people influencing you?

When I really thought about this consciously, I asked myself the question, what are the qualities that I want to be influenced by? Not just the people, but what are the qualities that I want demonstrated to me and I want to influence me? Like when you look up the word influence, it says the power to change or affect someone or something.

And if you believe that, if you're hanging out with influencers, right, influencers online or people in your life, that they will somehow influence you to make a change or do something different. And this could be as simple as following Kylie Jenner on Instagram and deciding that now you have to line your lips with a lip kit, right?

Or you're following someone that is working out all the time and they're influencing you to work out more and to eat more healthy, okay? It doesn't have to be something that you're purchasing from them, it could just be the way that you act. You could be following someone or spending time with someone.

I'll give you a great example of my friend Tonya Leigh. Being around her in my life, she has influenced me so much in terms of the way that I dress. She didn't even have to tell me how to dress, although she will if I ask her. But just the way that she shows up has such an influence on me. The way

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that she always looks so nice. The way that she's always so presentable. The way that she always takes care into how she presents has influenced me so much just by being around her.

Now, that's a conscious decision too. I notice it, I pay attention, I let it influence me in a positive way. And this is so great because when you choose to be around people that you want to be like, that you're inspired by, you can allow them to influence you. You can become more like them.

You've all heard this, you're the average of the five people you spend the most time with. And I don't think it's necessarily the five people that you spend the most time with, I think it's the five people you let influence you the most. And I will tell you that when I was younger my main influences were authors, were self-help authors and coaches. Those were my number one influencers. I opened myself up, I said, I want this person to influence me.

When I did this exercise, I also thought about the people that I want to influence me. And I don't want people that are constantly focused on shallow things to be influencing me. And they can if I'm not careful. People that are into more consumption than creation, into more purchasing than creating, into having to have the latest and greatest and shiniest and all that stuff.

That is very easy to get influenced by. And you just want to be conscious, am I letting this person who keeps doing these unboxing things on Instagram make me think that I need to get the newest iPhone, that make me think I need to get the latest bag, right? Those sorts of things. So just keep an eye on it.

And this can also, just crazily also be something that isn't even a real person that's influencing you. I remember, it's so crazy, when I used to watch Scandal I was so influenced by that character on Scandal. And the clothes she was wearing and how she was showing up. And it's not even the actress, right?

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It's not even the actual person that's influencing you, it's that character that's influencing you. The way that Kerry Washington played Olivia Pope had such a crazy impact on how I wanted to be and how I wanted to dress and how I wanted to show up. And I really made a decision that I wanted to be more like her and I let her influence me in so many ways. I let her change me.

So here are the types of people who I want to be influenced by. They are generous, kind, thoughtful and loving. They're ambitious, motivated, and non-judgmental. They're strong, they're fit and they're disciplined. And it can be a subtle decision that you make when you, for example, I go out onto the pickleball court and I see someone and they're a great player and they have a great attitude and they're having so much fun. It's like I want to be more like this person. I want to let this person influence me.

I feel the same way about my boyfriend who's so kind and so thoughtful and so chill and just so loving. It's like I want him to influence me. He has influenced me so much in the way that he shows up and is just so kind and so present with people that I want to be around him more so I can learn more about that and be influenced more by that too.

When I compare myself to people, I want to say I handled this situation this way, but he handled that situation that way. I want to handle it more like him. So I'm not beating myself up over it, I'm just inspired by the fact that he was able to do it in a way that I want to do more of.

I will tell you, though, that this exercise really made me get invigorated. It really made me get excited about my potential to grow, my potential to learn, my potential to be influenced and to really appreciate other people and what amazingness they are too. And not to necessarily feel diminished by it, but to feel so much possibility from it.

And to also make some significant changes that if I was being influenced by or comparing myself to someone who I felt was causing me to feel less than or was causing me to be diminished, that I could just take them out of

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my feed. And I did and I could just take them out of my roster of people that I want to compare myself to.

It's crazy how we can end up comparing ourselves to people that we don't even want to be like, that we don't even like. And so it's like we're trying to beat them at a game that we don't even want to be like. And pickleball, for me, is my example of the day, always. But it's like when we play against a team that's overly aggressive and very obnoxious, but they win every game. I get frustrated because I want to win more, I want to win more.

And then I stepped back and I was like, wait, I don't want that pair of people to influence me. I don't want them and the way they're winning to make me want to win anymore because I don't want to be like them at all. And it was just such a relief.

I could just take them off of that list and then also look at someone who maybe does play better than me and has been playing longer and has more skill and use them as I want this person to really influence me and I want to really look up to this person and have them be someone in my life that I compare myself to in a really positive way.

So do this exercise, my friends. It is actually a trip. If you want to change your life, change who you're influenced by and change who you compare yourself to. And you can end up having a more inspired, more exciting, more amazing life all around. Not by eliminating the people, but by adding them in and being influenced by them.

It's a beautiful world out there. Go have a great, amazing week, my friends. I'll talk to you next week, bye-bye.

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