

Ep #501: How to Take an L



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With Your Host

Brooke Castillo

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You are listening to *The Life Coach School Podcast* with Brooke Castillo episode number 501.

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, beautiful friends. How's everyone doing? Some of you are not doing so good. Well, I have got the podcast for you today. The podcast today is called How to Take an L. Now, everybody knows that an L is a loss, right?

So I raised two boys who are always handing me Ls. They put their fingers, like their thumb and their pointy finger into an L and they hand me Ls all the time. Like, here's your L, mom. And so I adopted that and now I do that back to them. It's very fun.

Speaking of fun, my son Connor, we just moved him into his very first home. He's so excited. That's a W for him, for sure. And we're actually, me and the kids, are actually going to the F1 races in Vegas this weekend. So I'm very excited to hang out with them and do crazy things in Las Vegas with my adult children. How exciting is that?

But today on the podcast we're going to talk about losing. And we're going to talk about failing and we're going to talk about how to do it and how to do it well and how to sign up for it, raise your hand for it. I have talked about this a lot throughout the podcast.

A lot of how important it is to know how to fail, important how to anticipate failure, to plan on it, to be willing to process your emotions around it. But I don't know what is happening right now, but it seems like almost everyone I am talking to is taking Ls in some area of their life and they are having trouble dealing with it, having trouble managing.

And one of the things that I have seen pretty consistently is trying to change the circumstance to undo the L. To like rewind it, to prevent it from

Ep #501: How to Take an L

happening again, to hide from it. And what I want to talk about on this podcast is embracing your Ls. And opening up to them and not hiding from them and not pretending like they didn't happen and not blaming, but just really being present with that part of what life is. It will change your life, I promise you.

I have been watching a lot of football. I don't know if I've ever talked about this before, but I grew up watching football with my dad. And we would set up on Sunday in the living room with snacks and watch football. And so I have so many wonderful associations of being with Dennis, my dad, in the living room on fall days watching the 49ers play. And I would be reading a book, usually. Reading a book, watching football, napping. It's one of my favorite memories.

And whenever it turns fall time and football comes on, I get so excited to watch football. I'm not super into the teams and having my own team or anything like that anymore. I actually love to watch Red Zone because that's like the most exciting part where they're just showing when the teams are in the red zone, and so I've been watching a lot of that.

My boyfriend has a fantasy football team, so we're always watching random players on random teams trying to see if we can get them to win so he can win his fantasy football league.

So, anyway, I've been watching a lot of quarterbacks and kickers and teams, coaches, do poorly and lose and take hard Ls. And I always, I don't know what it is for me, but watching the kickers miss game-winning field goals is so heartbreaking for me. I'm always thinking about their mom. Like what's it like? You know, if my son was kicking the field goal to win the game and he missed it, I would be so devastated and heartbroken.

And then I'm watching and some of the coaches are getting fired and some of the offensive coordinators are getting fired and some of the players are getting benched. And watching all these different Ls, watching all these different losses and wondering how they're going to deal with it and how

Ep #501: How to Take an L

they're going to show up in their life and continue to go on when they have very publicly lost.

I've been talking to close friends of mine who have businesses and they're doing launches and their launches are failing and they're not able to sell as much as they used to. And that's not true for all of them, some of them are winning, some of them are losing. And, of course, losing is relative in the sense of how you think about it, right? How you would expect yourself to do, how many points you would expect yourself to score, versus how many you actually score.

And as you all know, I'm playing a lot of pickleball and winning and losing in pickleball myself, personally, and then also watching other people win or lose. I decided to do this podcast just because I had been hearing so many people struggling with losses, but I had one specific conversation with a friend of mine that was really not managing her L very well.

She had taken a very hard L. She had not done as well as she had wanted to do and she did not win the game in her business and was really trying to approach it from a way of undoing it and justifying it and kind of giving up. And I'm wondering if that's what's going on for some of you too.

Maybe you're losing in a relationship. Or maybe you're losing in a goal that you're trying to achieve. Maybe you're losing in your health. Maybe you're losing in your fitness. Maybe there's just a point where you need to just sit down and be like, okay, I'm going to take this L. And make sure that you don't apply it to the rest of your life.

So, for example, if I lose a pickleball game today it does not mean that I'm a loser in pickleball for the rest of my life. It means I lost a pickleball game. It doesn't mean I'm a pickleball loser, right? And yet, how many of us, when we lose a game, start thinking of ourselves as losers? We lose a season in our life, we start seeing ourselves as losers.

So for my friend, she tried something new in her business. She tried a new program and tried to launch it and tried to sell it and it didn't do what she had hoped it would do and she lost money on it. And she was thinking of

Ep #501: How to Take an L

herself as a loser. And she was deciding that nothing in her business was working and that she probably still shouldn't be in business anymore and that she didn't want to show her face anymore.

And it's so crazy, I know that so many of you can relate to this, especially if it is a loss that you're experiencing publicly. So other people know you have lost, right? So it's like these quarterbacks or you're playing in a pickleball tournament, or you're running a business and you're doing a launch and it's not working out, right? There's other people that are noticing that you're losing.

And, for me, and this has happened to me many times, people think I don't lose. That's not true, I lose a lot. But I win a lot too because I stay in the game. I've been around a long time, I'm not going anywhere, right? And I am willing to take chances. I'm willing to fail. I'm willing to fail publicly and to get it wrong and to make adjustments.

I just recently talked about this at my last mastermind. A big L that I've taken in my business was really expanding it and hiring a bunch of people and getting a bunch of executives and really building it up in a way that I thought would take us to the next level. And it just did not work the way that I had wanted it to work. And it was very defeating, very challenging, very hard for me emotionally.

And one of the things that I talked about at this mastermind, and I'll talk about with you here, is how important it was for me to stay open and experience the feelings around that and be willing to really take on the L and just admit, like this didn't work the way I wanted it to work. And not be ashamed of that and not be afraid of that and not be worried about it, but to do the following things.

And this is how you can properly take an L. All of you, okay? The first thing that you need to do is just accept it. Just be like, that's the score, I lost. Okay? I was hoping to win. I was hoping this is what would happen. I was hoping to be standing on that podium and getting applause. And instead I'm over here with my L getting booed. Be there.

Ep #501: How to Take an L

If you have a hard time processing a loss or a failure, or like really being in the space of that, just imagine children who are playing board games that when they lose, they don't want to play anymore and they throw the board in the air and they get really frustrated. Like, that's okay, that's how we feel inside. But the difference between us and a small child is that we can regulate and we can process and we can, step two, learn. We can learn from our losses.

We were recently driving home from pickleball, E and I, and I said to him, "Hey, I want to talk to you about why we lost that game. And I want to talk to you about what we can do better so we don't lose anymore." And, for me, that is part of the processing of it. It's like reviewing it, looking at it, seeing what I did wrong and owning it. Like we deserved to lose that game, period.

I'm not saying it's their fault, the sun was in my eyes, it was your fault, that you didn't do it right, it was whatever. I'm not making excuses, not blaming anyone, but just learning, right? Processing is number one, accepting and processing. Step two is really learning. What can I learn from this L? What can I take away? How can I make myself stronger for having done it?

Now, when you learn from your losses, when you use the information from a loss to make you better, you may become even better than you would have had you not lost. And this is one of the most important lessons that you can hear and be taught. And I know that many of you have heard it before, you will learn so much more from your failures than you will from your wins.

And I really do believe that's true on two accounts. I believe it is very important to learn how to feel the pain of loss, the pain of failure, because the better and more skilled you get at it, the more willing you will be to do it more. And when you think you should never lose and you should never fail and you should never be criticized and you should never feel shame, you miss out on taking chances and putting yourself out there and trying to grow.

Ep #501: How to Take an L

I will, for example, never regret, ever, trying to build a big team and scale with people. I will never regret that because now I know the way that I approached that and the way that I did that did not work. And I have so much more knowledge now than I did before I did that. And because of that, my business is going to be so much better and I am going to be so much better as a human.

I'm so excited to play pickleball against players I know are way better than me. So I can go play pickleball against a team that I know isn't as good as us and I can win, I'm not going to learn anything in that game. I mean, I might, but I'm probably not. I'm probably going to have fun, but I'm not going to learn as much.

If I play against players that are way better than me, I learn so much. I learn, oh, I can't be cutting over to the side. I can't be hitting it high and I can't be doing this. And I learn from watching them do it well, too. I learn from watching them kick my butt. And I learn where I'm weak and where I need to be stronger. And I learn where my ideas were right and my decisions were right.

It's all so similar, right? So similar in business, so similar in pickleball. Same with relationships. I've had some relationships where I took an L in the relationship and I made a mistake and I ruined something. I went about something wrong, I handled something the wrong way and I lost the relationship because of that, or I lost the person's respect or I lost their trust or I caused them pain in some way. And when I really take the time to learn from that, I come out so much better, and if I process the pain, so much stronger.

So you may have heard me say this many times, like I believe that success is built on a pile of failures because the failures are what make you strong. I love using the example of little kids learning how to walk because before they learn how to walk, every single thing they do is a fail. It's a fall, literally. They try to push themselves up, they fall down. They try to push themselves up, they fall down. They try to take a step, they fall down.

Ep #501: How to Take an L

But in the process of falling down and getting back up, falling down and getting back up, that's what makes them strong. Falling on the ground and pushing yourself up off the ground will make you stronger than just laying down. And once you get stronger, then walking becomes easy.

When you can get to the place where you are willing to take an L publicly, you are willing to fail, you are willing to experience shame and humiliation, that's when you're going to be at your strongest, at your highest level.

Think about this, there is no way you can be a professional football player and not take Ls. And you may be taking Ls throughout a game, but you may also be taking Ls throughout a season, right? There are all those little losses that you're going to take when you miss the ball or drop the ball, but you're also going to be taking losses throughout the season.

And you can't make a loss mean, oh, we lost a game, we shouldn't even try for the Superbowl now. We shouldn't even keep playing. Right? We want to keep showing up. What's next? What's next? What can I learn? What's next?

So those really are, for me, the three steps. The first one is to accept and process the pain of the loss. Step two is what can I learn from this to make myself stronger by feeling that emotion, by processing that emotion through? What can I learn from this on how to be stronger? And what can I learn from this on how to be better? And then the last one is, what's next? Will I dwell here, or will I move on to that next version of myself that's better because I lost this game, because this fail happened?

I want to add that I think – This was true for my friend that I had talked to, but I think this is also true for many of you. And many of you who have come to me as very successful people, you've gotten straight As in school, you had approval, you've done really well in your job, you have an adoring spouse, you have great kids, like all of these Ws that you come to me with. And you're ready to go to the next level, but you're not used to losing at all.

You set up your life to win, win, win, win, win, win, win. And so when I suggest some impossible goal or taking everything that's beyond the status

Ep #501: How to Take an L

quo to a bigger next level, the agreement that you have to make at that point is to lose. But you haven't lost before, you've been such a winner your whole life, I think you all have the hardest times.

And that was true for my friend, her business had just been a string of Ws. Every launch, every offer, every connection. But now going to that next level, trying to do that next level thing brought some Ls. And sometimes it's the circumstance and sometimes it's just a fluke and sometimes it's the time of year, who knows?

But if you're used to winning a lot, you're going to have a hard time losing if you don't have any practice at losing. And this is why I want to encourage you to have bigger goals. If you're not someone who has lost a lot, you're not going to be good at it. You're not going to be good at accepting those Ls, you're not going to be good at learning from them, you're not going to be good at moving on to what's next.

The bigger your dreams are, the bigger your ideas are, the bigger chances you take, the more losses, the more Ls, the more fails you're going to live through in your life. And I'm like, let's go. Don't forget that you signed up for this. Don't forget that this is what you want. This is a big part of your life.

For those of you, I don't know how many of you have watched the Beckham documentary, but it is so fantastic. I loved it. And you see in that documentary him making one mistake, taking one huge L and the price he had to pay publicly with the public shame that he got for that one mistake and how he accepted it, learned from it, moved on, kept playing, kept showing up, is truly a testament to, I think, his ultimate success.

I think he was stronger and better because he went through that, not in spite of it. And so for any of you who feel like you're taking an L right now, you've just lost something or you're losing, I want you to remember you are not a loser at all. You are someone who wins and you're someone who also loses.

And you can learn from each of your losses. For as long as you're losing and as long as that's happening, you can be learning and using it as an

Ep #501: How to Take an L

opportunity to make yourself stronger. What's next? Move on, keep moving. That's what I'm going to keep doing for the rest of my life, whether it's in my business, whether it's in my relationships or whether it's in, and hopefully mostly, pickleball.

All right, my friends have a beautiful week. I'll talk to you next week.

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