

Ep #504: Determination



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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.

Well hello, beautiful friends. How's it going? How's December going? It's going amazing. I am in a crazy time right now. I am literally closing on three houses. I'm selling two, I'm buying one, all within a three-week period. So it is wild over here. Exciting, lots of change, 2024 is going to be a very different, very exciting big year for me.

So I am thrilled to say goodbye to 2023 and say hello to 2024. I hope you're feeling the same way. I hope you've joined me in Scholars for 2024. It's going to be an epic year.

Today, I want to talk to you about determination and I want to talk about why I think determination is one of the most important skills that you can develop, that I can help you develop, that you can focus on.

I was reading about venture capitalists and how they decide how to invest in certain founders and certain companies. And they were talking about how there are so many companies out there that have a great product, they have a great marketing plan, they have great management.

And they have to decide between hundreds of companies that have all of these things, which ones to invest their money in. And one of the most important qualities that they were talking about that they look for in the founder is determination.

Because determination will really be the factor that gets most startup businesses to win, because most businesses will fail because the people running them will give up. And I just thought that was so fascinating because I don't think it's something that we're teaching in business school,

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and it's one of the most important things in having a successful business is determination.

It's way more important than your education, intelligence, and your talent. There are a lot of people, let me tell you all, a lot of people way smarter than me, with way more education, with way more talent that do not have the level of success that they may want because they're lacking in determination.

And I don't believe that determination is something that you're born with or not. I don't think it's a character trait that you either get or you don't get. I think it's a strength that you can develop. It's a positive emotion that you can continuously generate and build evidence for through your actions.

When I think of the word determination, I have a very positive, warm, appreciative, proud feeling. I'm curious for you, think about that word for you, does it feel amazing, positive, awesome, like something you want to develop in yourself? Or does it seem exhausting, overwhelming, challenging?

Because how you have an approach with determination, how you have a relationship with determination may really indicate and influence your life. So I would like to invite you to have an amazing relationship with determination and really commit to developing more of it because I think it will serve you so much in your life.

Again, I have coached literally thousands of people and I've coached hundreds of people who have wanted to start and build their own companies. And if you understand the statistics on new businesses and new businesses succeeding and new businesses failing, you'll know that the percentages are abysmal at new business failure.

And most new businesses fail very quickly because of, I think, the lack of planning and the lack of determination by the entrepreneur. And I have

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seen so many of my students who have wanted to quit within the first sign of adversity.

And I do think this is one of the reasons why having a coach and having a mentor is so important because if you've had a career, or you've had your whole education system and your whole career filled with success, so let's say you were this amazing student in school and then you were really successful in your job working for somebody else, and then you go to be an entrepreneur and you start failing, you can be very misguided in thinking, "Oh, maybe this isn't for me because I'm not getting As all the time, I'm just taking Ls."

And I'm always, with my students that I'm helping, I'm always like, "No, this is part of it." This is part of the adventure of being an entrepreneur is being out of the world where there are correct answers and there are right ways of doing things and there are ways to study to get it right and get an A.

A lot of entrepreneurship, a lot of building your own company is trial and error, and there's a lot of error. And when we've been raised in this environment where errors are bad, we can lose our determination very quickly in uncertainty and in entrepreneurship when you don't know exactly what to do and how to do it and how to get the right answer.

And so I looked up how to define determination and there's lots of definitions, but my favorite of the three that I found was the ability to continue trying something even though it's difficult. The ability to continue trying something even though it's difficult.

So I started thinking about how do you develop the ability to continue trying something even though it's difficult, and the only way that we develop that ability is by making decisions to keep going. It's such a simple, elegant thing when you think about it.

Determination is simply continuously making the decision to keep going over, and over, and over, and over, no matter what obstacle that you are

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facing. Some other ones of the definitions were firmness of purpose, which makes sense.

If your purpose is very solid, I always say if your life was on the line or if your child's life was on the line, all of a sudden the success rate would go up tremendously because you would not be willing to give up because of the firmness of purpose.

Think about that. If your child's life was on the line if you didn't complete a certain thing, or you didn't build a certain thing, it wouldn't matter how much you believed that you could do it. It wouldn't matter how much confidence you had in yourself. It wouldn't matter what your time schedule looked like during the day.

None of that stuff would matter because you would be so committed and so determined to give it everything you had, even if you didn't believe in yourself, even if you did have the doubt, because of the firmness of purpose at the end. It would just clear it all up.

It wouldn't be like, "I don't really feel like saving my child's life today, I'm going to sleep in, I'm going to hit that snooze button," right? It wouldn't matter, "Oh, I'm not feeling confident today, I feel a lot of self-doubt." It just obliterates all of that when you have a firmness of purpose. And the other definition is the act of deciding definitely and firmly not to quit. That's it. Those are the definitions of determination.

I was thinking about how much we admire determination in other people. It's like when we look at Olympic athletes, when we look at people who've accomplished amazing feats like triathlons and marathons and weightlifting competitions and in sports, we're very filled with admiration for those people because we know how committed and determined they had to be in order to achieve that.

I remember, I think it might have been Tim Ferriss was talking about how he was able to go into a martial arts competition with very little training and

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fight against - I think maybe it was spar is the right word - against some masters who had been doing it their whole life.

It's kind of like if you get a cheat code or you get a certain method or way of being able to do something quickly so you can win. And thinking about that and thinking about people that kind of use, I don't know, tricks I guess is the right word, to be able to win something, it just doesn't have the same impact. It doesn't have the same level of admiration.

And I was really thinking about why that is. Why is it that if someone's able to figure something out and win without putting in the time and the effort and the sweat and the tears, why we admire them less? I think it's easier to be like, "That's not fair." Now, that is not to say that we shouldn't or wouldn't do things that make our lives easier and the hacks that make it easier to be successful.

I absolutely think that we should, and I do think that the major missing ingredients in most long-term entrepreneurial success and many other types of success is not having the mental training, the mental fortitude to continue to go, and I think that that's something that life coaching has really given to me and to so many of my successful students.

So when you think about determination, it is developed through adversity. It's very hard to have a level of determination or even need a level of determination if you're not putting yourself in a situation that requires it. It's very difficult to build strong muscles if you aren't lifting heavy weights. And I use that metaphor a lot. The heavy weights are the obstacles that we are going to face as we go through this journey of trying to achieve our goals.

One of the easiest ways to lack determination is to be in a hurry and to be too focused on getting the result, and less focused on the process and who you will become in the process of achieving that result. When I think about the results that I have right now in my career, the financial results, the impact results, the contribution results that I have, they are a result of me becoming the person who could produce them.

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And that is what I'm proud of so much. I'm not proud of the end result as much as I am proud of the process, the obstacles I overcame, the days that I had to get up early, the amount of time and energy I put into creation and frustration and learning and processing emotion. All of those things give me this incredible sense of confidence, this incredible sense of accomplishment because of the interaction that I had with my own brain, with my own self.

I feel like determination is now a resource that I have within me. It's an asset that I have built through many years of practicing it, many years of implementing it in my life. And had I not done that, had I not been committed and determined to overcoming myself, I wouldn't have as much confidence about my future.

I wouldn't know that I had that as a resource, I wouldn't know that I had that as an ability to be able to draw on. If we are constantly quitting and giving up and not overcoming adversity, then we don't have as much of that as a resource to feel like we can draw on.

So the question then becomes, how do we get good, the ability, at making the decision not to quit, ever? That doesn't mean we don't change our approach, it doesn't mean we don't change the process, it doesn't mean that we don't change direction on our way to that goal. Of course not. Many times, we're going to have to do that.

But it means that we stay determined to achieving the dream that we have within us, the ideas that we want to put into the world. How do we do that without giving up?

And I think when we understand that it's simply just a decision, and it's a personal decision that we either choose to make or not, the simplicity of that makes it so much easier.

One of the most important things that I have learned in my lifetime is to make decisions with the highest part of my brain and not to give in to

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decisions with my survival brain. And I feel like those two things are in constant conflict with each other.

The survival brain wants immediate gratification, it wants it right now, and it doesn't really care so much about the long-term consequences as long as we are alive right this second. As long as we are in pleasure right this second, as long as we are not in pain, as long as we are conserving our energy in this moment, the survival brain is happy.

And if you've studied my work in Scholars, you know that we call that the motivational triad. The survival brain is interested in the present moment right now, fix everything, don't feel bad, negative emotion should be resolved quickly and through maybe a cookie or a glass of wine or something. That's our survival brain.

And we have that on board. That's going to be with us our entire life. But as humans that have evolved, we also have the prefrontal cortex part of our brain that is able to make decisions in the long term. And I believe that my level of success and my level of creating the life that I actually want to live is equivalent to the number of decisions I make with my prefrontal cortex.

Because in order to develop the ability of determination, I have to be overriding that survival brain which constantly wants to quit and run in the cave. It constantly wants to seek the relief of not feeling the pressure, not going through the hard thing, not expending the energy, not feeling the pain, pursuing the pleasure.

So the more I can make decisions from that brain, the better off I'm going to be. And one of the ways I determine whether I am making a decision with my prefrontal cortex or with my survival brain is how much of a hurry am I in? And if I'm in a hurry to eat the food or get the drink or get out of pain or achieve the result, I know that I'm in my survival brain.

It's interesting when you think about goals and even business goals for people, I have students that'll come to me and they'll be like, "I've tried this

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and I've tried this and it's just not working yet, I just don't have the result yet. I haven't made the money yet, or I haven't gotten the clients yet, or I haven't achieved the goal yet, and I'm very frustrated that I'm not there yet."

That is your survival brain wanting to get to a place that is better than this place. The belief that there is a moment in time where I am going to be safer, better, more accomplished, happier in the future because of some external circumstance than I am now.

And of course we know, if you study my work at all and you buy into the belief that life was always going to be 50:50, it's always going to be a balance of positive and negative, then you won't be in such a hurry to get to the place where everything is rainbows and daisies because that place doesn't exist.

I think it might exist when we pass, but it doesn't exist in this world. That's not the purpose of this world. So what is the point then if we're just going to go from 50:50 to 50:50, what is the point? And the point is to develop ourselves as human to the highest capacity as we can because of how awesome that journey is.

And if I do anything in my life, it is to sell people on the journey of exploring their own capacity through obstacles, through challenges, through setting impossible goals that have impossible mountains to climb in order to achieve them for the mere sake of seeing what we're made of, for the mere sake of blowing our own damn minds and seeing what we're capable of, what is possible for our lifetimes.

That is my commitment to myself, but it's also what I want to be an example of. This is why I have this amazing goal of making \$100 million in a year, to be an example of what is possible when you are willing to manage your own mind. And hopefully inspire other people to go on that journey and see what's possible for them that maybe they never even considered was a possibility for them.

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The level of pride that I feel when I stay committed to something even though it's hard, when I stay determined to doing something even though it's hard is one of the best feelings of my life. But in order to have one of the best feelings in my life, I have to go through some pretty heavy negative feelings in order to get there.

And so that is the rub, but when you understand that, it's also the process that keeps you focused on long-term thinking. So determined people are typically focused on the long term but not at the expense of the short term because we understand that the decision to succeed, the decision to achieve a goal requires many decisions along the way to keep going, many decisions along the way not to quit.

So if you asked me, "Okay Brooke, I'm in, how do I create more determination in my life?" I would say make more decisions that do the following. Make a decision that overcomes your fear, that doesn't let your fear rule the day. That survival brain, whenever it gets afraid, wants to run away, wants to hide. Developing determination means you choose to overcome it instead.

The second thing is you choose to withstand temptation, urges, escapes. You recognize them, you see them, you allow them to be there, but you do not consistently give in to them. The temptation to stay in bed when you want to be working, the temptation to hide when you need to be showing up, the temptation to skip your sales calls when you have an opportunity to let someone know that you can help, and you help them make a decision to move forward in their own life.

The third one is you make a decision to continuously take action no matter if you're going to fail or succeed. Constant movement toward your goal. If you think about it like the metaphor of trying to find your path to the top of the mountain and you think about taking a wrong turn, you're not just standing there trying to figure out at the fork in the road. You're actually walking on the path to see if it is the correct path.

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And if it's not, you'll know soon enough, you can turn around, come back, and get on the right path. That detour is not wasted because now you know and you continuously are taking action. So many of us, we don't want to take action unless we know it's the right action so we end up being immobilized. One of the best ways to stay determined is to be constantly taking action.

The fourth thing is you're constantly learning from failure. You're letting yourself fail quick and fail often and you're learning from it. You're using it as fuel, you're using it as knowledge, you're using it as a way to build strength and continuously take action to move forward.

I did that, I tried that, it didn't work. I'm not making this mean that my goal won't work, I'm not making it mean that I won't work. I am learning from it and moving on.

One of the surprising things about determination and I think resiliency and making the decision to keep going is celebrating and not resenting the success of others. It's such an interesting perspective that I have as a teacher to see how my students feel about other students winning, and what they say about them, and what they say about me and my success.

People that are determined to have success for themselves, I notice that they celebrate the success of others. They're so excited and inspired and they have so much admiration for people who are winning. And those of us who don't have as much determination to keep moving forward, those of us who want to quit kind of put down the success of others. It almost makes them hyperaware that they didn't keep going, that they didn't keep trying, that they gave up.

And so in order to feel good about that, they put down the success of others. So deciding to celebrate other people's wins, other people's success is a huge part of determination.

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The next one is honoring your word to yourself. So when you make these decisions with your prefrontal cortex, when you decide ahead of time what you're going to do tomorrow, what you're going to do in the future, when you are then in that moment, where the decision has been made for you by you ahead of time, you honor that for yourself.

You have enough respect and enough commitment to yourself and enough love for yourself that you are determined to deliver to yourself what you've asked of yourself.

One of the most important qualities you can have for achieving your goals. Determination is I am not going to let myself down. I told myself I would do this thing, I told myself I'd go to the gym, I told myself I would eat this food, I told myself I would write this Instagram post and do these sales calls and create this content, and I will because I honor the highest part of my brain, which wants what is best for me.

And then the last thing is determination is really determined by not allowing any little quits. It's not the big quits, the big decisions to quit that normally get us. It's the little tiny decisions all throughout the day that add up to the big quit. It's a pile of little quits.

So that day where you're like, "It won't matter if I just do this, and I don't really need to do this little thing, and this little thing won't really have an effect," but the truth is every single time you decide not to do a little quit, every single time you decide to honor yourself, you build up your ability to remain determined toward your goal.

And as you create more determination, the strategic byproducts of that are more patience, more discipline, more persistence. It's like a win-win-win-win. I am a determined person, and I love that about myself. I love knowing that about myself because then when I look at the world, I can allow myself to want.

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Because when I want something, I know that it just takes the determination that I have inside of me in order to get it. And that is an amazing way to live in the world. It's amazing to look into the world, see what's possible, determine what I want, and then be determined to get it.

It's simple mentally, it's simple conceptually, it's difficult to execute, but that's what makes it so delicious. Signing up for the difficult thing to see that I am capable of doing it.

I believe the development of high determination is an accomplishment in itself. Listen, I say this so many times but I want to make sure you really hear me. It doesn't matter so much if you get to the goal ultimately as much as you believe in who you become in the process of overcoming the obstacles on your way to it.

Think about this. You may never achieve that goal of that thing that you want ever. So you could just not do anything and get the same result, right? I know I'm never going to make a million dollars, I'm committed that I can't do that, and so therefore I won't even try and I'll be just as well off. I totally disagree.

I think you are way better off for having bet on yourself, for having gone all-in, for having made the effort, for having gotten the education, for having made the attempt to do it. I think you are way better off if you try and fail than if you never try at all.

And you can question that for yourself. And the bigger the goal, the more impossible the goal, the more skill you're going to develop, the more strength you're going to develop for yourself.

Ask yourself this question. Do you like yourself for going all-in, for betting on yourself, and for not giving up? Do you think that that would ever be some disappointment that you would have in yourself? "Well, I wish I never tried, I wish I never would have gone all-in on myself, and I wish I would have given up sooner," said no one ever.

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I mean, probably that's not true. Probably people like that they've given up. But most of the people following me, most of the people that want to learn from me are people that want to achieve big, great, amazing things with their life.

And it's staying committed to that determination, to doing that thing when all the evidence makes it easier to quit. That's the trick, right? When you can say to a friend, "Well, this happened and this happened and this happened and this happened," they're like, "Well, why don't you just quit? This seems really hard, this seems like it's making you cry, this seems like it's making you upset. Why don't you just quit and go back to your job? Or why don't you just quit and do this instead? Or why don't you just quit and accept where you are?"

And the reason is because you want to stay committed to the decision that you made and see what's possible if you don't quit. I think there's two main reasons that I see that people give up their determination and quit. And hopefully these could be red flags for you if maybe you see them in yourself.

The first one is there's a lot of us who have this sense of entitlement for it to be easier. We don't want to be challenged, we don't want to have to go through the difficulties, especially if they're self-imposed because life is so hard already. Why would we make it even harder?

We feel more entitled to an easier life. And what I always try and teach those people is that yes, you can make this moment easier on yourself, but your long-term life will be harder if you aren't committed to bettering it in the long run.

And the second one that I see with a lot of people is just an intense amount of self-doubt and self-criticism and not believing in our own capacity before we've actually achieved it. And I just want to tell the people that are having all of this intense doubt is that is very normal.

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If you haven't exercised your own capacity and developed your own ability to achieve that thing, you're going to have doubts that you can do it because you don't have any evidence.

And so that is the process. The process is taking action, committing to action, not quitting, despite there being no evidence of your success yet. That is in a nutshell what determination is.

We need determination as humans because we are inclined to quit. We're inclined to take the easy way out. We're inclined not to move forward. And so we have to use the higher part of our brain to overcome the lower part of our brain in order to evolve and to express our human ingenuity and to create better lives for us, for other people, for the world by stepping out there and doing things we've never done before, with no evidence that we can succeed.

The answer is by developing your determination and never quitting. So that's what I have for you today, my friends. I hope that all of you will sit back and think about your own determination and where you want to develop it, and where you want to build it, and what result you want to focus on in order to do that.

2024 is going to be an amazing year for us to be doing that together. If you want to join me in Scholars, I would love to do that with you. I'm going to be doing it myself personally and I'll share with you the entire process.

Have a beautiful week everyone. Talk to you soon. Bye.

Hey, if you've ever wanted to work with me as your coach, now is the time to do it. You can join me in Get Coached in Scholars by going to TheLifeCoachSchool.com/join. This is going to be the best year ever. It's your turn to change your life. Let's go.