

Ep #510:What Is Hard?



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 510.

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.

Hello, beautiful friends. Welcome to a little bit of, what shall we call it? Tough love? A little bit of tough coaching? I'm coming for you today. Some of you don't even need this one, but many, many, many of you do. And just know that this podcast comes from absolute love and belief in each and every one of you.

The name of the podcast is What Is Hard?, because one of the things that I have been doing a lot of lately is thinking about the difference between people who succeed at the highest level and people that don't. One of my missions in this world is to help more women, especially, succeed at the highest levels. And I have many students who are in the top 1%, literally, of the world in terms of success. And I have students that do nothing with what I teach them.

And I'm fascinated by both extremes, but I'm much more fascinated by the middle. Most of America, most of the world, most of the student body who is in the middle. And how do we bring our lives to that next level? I'm teaching a class to my alumni coaches called the High Earner Experience and we're in there talking about how do you go from kind of a mid-level earner to a high-level earner, to the top percentage of earners as a life coach?

And there's no, of course, cookie cutter formula for it, but there are a lot of things that I have been thinking about that make that difference. And I have a lot of experience with this, right, because I have been on all levels of the earning board. I have been a very low-level earner. I have been a mid-level earner in terms of having a corporate job. Then I went back to being a no level earner entrepreneur to a low-level, to a mid-level, to an extraordinary high level.

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And so I have kind of the breadth of experience personally to share. But also I've watched thousands of my students who want to be successful entrepreneurs go through the process of trying to do so. And in that observation and in that education and in that witnessing that process I have learned a tremendous amount about human nature, what we're inclined to do, what it requires to be successful. And one of the things that I have learned recently is that most people do not understand what hard is.

And I think it's really interesting to realize that that word is so subjective. So when I say to you we can do hard things, or when Glennon Doyle says we can do hard things, or when someone says this will be hard, what do they mean? Do you know what that means? Do I know what that means? No, because when I'm saying it I'm meaning something by me saying it and you're hearing something different if I don't define it.

And what I have noticed is that as people come through the process of becoming life coaches and going out there into the world and trying to make businesses, what they thought hard was isn't what hard is. And what I define as hard isn't the same for them. So I started thinking about how we all have kind of a biased definition of what hard is and we can misinterpret what hard is, right? And it may turn us off from doing something because we may interpret that word as impossible. Or we may interpret that word as, huh, I can do hard things, no big deal.

So I started thinking about this, how do we create our own definition of hard? How do we evaluate our own biases of what we think is hard and where does it come from? And one of the things I started to notice and one of the things that I've been tracking and researching, fascinating myself with, is the number of ultra successful entrepreneurs who have had incredibly traumatic and challenging childhoods.

And there's actually a lot of research out there and a lot of hypotheses about how children who experience a lot of trauma or are in survival mode a lot of their childhood, are trying to seek significance through building businesses and having success. And the correlation between those two things is very high.

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And the certain type of person that comes from a childhood that is tumultuous and has those survival skills and comes out of that experience kind of fighting instead of being frozen can be one of the most successful entrepreneurs. And of course we have to define, what does success mean as an entrepreneur?

So I started thinking about how do we create a definition so everyone kind of understands what we mean when we say this is hard, this is difficult, we can do hard things, right, and make sure we're all on the same page. So when we talk about entrepreneurship and building a business and starting from scratch and putting yourself out there, there are phases to that success.

And I've watched hundreds of my students go through these phases and some end up stopping mid journey and some keep going. And so what is the difference between the people that stop and the people that keep going? That's what I want to understand because I feel like if I can understand that and I can teach that and I can explain that and you can know what's coming and you sign up for it knowing that it's coming, I think more people will be successful in entrepreneurship.

It's a very low percentage when you look at the entire world of people that'll be successful long-term in their own business. And because we live in a capitalist society, which basically means we are in charge of our own money, we can create our own money, we can run our own businesses as individuals, it's important that we understand the opportunities that are available to us. The options that we have and what they require.

It's also very important that we understand what hard means, what difficult means when it comes to our own lives. I talk a lot about the purpose of life being to evolve, to grow, to see the corners of ourselves, to put ourselves in harm's way and to understand what we're capable of. But, my friends, that is the hard life, right? We talked about the hard life versus the soft life, what is hard? That is the hard life. It is signing up to lift the heavy weight to become as strong as possible.

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And I want to tell you what that means. I think so many of us, so, so many of us brought up in our educational system are taught that we will be given the exact direction of what we need to do in school and if we do that we will have the exact life that we want. And so many of us are not taught how to fail, we're not taught how to be creative, we're not taught to take ownership of our own lives and our own education and her own creativity. And that, I think, is the crux of the problem.

This does not mean that every single person wants to be an entrepreneur. They want to own their own business. They want to be in charge of their own company. But there are so many more people that want it that don't have it that I want to help. So let's talk about what I'm kind of defining as the phases of success as I have seen myself go through them and learned from research and understood from watching and observing.

The first phase, and the one that I have really dedicated a lot of my time to is unawareness. Way too many women especially in this world do not understand the plethora of opportunity that is available to them to be independent, to have freedom, to work from home, to make their own money, to be at a level of success that could create for them a life of their dreams.

And so part of the work that I do is going out there and telling people what's possible, what I've done in my own life. I want to be an example of what's possible. I want my students to be examples of what is possible. I want to share that with the world. That's what I do, I go out there and say that. So a lot of people will hear me and go, wait, what? I can do what? I never even knew about this, this is so exciting. Do you really think I could do it? Do you really think this is possible for me? Yes, yes, and yes.

Okay, so that's phase one, unawareness. Just not even being aware of the possibilities for your own life because, first of all, just never even hearing about it. But second of all, just a complete lack of belief in yourself. Low self-esteem, not even inquiring into what your own capacity, what your own ability, never even considering that option for yourself.

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A great example of this would be when I hired my CEO. And I presented the opportunity to her, I presented the job to her and she was just like, what are you even talking about? Like it never even had occurred to her. She told me I never even thought of this for myself as an opportunity, right? She knew, obviously, that there were CEOs, women CEOs in the world running companies, but she had just never considered it or believed in that for herself. Okay, so that's just a complete lack of awareness on your radar of what could be possible for you.

Okay, that's phase one. Phase two is a new belief, awareness, a belief in possibility. A belief so significant that you actually decide to try. That's phase two. Phase two isn't just belief, it's a belief so significant that you decide to try it. So this may look to you like accepting a job. This may look to you like applying for a job This may look to you like signing up for a school to pursue a new career or a training to pursue a new career.

This may be setting up your website. Deciding that you're in business, getting an LLC. Stating that you are now officially in business. Hanging up your shingle. Going out there and telling people that you're a life coach or that you're an attorney or that you're a doctor, whatever it is that you have decided to try and do.

Now, this is a very fun stage for people. I've watched it happen so many times. It's almost like they've been awakened to the possibility, they have enough belief system that the dopamine is juiced. They're thinking about possibility, they're acknowledging their own greatness, their own capacity, their own ability, their own possibility for themselves.

What's so interesting about phase two, and the reason why it can be so exhilarating, is because there's no evidence against this possibility because if you haven't tried this particular thing yet, this new opportunity for you, there's no evidence yet that you can't do it. Now, there's no evidence for it either, but your belief is carrying you through. Maybe I could do this. Maybe I could make that amount of money. Maybe I could buy this house. Maybe I could get that job. Maybe I could work at this place. Maybe I could quit this horrible job that I'm in.

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Possibility is intoxicating. It's exciting. It's fun. It opens up our brain. It opens up our energy. We are completely in belief with no challenge against it in the beginning. It's that peak of the belief system. No evidence against it because we haven't started trying yet, we've just decided to try. That's phase two.

Most of my students are in this phase all through their training program and about three months after their training program, right? The belief is high. The work is high. The energy is high. The excitement is high. No evidence against it yet. Some people start getting evidence against if they're struggling within the training. If they're having a hard time getting the work done or if the coaching isn't going the way they wanted or something like that. But most people go through the education part on a high, having so much fun, it's so great.

Then what happens is phase three. And phase three is all about action, right? Because the belief is high enough that we're starting to take action. We're going out there. We're showing up. Maybe we start some social media. We start getting some clients. We start trying to grow our business. We start trying to get clients, that whole process, right?

And all of that action starts to create some evidence. Now, in the beginning of any new adventure towards success, we are most likely going to really suck at it. In one of my first books I have a whole chapter called be willing to suck at it. Be willing to not be good. And what I'm referring to in that process is weight loss and exercise and showing up at the gym and not knowing how to lift a weight, not knowing how to work out, not knowing how to be strong yet. Like really be willing to suck at it.

And so in phase three when we're taking a bunch of action and creating a whole bunch of new evidence, the new evidence initially is usually negative. It's usually failing. It's usually sucking at it. It's usually things not working. It is very rare that I see a student go out there and start trying brand new things in a brand new way and having incredible success from the beginning.

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Now, there are some that do but it's very rare. It's very rare. And I actually worry when I have a student who has a lot of success from the very beginning because they're not really developing the skill that is necessary for long-term success, which is resilience, okay? Phase three is when you build the strength to be a business owner because you start to fail and you get a lot of evidence that this isn't going to work.

Now, most people, this is so heartbreaking to me, but hear me say this. Most people, most of my students, most of the people in the world quit at this stage, stage three. They go from unawareness to awareness in stage one. In stage two they go into believing enough in themselves that they make a decision to move forward. Phase three they start taking action and most people quit.

And most people don't just quit quietly and nicely with themselves and gently with themselves. Most people beat the crap out of themselves for having tried. They complain, they blame, they throw toddler fits, they get upset with themselves. They live in a ton of regret and pain that they even tried. I have been in this position so many times. I get mad at myself, why did I even think this was possible? Why did I show up like this? Why did I put myself out there?

It can be very painful, phase three, but this is where you really learn what hard is. What is hard? This. This is what hard is. Now, if you haven't had a lot of hard things in your life, if you haven't experienced a lot of things that were hard to get over and hard to work through and challenging, this may be your first taste of hard. Beautiful. I want things to be hard for you because I want you to be good at doing hard things because the best things are hard.

This is the least time that I would want you to give up and blame and complain. This is the time when we've got to double down. So the collection of students that I have, the friends, the entrepreneurs, the people in the world that end up pursuing and continuing success double down at this point. They know it's hard. They know they need to get stronger. They know they need to work hard at this point.

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Not just externally hard by showing up and doing the work, but internally hard by overcoming all the doubt, all the evidence, all the frustration, all the pain that inevitably comes to most people who are seeking success and are in phase three. Phase three is the hard part where action creates evidence against.

For example, if you are trying to get a job as a CEO of a company and you have believed that that's possible for you, someone has told you that you have the credentials, the experience, the knowledge, the ability to be a CEO and so you go out there. You believe in that for yourself, you go out there and you start applying to all these jobs as CEOs and you do a bunch of interviews. And you're probably not going to get hired in the beginning. You're probably not.

Most people, most people will give up at that point. Now, when you're thinking about even the CEO jobs, it's fascinating just as a side note, most women don't even get to the new belief, phase two, where they believe enough of themselves to even apply for those jobs. If you look at the statistics on the number of women who apply for CEO jobs, it is atrocious. Highly qualified, ready to go, CEO caliber candidates who never apply for the opportunity. It's crazy. Crazy.

But if they do get past phase two, new belief enough to make a decision, then phase three is the action that creates evidence against. It's always going to, phase three. Evidence against the possibility of it ever happening.

So for example, someone will start a social media channel. They want to be successful with getting clients through social media. They want to start creating a lot of content. And all of a sudden they start getting some negative comments on their reels, let's say.

I have so many students come to me and be like, these people are saying negative things about me. I'm like, welcome to the internet, where have you been? You may be on the other side of that. Maybe you were the one that was commenting, now you're the one creating and so people will comment.

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People are awful. They will say awful things. But it's usually 50/50. You usually have people saying amazing things and people saying terrible things. It's hard, especially if you're not used to being in the public eye. You're not used to being criticized. You're not used to people commenting on your appearance. You're not used to people commenting on your voice or on what you're wearing or on how you do a video or the content you say. Welcome. Welcome to hard.

This is what hard is. And you can run away, you can hide, you can be afraid and no one will blame you. The body is wired to run away. It's wired for comfort. It's wired for pleasure. There's no reason in your brain's mind why you would put yourself in harm's way, why you would put yourself out there to be criticized by the internet.

But you know why you're there. You're there to reach the people that you know you can help. And if that means that you have to deal with some trolls on the internet, then so be it. There's a lot of critics out there. They're not in the top 10%, I promise you that. They're not. They're too busy creating in their own lives, the top 10%, and being positive, being supportive because they know what it's like because they're in the arena, as Brené Brown would say.

So phase three, you're new, you suck, you're taking action, there is tons of evidence against. So, phase four is you either quit, complain and blame or you double down. This is where success is made. This is where identities are changed. This is what hard is. This is the top 10% that get to have the success, that get to earn the success.

People will say to me all the time, I wasted my time. I should have never believed that I could do that. I'm like, listen, even if you quit in phase four, you, in my opinion, are better for having tried. For going through the phases of believing in yourself, for trying to take action because successful people are the ones that create success. And successful people know how to take action, they know how to deal with evidence against, they know how to overcome obstacles, they know how to keep believing in themselves through the hard times.

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And if you have tried and you have put yourself out there, you have learned the first level skills. And what's awesome about learning those first level skills is you will always have them. So even if you fail, you have all the knowledge. You have all the experience. You have all the data. You have your brain that will take you to that next level of yourself. No one can take that away from you.

Even if you quit, complain and blame, you still have more knowledge than you would have, had you not tried. Success comes from navigating through phase three where your action is creating evidence against. I think a lot of times we think, oh, we know how to do hard. But as soon as something hard happens we think, oh, this is terrible, I've got to get out of here. Instead of embracing it, showing up for it, working through it. I can do this.

Listen, this is why the question is so fascinating because if you ask me what is hard, I'm going to have a very different definition than someone who's just starting a business. Why? Why will I have a different definition? Because my hard muscle is bigger. I've developed it more. I've been through more. I've lifted more of those hard entrepreneurial tasks in the gym. So I stand here with more strength around that.

So when you tell me, hey, this is going to be hard, it's all relative. It's hard to pick up a weight if you've never picked up a weight. But if you've been lifting weights for 20 years, it's not that hard, relatively, right? So if you want to be a successful person, if you want to have success in your life, you've got to figure out how to get through that phase.

And one of the things that I think will help is if you see it as an inevitable part of the process of developing the strength to be successful, the emotional maturity, the discipline, the sacrifice and the effort that it will take for you to be one of the top 10% of people that overcomes the human survival brain to create your dreams. To create your business. To create your opportunity, your possibility, to see what you're capable of.

For some of you, you'll fail 17 times. For some of you, you'll fail 100 times. For some of you, you'll only have to fail 3 times. Life is not fair. Some of

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you are starting way ahead on the privilege starting line. I am for sure one of those people. But there are people way ahead of me, there's people way behind me. I stay in my own lane. What is the work I need to overcome? There are some things I don't need to overcome, I don't struggle with, but there's other things I do. And that's my business. That's what I need to overcome.

Now, the option of getting back into the stands and jeering and throwing stones or leaving the stadium all together and just giving up and not doing the thing is always going to be there. Those are always options that are available. I love that we have choices, we have options all the time. But what can happen is we can tell ourselves I wasn't capable of that, I wasn't able to do that, or worse yet, that was impossible. No one is capable of doing that. That's not even real.

And we give up on our dreams just because of phase three. Just because we're being introduced to a whole new level of hard, a whole new level of challenge, senior year at hard knocks, right? And this is the hardness that we're dealing with as entrepreneurs. There's all sorts of different kinds of hard but here's the magic, here's the magic of this, when you get good at doing hard things, you get good at doing hard things in every area of your life.

This is why I believe if you had to have a hard childhood, if you had to get over a lot of BS in your childhood, a lot of hard things, if you were exposed to a lot of opportunities that were difficult to achieve, you already have so many skills that you can then apply to your dreams, to becoming an entrepreneur.

So, what is the level of hard that you are willing to experience and why? Are you willing to let your life be harder than it is so you can have and earn the life that you want?

I think the biggest heartbreak for me is to watch someone who I can clearly see is capable of the hard in front of them, turn it away because they stopped believing, because they tried to pick up that weight one time and it

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didn't work. So they just completely gave up instead of trying every single day for 365 days and then ultimately picking it up.

And the most heartwarming thing, one of my favorite parts about my job is to talk to people who achieve something that they didn't think they could do. They believed in themselves in spite of themselves and overcame that.

And then phase five, that's when you have the evidence for. When you get over the failure and you succeed and you get to the point where you blow your own mind. And you get to the point where you've tried 100 times and 101 was the one that made it work. And that's when you can become an inspiration to your own self.

I think that's an amazing feeling, to inspire yourself with your own achievement. To inspire yourself to get up every day and overcome the obstacle that is in front of you every single day, even though you may not want to that day. You're doing it for that future version of yourself. It's magical. It's a magical way to live your life, is to believe that you can handle the challenges that your life has given you. To believe that you can handle the challenges that are in between you and the life that you want.

And I will tell you, if your dream is to help people, if you want to go out there in the world and help people, you're not going to do that by sitting around and complaining and blaming yourself or about other people. That's not helpful to anyone, especially to you.

But if you want to give yourself a chance, you have to be willing to redefine what hard is. You have to be willing to work even with the evidence against in phase three. You have to get through phase four of doubling down to get to phase five of looking at the evidence around you and believing even harder than you even thought possible. That's what hard is.

Overcoming hard is the most delicious, savory, empowering, strengthening thing you can do for yourself in your life because when you land on the other side of hard, you start looking around for more hard things to do. That's how we are built. That's how our human spirit is built. And the strategic byproduct of that is if you are creating in your life opportunities to

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do hard things by having big dreams, when life smacks you in the face with something you don't want, and it will my friends, it will. That is the nature of the world.

When horrible things happen in the world, as they do half of the time, you will have the skill to deal with it. If you set big goals and ask yourself to do hard things, you will be prepared for the hard things that you hadn't planned on. It will make your life easier and better if you sign up on purpose to see what you are made of.

The phases of success are unawareness, a new belief enough so you decide to try, action that creates new evidence against. Phase four is you quit, you complain, you blame or you double down. And phase five, for those of you who make it through phase four, phase five is evidence for and the magical life that can come from stacking success upon success upon success.

And in case you missed it, what that really means is that you're stacking a bunch of failures that'll lead you all the way to the top where there is ultimately success. And not just the outcome of your goal, but the success of being a person who can do hard things.

What is hard to you? Decide and then go for it, my friends. 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.