

## Ep #521: How Thought Work Works



### Full Episode Transcript

With Your Host

**Brooke Castillo**

[The Life Coach School Podcast](#) with Brooke Castillo

## Ep #521: How Thought Work Works

You are listening to *The Life Coach School Podcast* with Brooke Castillo episode number 521.

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 you been? I have been amazing. Since I've last talked to you I did an in-person coach training that might be one of the highlights of my entire coaching career. We had the most amazing group and it was like the most magical topics, the most deep coaching, talented coaches. It was phenomenal.

One of the things that I did differently this time is everyone who came to the training had already been certified in Tools. And so all we really were doing was practicing coaching, giving feedback on coaching, discussing coaching, like coaching our faces off basically. It was seriously a magical time for me. One of my highlights for sure.

What an amazing group of women, it was all women. That wasn't by design, that's just what happened to be the situation. And we went deep. So I love y'all, all y'all that were there with me. And we also did the Coachathon, which was hysterically amazing. I don't know why, when we all get together, we just end up laughing so much.

And I love it because I love laughing at kind of how the mind works and how it sets us up for things that are completely unnecessary, and when we can look at them from a new perspective it's really fun to be able to laugh about it.

And so we just had an amazing time at that Coachathon. That was seriously really fun. I love doing it in a theater, it was super cozy and, I don't know, it was just a great, great time. I'm on a high. I've been on a high since then.

## Ep #521: How Thought Work Works

I'm about to leave to watch Christian play some golf. I can't wait, it's five days. He's going to be playing in a tournament, so I am thrilled to be able to do that. I have been coaching my face off for the past three days so I'm able to go and watch him play golf.

That's one of the things that I always put as a stipulation in all of the classes that I teach, is that the schedule is subject to change if Christian will be golfing. And so he was chosen to go to this five day tournament, so I had to switch everything around. So for those of you who are in Scholars, I appreciate you all being so accommodating.

Today we're going to talk about thought work and we're going to talk about why thought work works. I am working on a mini training right now about thought work and I am really trying to help people understand that have never been introduced to thought work, what it is and how to integrate it into your life. How to start playing around with it and why it is so powerful.

I always have been really interested in self-help. I've always been really interested in studying ways to make my life better and ways to feel better. And I think it's because I really experienced a lot of trauma in my childhood that put me into a state of kind of fight or flight, lots of anxiety all of the time.

And in order to learn how to regulate my life, in order to make sense of it, I tried to solve my problems intellectually, right? So I would approach each problem, each compulsion, each survival mechanism from an intellectual point of view. And so reading self-help books, I really feel like saved my life.

I had so many kinds of influences in my life that helped me understand my own brain, my own emotional life, my behavior and the results that I was creating at a very young age. I got very into self-help at a very young age.

I believe that one of the most powerful habits someone can have is reading books. And when I was growing up, it was very common for there to be huge bookstores in malls and huge bookstores on corners. And there still are a few of them. These were like mega bookstores and then also like small mom and pop bookstores everywhere.

## Ep #521: How Thought Work Works

This was kind of right before Amazon took off. And this is how we went and bought our books, right? And I've always felt like my church was bookstores; Barnes & Noble, Borders Bookstores, Bookstores on the Corner, and also even the library. I always just felt at peace around books and I always felt connected more than I ever have to anyone who's been able to help me as a young person in my life to the authors that wrote in these books.

Marianne Williamson and Robin Norwood, like these women genuinely helped raise me. I listened to their audio books like on tapes, books on tape, right? Listening to them over and over and over again in my mind. And I think it helped me regulate my brain so it wasn't just locked in to fight or flight and survival mode.

My brother, unfortunately, dealt with his trauma by taking drugs. And he dealt with all of it with cocaine and he eventually died in his 20s of a cocaine overdose. And I often wonder how do we help people find alternative ways of dealing with trauma, alternative ways of dealing with the brain.

And the brain, when it's in survival, is really trying to protect us and to understand that the brain is just constantly trying to keep us alive and inadvertently is causing us a lot of problems along the way in addictions and compulsions. And that was one of the things that I had really struggled with when I was younger.

So when I started to go to college, I started to study psychology because I really wanted to help people the way that the authors in these books had helped me. And one of the women that had helped me the most was Robin Norwood and she was a therapist and she talked a lot about therapy and how powerful it was.

And at that time, I was going to therapy like four times a week, literally. I was going after school and sitting in my therapist's office and really just trying to figure out what was wrong with me and how to solve it. I got many, many years of therapy and not just years of therapy, but condensed years

## Ep #521: How Thought Work Works

of therapy, right? Because I was going multiple times a week. And I think it was very helpful and I love therapy and I do recommend therapy to a lot of people.

But the missing piece for me to be able to be a high functioning person, a higher than average functioning person in my life was really the concepts that I was learning in these self-help books. And most significantly, I would say the work that I did studying Tony Robbins as a very young adolescent and then eventually Byron Katie.

And getting introduced to Byron Katie was a turning point in my life because that was the first time I had ever really been introduced to thought work in a way that I conceptually understood it as thought work.

Tony Robbins teaches a lot about belief systems, but I had never related it to just thoughts that were going through my head. I had never understood it in a way where it was really just like electrical impulses going on in my brain that I can control.

And when I first started working through Byron Katie's work, which I was introduced to when I went to a coach training with Martha Beck, was life altering. And she has a process that's not for everyone, a lot of people are turned off by her work. I love her work. I think that the way that she taught me how to look at a thought as just a separate thing from me and not what I actually am was profound. A huge turning point for me.

When I first was taught her work, I did use it a little bit in my practice. That is the tool I was taught in my coach training, I did use it in my practice. But it felt a little bit too aggressive for me, which is kind of funny because I feel like I'm a very assertive coach. But I did feel like in many ways it was kind of a jarring experience for most of my clients.

I personally prefer really kind of aggressive coaching when I'm playing sports or aggressive coaching when, you know, as long as it's coming from a place of love, when I'm getting feedback, that sort of thing. I like really direct communication. That's just my personality. And so I tend to coach that way, but this was like on a whole nother level.

## Ep #521: How Thought Work Works

But the turning point for me, I was really studying a lot of Byron Katie and a lot of Abraham at the time and understanding about thoughts that – The two things that I learned from them is basically from Byron Katie. I learned that you can take a thought that's in your brain and evaluate it, whether you wanted to keep believing it or wanted to keep thinking it.

And she was the first one that introduced me to the idea that thoughts are optional. She asked the question like, who would you be without this thought? It's such an incredibly powerful question. And she was having us in her work, and she still does, turn thoughts around. So taking a sentence and kind of making the opposite a consideration for something to think. So that was kind of my introduction to thoughts being optional.

And then the work that I did when I studied Abraham was really like creating thoughts and thinking new thoughts that I had chosen deliberately. And when I did this work, this kind of thought work, my entire life started to change. I started feeling better. My behavior became easier to control. I was getting way better results in my life. And I was really focused on just the thought work, just the piece of thought.

Now, I had been introduced to cognitive behavioral therapy when I studied psychology. And I had always thought that was the best, most interesting approach to psychology and all the things that I had learned in terms of how the way that I think influences my behavior.

So I think it was just the combination of all of these different approaches to teaching the truth. And obviously, then the work that I had done with Tony Robbins, which was a lot about goal setting and future focus and really kind of creating your life on purpose.

And I've talked about this a lot, but I had this moment where Byron Katie had said just casually that our thoughts create our feelings. And that is when everything clicked for me, because then I was able to go home and sit down and be like, okay, if our thoughts create our feelings, then what do our feelings create? And if our feelings create our behavior, then what does

## Ep #521: How Thought Work Works

our behavior create our results? And what is left in the world is just our circumstances.

And the way that I thought about it came together in a way that became what I call thought work, what I call in my world thought work. Now, a lot of people use the terminology of thought work, right, because our thoughts create a reality. You know, we've heard of the secret and we've heard of, like I said, cognitive behavioral therapy and cognition and how it affects our lifestyle. So it's not like any of us had invented this concept. It's not just like, oh, okay, this is my opinion. This is literally just how the world works.

But nobody teaches it to us, right? No one teaches us that thoughts are appearing in our brain that we have control over. And they're not just observations about the world, they are electrical impulses that basically we have learned that we can change.

And so the reason why thought work works is, first of all, it creates a consciousness in our lives. It requires us to pay attention to what is going on in our brain. And when you pay attention to what is going on in your brain and you understand what a powerful influence those thoughts are on your life and on your feelings and on your actions and on your results of your life, you start to live from a place where you can observe yourself being yourself.

And this is something that is taught really well, I think, and often in meditation, is being able to witness yourself thinking or witness yourself trying not to think and witnessing just the presence of being present. And what happens when you do thought work, when you do meditation, when you do any kind of bringing yourself to the present moment awareness to find out what you are thinking, to eavesdrop on your own self, you have the understanding that there is you, and then there is the you that can observe you.

And when you start to experience that on a regular basis, you start to realize that you are not at the effect of your survival brain and you are not at the effect of everything that's happening in the world. That you actually



## Ep #521: How Thought Work Works

have a presence outside of your own brain that allows you to witness your own brain. A consciousness, a connectedness.

It makes me feel the most peaceful I ever feel when I'm able to watch myself be myself. And I can't imagine now trying to live in the world without that skill, without that ability. To be able to watch myself feel gives me a minute, gives me some space, gives me a breath between the negative pain that I might be experiencing and being the observer of it. There is a peacefulness by being conscious of your own consciousness.

And so when people ask me, how does thought work work? It works because you're able to access the highest part of your brain, the highest part of your consciousness in a very simple way, in a way that allows you to use the highest skill, which is to work on your life and not just be in your life. To develop a relationship with yourself consciously. To decide on purpose what you want to think, what you want to believe, how you are willing to process your own emotion and be present with the truth that is you.

And all of that leads to being able to manage and control your own behavior in the world, to be the type of person you want to be. Meaning exploring your own capacity, deciding to evolve, being kind, being helpful, being of service, making a contribution.

We're not just going through our lives as a big ball of negative emotion, getting bounced around and feeling like we're at the effect of what is happening to us. There's a piece of us, even in the darkest of times, even in the most helpless of times, when we can access an incredible amount of power within us knowing that we have a decision to decide what to think. And no one can take that away from us.

No one can take away our ability to decide what we want to think. The only way that we are programmed, the only way that we are locked into a sleepless life is if we don't become aware of our own selves and how we interact with the world. And thought work does that.



## Ep #521: How Thought Work Works

It's simply the work of mind awareness. It's the work of observing and managing your brain. It is the work of understanding how your thoughts impact your feelings, your actions, and ultimately your results. It is the work of understanding the difference between circumstances that we can't control and thoughts in our mind that we can control.

I believe it is the most important knowledge that we can have for our mental health. I believe the ability to understand how the brain works on our emotional life and how the brain is programmed in our childhood to determine how we think, feel, react, and the results we create is the most powerful, freeing thing that any human being can experience.

And I will tell you from my perspective, and you can see this by my whole life, and what I do with my whole life is once you understand this information and you see how powerful it can impact your life, your peace, your self-love, your connection with yourself, you feel an obligation to share it with as many people who want to know.

And that has been my work for the past 20 years. That has been my goal, to help people understand, if they want to understand, that they can choose their thoughts and they can choose what to believe and they can handle their emotions and they can process them if they don't resist them and don't fight them.

It's not that the thought work works because of the Model or that the thought work works because of Byron Katie's four-part turnaround or the thought work works because, you know, you do Maslow's hierarchy of needs through programs like that that. That is not what it is. The reason and how thought work works is you observing you. You being in the watcher position, you being in the observer position of yourself while you're thinking and then of your life while you're thinking.

And if anyone has experienced this, you know exactly what I mean. There's this moment where there's you watching you and you wonder who you are when you are watching you. If I'm watching my brain, who is this that is watching my brain? What is this awareness? And it opens up a dimension,

## Ep #521: How Thought Work Works

let's call it a dimension of life that otherwise we wouldn't have a perspective that we otherwise wouldn't have. And that is how it works. And that is why it is so possible.

It's easy to get caught up in the intellectual part of it, switching thoughts out, creating new feelings and trying to try on new thoughts. And that's all very powerful. But the reason why thought work works and how it works is that you become consciousness, you become your own consciousness of your own self, your own awareness. And from that place, you're able to make decisions for your highest good. So don't get it confused, that is how it works.

And it works when you use the Model and it works when you use Tony's work and The Secret and Gabby Bernstein and Marianne Williamson, everyone who teaches this, Course In Miracles, all of it, it all works. It works in different intellectual ways, but in all the thought work practices, it's because of your awareness of your own self. So don't forget that. This isn't some hard, complicated thing. It is presence with yourself. That's what it is.

Have a beautiful month, my friends. Upcoming, you're going to hear about Kara Loewentheil's brand new book. Her episode will be coming up shortly. Please enjoy. Take care, everyone, talk to you soon.

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](http://thelifecoachschool.com/join). This is going to be the best year ever. It's your turn to change your life. Let's go.