

Ep 1: How to Feel Better, Do Better and Live Better



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With Your Host

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Welcome to The Live Better Podcast where I, Monica Bhardwaj, Certified Life Coach, teach you the life coaching tools you need to think and feel differently so you can navigate life's challenges with more ease, feel good about yourself and show your kids how to do the same.

Hello and welcome to episode one of the Live Better Podcast, I'm Monica Bhardwaj and I'm so excited to share this first episode with you.

Today, I want to introduce you to the foundational concepts that I use and teach my clients to help them create the change that they want to see in their life.

I'll be teaching these concepts more deeply in upcoming episodes, but just having this high-level understanding will help you start feeling better right now.

I first learned these concepts from my first coach Kara Loewentheil and then Brooke Castillo at the Life Coach School.

Now, these concepts aren't new – they've been around for centuries and taught by people like Abraham Hicks and Eckhart Tolle.

They're also based on mindfulness and cognitive psychology – so, how our minds and bodies work.

And I teach them using my own lens and experience and offer suggestions on how we can teach our kids so they can navigate challenges and thrive as well.

This is important to me because one of the reasons I do this work is so our children don't have to inherit the same limiting beliefs as us, so they can live more extraordinary and intentional lives.

But we adults have our own inner work to do too because kids learn from what we do and what we embody, not what we say right?

Okay, so the basic premise of this work is this: our thoughts create our feelings and the results we either want or don't want in our life.

So, something happens. We have a thought about it. That thought produces emotions and then those emotions drive us to do things. And the accumulation of all the things we do and don't do create results in our life.

So many of us are taught that what we experience, and what people say and do or don't do cause us to feel sad or angry or happy or loved.

But that's so not true.

It's actually the thoughts that we think about it, our interpretation of it that cause us to feel that way.

Let me give you an example:

Say my friend always shows up late to meet me and I feel annoyed. It's not that she always shows up late that makes me feel annoyed. It's because of my thoughts and what I make it mean like "she doesn't care about me or "she doesn't respect my time" that makes me feel annoyed.

Can you see that there is a thought between her showing up late and me feeling annoyed?

I know some of your brains might resist this idea, but I want you to stay with me.

The reason I know that my own thoughts are causing me to feel annoyed and not her behavior is because not everyone would feel the same way about it.

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Not everyone thinks that being on time is important and that being late is disrespectful and would upset other people. Some people are used to showing up late, so they aren't bothered when other people do it too. Because they have very different thoughts about it than I do.

And, I want to be clear that there's nothing wrong with thinking that way and feeling annoyed.

I just want to make you aware that you always have a choice instead of defaulting to your usual thoughts – especially if they make you feel terrible.

You don't have to change a thing if you don't want to, I just want you to make it a conscious choice and know you could if you wanted to. Because you're always in charge of how you're thinking and feeling, but you're just choosing not to, and that's perfectly fine.

And one way to decide if you want to change how you're feeling is to consider if you like how you're showing up and the results that it's creating in your life.

Because remember that our thoughts cause our feelings, which drive our actions and all the actions that we take or don't take create the results in our life.

So, if I'm annoyed and feel disrespected by my friend, I may act passive aggressive towards her which just creates more disrespect towards both of us.

Think about it: I'm not respecting myself enough to ask for what I want from her, which is to show up on time and I'm not respecting her by not taking the time to understand what's going on for her that she's constantly late.

This is literally the secret to life. Our thoughts create our feelings and results so we can change our thoughts to change our life.

And I'm not talking about changing our circumstances. There's that obviously we can't control like the weather, the existence of Covid, what other people say and do or what happened in our past.

But we can choose how to think and feel about it and how we show up in relation to it. We're always in charge of how we think and feel and show up. No one and no circumstance can ever take that away from us.

Now, I wish it was as simple as thinking positive to feel better and have different outcomes, but it's not.

Our brains and our bodies are more complex than that.

Our beliefs are thoughts that we have been thinking over and over and over for most of our life.

And most of us don't consciously choose the deeply rooted beliefs that we have about ourselves, other people and the world.

Because they are shaped by a couple of things:

First, there's the primitive parts of our brain. The ones that humans developed first. You may have heard this referred to as the "reptilian or lizard brain." It's the part that's responsible for keeping us alive by scanning for threats and dangers, conserving energy and avoiding pain.

And we need this part of our brain to keep us safe and alive. If I'm driving, I want my this part of my brain to tell me that there's danger ahead and make me feel scared enough to hit the brakes to avoid crashing into the stalled car in front of me.

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But unfortunately, these parts of our brain are not as evolved as our society. So, it will offer us thoughts that make us feel stressed and anxious to feel safe from what it sometimes falsely perceives as a danger. For example, receiving a late night email from your boss may feel as threatening as a lion because your brain is freaking out and interpreting it as you're not doing a good job and will be fired and die under a bridge.

So that's the first thing that shapes our beliefs.

The other thing that shapes our core beliefs is how we are socialized. What we've learned through our family patterns, our friendships, our education, and the media. On top of that, women are socialized very differently than men. We're taught to constantly critique and compare ourselves and to put everyone else ahead of our own desires.

So, all of this combined means that if we want to feel better, show up in ways that feel good and create better outcomes in our life, we HAVE to overcome a lot of negative, anxiety producing, self-critical thinking.

The good news is that it is possible. It just takes a little bit of effort and some practice.

Because, number one, we have a more evolved, conscious part of our brain like the prefrontal cortex, that help us manage emotional impulses, understand the consequences, and think long-term instead of seeking instant gratification.

Now, it's worth noting this part of our brain doesn't fully develop until around the age of 25. Which is why our kids get flooded with emotions, act on their impulses, want the instant gratification and constantly do things without the understanding of the consequences. So, if you find yourself feeling frustrated with your kids for any of these reasons, it may help to know that nothing has gone wrong. Their brain is operating exactly how it was designed to.

And it may also help you to know that you still operate from this part of the brain too.

Think about it. You still experience intense emotions, but maybe you take the edge off with some food or alcohol or binge watching Netflix instead of having a full blown tantrum. And how often do you give into your impulse of buying something that you really don't need or want?

So, our children are operating from the primitive part of their brain. And it's how they act as a mirror for us sometimes.

If we're willing, they will raise us while we raise them by showing us our humanness, where we have our inner work to do when they trigger us. And they show us that our brains are doing exactly what they are designed to do because we will always have that primitive part of our brain.

They also show us the potential that we have with their ability to love unconditionally and allow their emotions to flow through them so quickly.

And, as we do this work and live more from the conscious parts of our mind, we can lend it to them while theirs is still developing. How cool is that??

Okay, so that's the first piece of good news. We can learn to live from the more conscious part of our mind.

The second piece of good news is that our brain has neuroplasticity which means that we can create new thought patterns that serve us in having more of what we want.

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And again, this is not about positive thinking.

I've talked a lot about the complexities of the brain that we have to overcome, but there's also our heart and our body, where our emotions live.

So, going back to the example of me getting annoyed when my friend is late, her being late doesn't have an emotional charge for me until I make it mean that she doesn't respect me.

Sure, that's an optional thought that I can decide not to think to stop feeling annoyed, but I'm not going to be able consider any other perspective while I'm feeling so irritated and annoyed right?

That's not how our brains and our bodies work.

Our emotions need to be experienced in our body to release before we can have mental clarity to access our conscious minds.

And I'm going to teach you how to do that in more detail in the next few episodes, but just for now, being aware that if I'm feeling something and I allow it, instead of pushing it away and numbing out, that's enough to help it start to release.

Then I can decide how I want to feel because feeling disrespected and being passive-aggressive just doesn't feel good. So, maybe I want to feel neutral to start by thinking something like "my self-respect has nothing to do with how my friend shows up and everything to do with how I show up."

Do you feel how empowering that is?

It helps me feel more neutral and act more respectful towards both of us.

Not attaching a story to her actions helps me have more of what I want.

When I don't make her tardiness mean anything negative about me or her, I will be more willing to wait for her so I can spend time with her, which is what I really want. I will be able to calmly ask her to be on time and I'll be more able to leave if she's late without feeling like a terrible person, right?

Okay, so that was a lot, let me recap:

- The situations that we experience don't have an emotional charge until we have a thought or interpretation of them.
- Most of the time, we unknowingly interpret situations from the less conscious part of our mind or our past conditioning.
- And these interpretations are not always accurate. They can leave us feeling things like anxious, resentful and insecure unnecessarily.
- Most of us didn't choose these thoughts and beliefs. They were shaped by how we were raised, what we were raised to believe and our socialization.
- So as adults, we need to take responsibility for how we are thinking and feeling and showing up and the results that we are creating in our life.
- Because we can change our limiting belief and emotional patterns to feel better, do better and live better.

And when I say live better what I mean is showing up fully for your life in ways that feel good for you, no matter what life throws at you.

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Because when you have emotional well-being and optimal mental health: You are less triggered by other people. You stop over thinking and being hard on yourself. you stop hiding from your life by numbing out with over-eating and over-drinking and other things. Relationships feel more connected and are easier. You have your own back and go after what you want in life.

This is the active work that I do and teach my clients to do.

But it isn't about doing it perfectly. Managing your mind and emotions even just fifty percent of the time is enough to completely change your life.

I may be a life coach, but I'm no unicorn.

I have a human brain too and my own conditioning to work through too. I'm really good at some things but have to work hard at others.

And I'm going to openly share my process with you throughout the podcast so that you can learn from my experience.

In the meantime, this week, here's something for you to try. If there is something that's stressing you out or making you feel overwhelmed or anxious. Get curious about the thoughts that might be creating those feelings for you. Are you interpreting the situation accurately or from the lens of your past conditioning? Is your lizard brain freaking out unnecessarily to keep you safe?

Then, ask yourself, how do you wish you could feel instead? Do you want to feel calm? Confident? Maybe just a little neutral for now?

If you want to feel any of those feelings, ask yourself what do you need to think to feel that way, even if you don't believe it yet. Could you find evidence from now or from your past to help strengthen that belief?

And finding evidence is really helpful. I was just coaching a young girl who was so upset because someone at school said that they didn't like her. And of course, that's upsetting when you think you're not likable. Her lizard brain is freaking out because it cares a lot about what others think because status in the tribe is essential to it's survival.

But she could also give me a list of all the qualities she genuinely liked about herself and all the other kids that liked her so she could see that it wasn't true and that she is likeable, which made it less upsetting and more unbelievable that someone didn't like her.

So, use these concepts with your kids too. They get it. And we have to help them interpret their experiences in a way that protects their self-esteem.

I have a free guide to help you do this exercise and I'll put a link in the show notes for you to download it and work through it.

I hope you'll give it a try because there's so much to be gained from being aware of what's happening in your mind to create how you're feeling and knowing that you have the power to take control of those feelings.

That's all for now, I'll see you next week.