

Episode 52: How to Put Your Thoughts on Trial



Episode Transcript

With your Hosts
Mary Preston & Keysa Amaro

Welcome to The Real Life Wellness Podcast with Mary Preston and Keysa Amaro. Where we talk about different ways to integrate healthier habits into your life.

Welcome back, friends! I'm Keysa Amaro, certified Health Coach and I work with moms to help them get control of their food cravings without deprivation or complicated meal plans.

And I'm Mary Preston, a licensed marriage and family therapist, life coach and the founder of the Goodbye Burnout for Healthcare Professionals Program.

Quick plug, you should definitely jump into the Saying Goodbye to Burnout Facebook Group. The link is in the show notes or just do a search on FB for the info.

If you have questions about any of our programs, the podcast, or anything about health and wellness, come join us in The Real Life Wellness Podcast with Mary and Keysa facebook group or find us on social media, I'm always active on Facebook

Join me for my 5 day challenge each month where we cover a topic or issue that will help you lose your cravings. It's free to join, just head on over to my website: keysaamaro.com and sign up!

The Real Life Wellness Podcast, Episode 52: How to Put Your Thoughts on Trial

Alright. On to our topic of the day, which is how to put your thoughts on trial.

In this episode, we discuss how your thoughts create your results and what to do if the thoughts you are thinking are not bringing you the results that you want.

But first, I want to share with you an amazing review from one of our subscribers:

5 Stars from

Shaolin Soprano, 01/17/2020

Mary and Keysa are da bomb-digity

Really enjoyin' tuning into the show. These 2 are incredible host with dynamic synergy. With health and wellness being apart of my daily lifestyle I can truly appreciate all gems dropped here. Great overall show.

So, let's do a quick review of how our thoughts create our current results. For a more thorough review, go back and listen to Episode 16- the Power of Your Thoughts.

This episode has a few worksheets to look at that go along with the process. I highly encourage you to go to the show notes and download them and read along as we go through this. If you are listening while you are driving or don't have access to the worksheets at this time, please go download them later.

Okay. So, first off, it's important to be able to identify the facts. These we often refer to as circumstances. These are the boring details, the words said, the location, the actions taken by you or another person. Circumstances are very boring, there is no drama, opinions, or judgments.

Then, we have thoughts about those circumstances. Our thoughts are the sentences in our mind, the judgments, opinions, and drama.

Those thoughts are what are creating our feeling state in that moment. If I am having happy thoughts I will feel happy. If I am having angry thoughts, I will feel angry. If I am having worrying thoughts, I will feel worried.

Those feelings will determine how I act and respond.

The way I act, or my actions, will create my current results in the moment.

For instance, I have a dog. His name is Gizmo. Those are circumstances. Nothing interesting there. I have lots of thoughts about Gizmo. One of them is that he is the most snuggly dog in the whole world.

That thought creates the feeling of loving.

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When I feel loving towards Gizmo, I want to snuggle him and hold him and smoosh him.

My result is that I am snuggling Gizmo.

In another instance, however, I may have a different kind of thought. Like, "Gizmo pooped in the basement and he shouldn't have."

When I think this thought I am annoyed.

When I am annoyed at Gizmo, I might speak harshly, or avoid him.

My result in those moments is not creating a loving environment for my dog.

Same dog, different thoughts.

Again, please go back and review this in Episode 16 for more details.

Okay. So, we know that the way we are thinking drives our results. And maybe you don't like the results you are getting in the current moment and you'd like to have better thoughts. Now what?

What we are going to talk about today is a process that I use with clients often. It is my go to when there are painful feelings about a situation that they don't understand, or that they want to let go of.

We are going to put your thoughts on trial. Please download this worksheet and use it often!

Step number 1 is we are going to identify a painful situation. Picture it in your mind. Who is there? What is happening? What are they doing? What are you doing? What are you thinking?

YOU are going to write everything down on a piece of paper. Write all of the answers to those questions. You are not going to want to do this part. YOU are going to want to do this in your head and I really want to emphasize that you will not have the same focus and you will not get as much out of this exercise. Get a paper and write it all down. Ask yourself what you were thinking in this moment? What should be different? What should they be doing differently? What should you be doing differently? What is wrong with this situation? Why are you feeling the way that you do?

Now, look at everything that you have written and ask yourself which one of those thoughts, beliefs, or statements is creating a lot of pain for you. There is no right answer, just pick one sentence.

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If the thought you have picked is a question, go back and answer the question. YOu will want to say that you don't know the answer, but push through that. Ask yourself, if you did know the answer, what would it be?

Now we will put that thought on the top line and we are going to run it through some questions.

The first question is, is it true? When we are talking about "it" we are talking about that thought that you wrote. Is the thought true?

For this to make more sense, we will use the thought that I sometimes have when I am driving.

"People should not drive slowly in the left hand lane."

So, we ask the thought, is it true? Well, it certainly feels true in the moment. There are rules about driving in the right and left lanes. So for that question, I would put, yes.

The next question to answer, is "Can you absolutely know that it's true?"

For this question, ask yourself if every human on the planet would agree with the statement. If they would, you can answer with yes.

For my example, I have to assume that the person driving in front of me, going slowly in the left lane, would not have the same belief as me. Therefore, I have to answer this question with a no.

The next question is how do you feel when you think the thought?

For me, when I am driving behind someone going slow in the left lane, thinking that people should not be driving slowly in the left hand lane, it creates a feeling of intense frustration.

The next question is, "is it useful?" For this question I want you to think if the thought you put on the top line is useful in your life. Is it bringing the results that you want? For mine, the thought that they shouldn't be driving in the left lane slowly, and there is someone in front of me driving slowly, and I'm feeling frustrated, I become a bad driver. My frustration has me driving too close to the person in front of me, looking to pass them in the right lane, and being distracted instead of focused on the road. This is not a useful thought for me.

If the thought is useful, there's no reason to discard it. If it's not, we go to the next step.

So, now that we have put that thought to trial, what we are going to do is take a look and see if there is a different thought that would be useful.

When I am teaching this, I always go with the exact opposite at first, so that we learn the steps. So, the exact opposite of "People should not drive slowly in the left hand lane," is "People should drive slowly in the left hand lane."

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Now, you will want to believe that I am crazy for putting that there. We have really strong beliefs about what people should and shouldn't do, and putting the opposite will hurt your brain.

So, we put the opposite thought, then we look for 3 pieces of evidence that it could be true.

My first piece of evidence is that sometimes people who want to turn left in the near future will drive in the left hand lane. They will be going slowly because they are making sure that they are going an appropriate speed to find their turn and make it safely.

My next piece of evidence is that I have actually talked to people who have learned a different way of driving. They have literally been taught to drive in the left hand lane at times when not passing. They are doing what they are taught. This person in front of me might be one of those people.

My third piece of evidence, which is the most important has to do with the "shoulds." Our friend Joanna told me once that her family calls it "shoulding" on people.

When something is happening or present and you think it shouldn't be happening or shouldn't be present, you are literally arguing with reality. Right now there is an empty can of seltzer sitting on my desk from yesterday. If I think "it shouldn't be there" all that happens is pain. How do I know the can should be there? Because it is.

How do I know someone "should" be driving in front of me slowly in the left lane? Because they are.

Next question is how do I feel when I think this new thought. There are no right or wrong answers. This is not going to always make you feel better. For me, the new feeling is less frustration, but still annoyed.

The last question is, is it useful? Is this new thought more useful than the first one? For me, the answer here is yes. I can recognize that I am getting stuck on arguing with reality. I don't want them to be driving in the left lane, but when I calm myself down I become a better driver. I can see my options more clearly. Maybe I wait until this person has turned, or I just back off and drive a reasonable distance behind them. Maybe I carefully pass in the right hand lane. Understanding that they should be driving in the left hand lane doesn't mean that I have to start driving slowly in the left hand lane myself, or that I have to just sit there and do nothing. It simply clears my mind, calms me down, and lets me make better decisions in the moment.

I have found this process to be extraordinarily powerful and I really encourage you to download the worksheets and give the process a try!

5 Tips to help you begin to put your thoughts on trial

1. **Pay attention to your thoughts:** Some of you may already be doing this, and some of you may not know what thoughts are creating your feelings. It is very important to pay attention to what thoughts and beliefs are running around up there in that brain of yours. This might be where you are right now, I want you to know that this is okay, being able to notice your thoughts is a great first step.
2. Often I have clients tell me their thoughts in question form. "Why would I do that" "What is wrong with me" "What is wrong with them," etc. If you have questions in your journal, what I want you to do is answer them. The truth is, you have been answering them all along. Why are you believing that you did that? What are you believing is wrong with you? Answer those questions- don't put a question at a top of the worksheet- always put the answer.
3. A common answer to these questions in my office is "I don't know." It may feel like you don't know the answer. Don't let yourself live in that space. Ask yourself, what would I say if I did know?
4. Often clients will say to me that "journaling doesn't work." We have this belief that if we sit down to journal when we are feeling painful feelings, that when we are done, we will feel better. This is a different kind of journaling. This is a brain dump of all the good, bad, and ugly that you have been thinking and believing. Don't edit yourself. Don't try to make yourself feel better. This is not the kind of journaling that you go back to read another day, it is solely for understanding what thoughts are rattling around in your brain about this particular topic.
5. **Ask yourself, is it useful?** This question is so simple, and so powerful. Even if you believe your thought or belief is true, ask yourself if it is useful. Is there another thought that might be more useful to you.

Alrighty, friends, that's all we have got for you today. Thank you so much for being awesome as always and listening in.

Tune in to our next episode where we talk about ... the war on obesity.

If you'd like to know more about us, and if you have any questions or comments, head on over to our dedicated Facebook group! You can also contact Mary at her website at www.maryalycepreston.com or Keysa at her website at www.keysaamaro.com!

If you know someone who you think would benefit from the information shared on our podcast, please share this episode with them! We want to extend our message to, and support as many people as possible, and we need your help to get our message out.

And if you enjoy the show, we would love it if you would leave us an honest review on iTunes. Simply go to iTunes and search for the podcast page. Hit the tab for ratings and reviews, and click on Write a Review. That's it! Super helpful!

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Episode Resources:

[Episode 16- The Power of Your Thoughts](#)

[Byron Katie- The Work](#)

[Brooke Castillo- The life coach school](#)

[Worksheet to Download](#)