

115. How to separate your core self from your negative thoughts

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Welcome to the Empowered brain, the only podcast using science, psychology and coaching to help you rewire your brain and create a life you love with your host, Dr. Vanessa Calderon, a Harvard grad physician, master coach, and mother of two.

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Hello, sweet friends. Welcome back to the podcast. It is such an honor for me to be here with you every week. Thank you all so much for tuning in. Again, I want to give a huge shout out to all of you because the podcast has continued to expand and grow. And just in the last month, we've had 1000 New downloads was it, which is just like tremendous growth. And I'm just in, you know, feeling super grateful that I'm able to help so many people. You know, one of my missions in life is really to be in service, and to be able to impact and help as many people as I can. It's why I chose to be a physician. It's why I was a social justice activist before I became a doctor. And it's why I have now devoted my life to coaching and supporting women and other professionals as they're creating more and more in life. So if you are learning a lot in the podcast, if you've really enjoyed it, I would really appreciate if you can continue to share the podcast with your friends, your family, people who you think would benefit from listening. So thank you, again, for continuing to be here with me, I am just tremendously honored and humbled that you would take time to continue to tune in.

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So I want to share something with you all today that I hope will really be helpful in helping you separate your beautiful core authentic self from the negative thoughts that we sometimes think. And I want to start by sharing a story with all of you. So if you've been listening, you know that I just moved across the country from California to Atlanta, and we absolutely love it here. We're so happy. We have a new community, some great friends, and we're happy here. And our kids just started school. So I have a nine year old and a six year old, and we just enrolled them in school. And the day before they started school, I had so many thoughts come up, I had thoughts come up like oh my gosh, what was I thinking? I'm the worst mom ever. I'm so selfish. How can I move my kids across the country? What if they don't adapt? What if they don't make friends, and on and on my thinking brain went. And you know, I've been doing sort of felt work for a very long time, and including meditating and other things. And I was able to notice those thoughts come up. And it was so shocking to me, that I was still having such loud thoughts come up for me that were so negative. Because those thoughts, if I were to follow them down, the path would go down to making me feel disappointed or ashamed or guilty, you know, all of the things that we know do not create, you know, the future that we want, it doesn't create the results that we want. And I felt so grateful that I was able to notice those thoughts and not engage with them.

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And what I want to do today is I want to teach you a way for you to do that for yourself. Because I have students all the time that come to me with a thought that's making them feel disappointed or ashamed or guilty. And they don't see it as a thought. They think that that's just reality, that this is just the truth, this is certain this is the way it is.

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And when you don't see that as it's odd, it's really hard to separate and shift. And when you don't shift, you start creating results that you don't want in life. You start creating things that make you feel more disappointed in yourself that make you feel more ashamed in yourself that make you feel more guilty.

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And that right there is what I want to help you with. If you're someone that's struggling with this, if you're catching yourself consistently with negative self talk that you can't shift out of. Maybe you don't even notice the thoughts anymore. Maybe it's just feelings like I'm always disappointed. I feel so ashamed. I feel so guilty. Those are the things I want to help you with. You know, there's two ways that you can work with me. Well, I guess three. One is you can continue to listen to the podcast because I give great content on it. But you can also work with me one on one if you're interested. I work with women and men and other professionals. And I help them really separate these types of things and create a life of intentionality where they're not stressed, they're not burnt out and they're just functioning from a place of being really effective. I do that one on one and I also do that in my program the journey. The journey is absolutely fantastic. It has great teaching module.

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is inside a really cool, wonderful community of high achieving women. So if you're a woman, smart, high achieving woman, and you want to join a really great community and learn a bunch of fantastic things that will help you stop procrastinating those past impostor syndrome, really start showing up more confident, way more effective in your life, then I encourage you to check out the journey. Vanessa Calderon, md.com, backslash join J, o i n, you can just go to my website again, and just look click on the journey, you can read more information there. And if you want to work with me one on one, just DM me, and we can talk about working together one on one. Alright, so back to this episode today. And I'm gonna use the example that I just gave you to really elicit the tools I'm going to teach today. And I also wanted to share one other example of one of my students. So one of my students, incredibly successful woman came to me feeling really disappointed in herself. And what she said is, I just I don't know what's wrong with me for the last few days, I've been feeling really lazy. I've just been so lazy for the last few days. And then she starts giving me examples of what she's been doing. I just can't focus, I'm not motivated. I can't get through my to do list, I have all these things I want to do, and I'm not doing them. And I was like, Well, what are you doing? Instead, she said, well, one night, I was craving this meal. So I decided to just get up and make it from scratch. And then I ate it. And then I took a nap. And then I realized that it was time for me to get up and start taking action again. So I got up to start doing stuff. But then I was like, oh, I need a snack again. So I took another snack. So I want you to notice what happened here. What happened here is that she had an initial thought, I'm lazy, which caused her to feel disappointed in herself. That disappointment led to those actions, the actions of eating late night, taking naps, waking up and having another snack avoiding all the work that she wanted to do.

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And ultimately, what she ended up creating is more disappointment. Notice that vicious cycle. And I want you to see that because what is ultimately happening is that our thoughts create our reality. I've said this over and over and over again, our thoughts will create our reality. We think something that one thought that one sentence in our brain causes us to have a feeling that feeling is what drives all of our actions. Everything we do, and we don't do comes from that feeling. And those actions in life is what creates our results is what ultimately creates our results. And if you're not careful, and you don't separate those thoughts, and you don't notice that thought feeling combination, you will just continue down that vicious cycle continuing proving to yourself that you're lazy, continuing to feel disappointed.

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Okay, so what I want to do now is I want to teach you a really simple and really effective mnemonic to help you separate your thoughts from your feelings.

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Again, remember, you're gonna have a million thoughts in a day, about 60,000 thoughts in one day, those thoughts for the most part, you know, half of those thoughts might propel you forward, causing you to create the results you want in your life. And some of those thoughts may not. And what you want to do is you want to choose the thoughts that propel you forward that give you the results you want in life. And you want to notice those other thoughts, the thoughts that cause you to feel things that I call paralyzing emotions, thoughts, like guilt, shame, disappointment, rejection, notice those thoughts. Because when you have those negative feelings, that is a cue for you that you are focusing on something and you need to shift that you're focusing on something that is not serving you and you need to shift because the truth is that everything is a thought,

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negative thoughts and positive thoughts. They're all just thoughts. And what you choose to focus on is going to create your reality. So you want to choose the thoughts that propel you forward that are associated with what I call propelling emotions, emotions like motivation, inspiration, pride, love, joy, commitment. Those are the thoughts that you want to continue to focus on.

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Okay, so here's the mnemonic. The mnemonic is the colon mnemonic ce o l e, and it comes from Dr. Dan Siegel, who's a clinical psychiatrist and founder of UCLA mindfulness Research Center. So I've been teaching this mnemonic for so many years because it is so simple and easy. And I've adapted part of it just to better serve my students. So I'm going to teach you the way I've adapted it to serve my students in a way that's super simple and easy for you to start using now. And what I want to show

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share with you. And what I will share throughout this is that one example that I shared with you about my own life and feeling like a really bad mom. That's how I'm going to teach you the mnemonic. Again, the mnemonic is the core mnemonic. And it's C O ALCOAL. Alright, so the C stands for curiosity. So when you notice you have a thought come up. So sometimes you'll notice that thought, like, I'm so lazy,

like my student, or my thought, I'm such a bad mom, I'm so selfish. Sometimes you will notice that thought. But oftentimes, what you might notice first is just the feeling like you might just have that feeling of like, you know, pressure in your chest, which is shame, that's a shame shows up for me, or that discomfort in your stomach, which is how disappointment shows up for me, you might notice the feeling first. So once you notice the thought or feeling, that's your cue to cue in to what's happening. And to see again, stands for curiosity, what you want to do is you want to approach that thought with curiosity. So here are some things that I'll offer to you that you can use yourself. Number one, wow. Isn't that interesting that my brain is offering me this thought? Or it? Here's something else, I often tell myself, Oh, my gosh, how fascinating. How fascinating that my brain is trying to tell me that I'm selfish, or that I'm a horrible mom.

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Something else I will use often is, ooh, look where my brain went. Isn't that interesting that my brain went there? Or I wonder why. I wonder why my brain did that. Why my mind brain has offered me that. So notice how I'm approaching a thought with curiosity. I'm approaching the thought as a scientist, as a humble scientist, like, for example, Albert Einstein never felt like he had all the answers, and was always so curious about everything. Notice how I'm approaching it with curiosity. The opposite is approaching it thinking that you know, like a master thinking that you already know why. And that is the ego. That is the ego that will sometimes show up arrogant, and instead of approaching it with curiosity, the ego might say, of course, you feel guilty and selfish, because you are because you are a bad mom. Of course, you're feeling like this, like what were you thinking? How could you have moved your kids across the country that was so stupid. So notice what the ego will do. The ego will show up thinking that it knows trying to make you believe that that thought is certain, very arrogant, and often very negative.

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As opposed to when you really approach the thought with curiosity. That's how you want to approach these thoughts. Approach them with a beginner's mind and curiosity. Think about that scientist.

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The next thing you want to do is go on to the second letters. Oh, and that's objective. Once you notice the thought, and you approach it with curiosity, you want to be an objective observer of the thought, you want to be an objective observer of the thought. The opposite of that is being a subject of the thoughts subjective. And when you are subjective, or a subject of the thought, now, the thought is happening, you know, and you in your thinking, Oh, my gosh, oh, my gosh, I'm feeling like this, or, or I'm, I'm guilty, or I'm ashamed. Or I'm really, it's like, I'm thinking a thought that's causing me to feel this. And notice how you separate yourself from the thought. That's what the objective observer does. The objective observer notices a thought, kind of like a mediator in a conflict. You're watching this as kind of like a third party, noticing what's happening. So something I can offer you here is you can ask yourself, oh, I noticed that I'm thinking or what am I thinking? Ah, interesting. How would that thought make me feel how is that thought making me feel? How does this feel in my body? So again, you want to be objective. So the C's curiosity, the O is objective. And now the A, the A stands for acceptance, accept. What you want to do here is you want to accept the thought as a thought.

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Accept the thought as it's not reality. This is a thought that my brain is offering me that interesting. When you accept it as a thought, not as reality. There's much less drama included. There's no rumination.

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There's much less judgment. For example, for me, my brain is offering me the thought that I'm a horrible selfish mom.

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And when I see that I can say, Ah, interesting look at what my brain is offering me. Now if I were to believe that was true, what would I do? I would start ruminating on all of the past looking for evidence as to how I'd been selfish

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In the past and guilty in the past, I would be thinking about the future with anxiety, thinking about all the ways you know, my kids might not thrive here and that I did this to them and all these things. Notice the judgment, when you're not accepting it as a thought. Notice the drama. So again, you want to accept it as a thought.

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And then you want to L L is the last part. Now, what I do with L here is I say you want to love and let go. When I say love, I mean, you want to offer yourself love, you want to offer yourself Self Compassion in this moment. You want to give yourself a hug, if you need it, be kind to yourself and say, Oh, wow, of course, I'm thinking that thought.

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Of course, this is coming up for me. But that's okay. I know that that's not who I am. But that's okay, I know I'm doing the best I can. And once you're able to love yourself and offer yourself Self Compassion, you neutralize that negative thought. And that is your opportunity to shift. In that moment, you can shift and choose how you want to think and feel. Instead, you can choose how you want to think with thoughts, you want to think how is it that I want to feel. And one thing I want to offer you here, here's a thought I would love all of you to adopt, it's, I'm doing the best I can.

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I am going to do X, choose whatever thought or feeling you're going to do next. And just remind yourself that you are doing the best you can. And when you do that, you can then move on. And when I say move on, I mean take action. I mean, you you come up with a thought, actually, I'm not a really, you know, selfish and guilt. I'm not a selfish Mom, I'm not the worst mom in the world, and actually doing the best I can I prepared my kids, I had these conversations with them. And what I want to do in this moment is I just want to go sit and be with her and love her and make sure she knows that, you know, first day of school might be challenging might be hard, and that we're going to be here for her to support her. And that's the action part. You want to be able to take action and practice, you know, ways of being.

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You know, there's this concept of being, how you're being how you're thinking and feeling is who you be. That's your being. And you're doing is the action part of that. It's how you choose to interpret the the actions you choose to take from those thoughts and feelings. And being and doing is this beautiful dance that you get to do in life. When you choose to think and feel a certain way, then you can go and take action and those actions. Again, it's this beautiful cycle that's going to strengthen your ways of being. And your ways of being is going to strengthen your actions. It's this beautiful, virtuous cycle. And so when you notice those thoughts, get curious with them, see them as an objective observer. Accept them as a thought not reality, but as a thought. Love yourself in those moments, offer yourself that self compassion, let go of that thought and choose how you want to think and feel instead and shift. You can then take action from a place of intention. And again, those actions is what's ultimately going to create the results in your life.

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All right, sweet friends, I hope this was helpful for you. Again, it's the call pneumatic CE O A L. And I just invite you to try it out and practice it for yourself. Practice it right now. Come up with a thought right now that you were thinking and go through the mnemonic for yourself. You know be fascinated by the thought and get curious about it. Notice how it's making you feel accepted as a thought. Love yourself in that moment. Let it go and choose how you want to think and feel instead. All right, I will see you all next week. Have a fantastic week.

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Hey, sweet friends, if you love what you're learning, then you've got to join us in the journey. It's my all inclusive program and the best community out there giving you the education you never knew you needed to help you create a life you love. Join us at [Vanessa Calderon md.com](http://VanessaCalderon.md.com) forward slash join. I'll see you there.