

13: How to Know When You're Ready to Start



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With Your Host

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There's one sentence I hear the most often from people who want to be coaches or start any new project or venture and are not getting moving on it. I don't feel ready yet. Or the sneaky cousin, I'm preparing by doing this or that, and then I'll feel more ready. Both of these assume that ready is a feeling that will arrive when the time and circumstances are right. This is a huge mistake that can derail your dreams and hold you back in life. So today I want to get into what we mean when we talk about feeling ready or not feeling ready and how to think about starting something new differently.

Welcome to *The Future Coach*, the podcast for independent coaches, in-house coaches, and the coach curious. I'm your host Kara Loewentheil, founder of The Socratic Coaching Academy. If you want to chart a new path, uplevel your skills, and build a successful career around coaching, you're in the right place. Let's go.

If you've been listening to this podcast for a minute, you know that I didn't come up with the idea of becoming a life coach and then immediately jump right in. I spent years thinking and joking about how I wanted to quit law and be a life coach without actually doing anything about it because I didn't feel ready. So the natural question would be, what changed for me to feel ready and actually take action? Here's the God's honest truth as an answer. Nothing. Nothing changed. I never felt ready. The truth is that all the successful people you know or you just see online or out in the world are not successful because they magically feel ready to take risks, take action, bet big, or try something new. They're successful because they don't wait to feel ready.

You've probably heard that before, but that makes it sound like waiting to feel ready is an option and it just might delay things a bit. If you just learn a little more, if you just save a little more money, if you just practice more, if you just wait for your kids to start kindergarten or to start college. There are so many things we can tell ourselves we're waiting for, sure that once they arrive or we get to them, we'll suddenly feel ready. But that's a lie because there's no such thing as feeling ready.

13: How to Know When You're Ready to Start

What I figured out that allowed me to move forward was that I was never going to feel ready. Because what we call feeling ready is really feeling confident or certain, or the absence of feeling doubt, anxiety, or fear. So when we say we don't feel ready, what we really mean is I feel uncertain, nervous, or afraid. What we really mean is I don't believe 100% this will work. And we think that means something or is actual information about whether we should do it. But it doesn't mean anything.

I know there are some coaches or gurus out there who will tell you that they had total faith in the universe or manifestation or whatever. But I'm a normal human with a normal brain who hasn't achieved enlightenment. So honestly, if I had felt ready to quit my job running a think tank to become a life coach on the internet, that would probably have been a concerning signal about my mental health. Like, how could a person feel ready to do that? I had invested a decade into my legal education and career and I had only just gotten certified as a coach. I had no experience as an entrepreneur. I didn't even balance my own checkbook. There was no universe in which I could have made that change without feeling doubt, fear, and insecurity.

Even if I had built a coaching business alongside my legal practice for another decade, I still would have had all of those same emotions. I might have had more proof that I could make money as a coach and that I enjoy having a business, but I'd also have sunk more time and energy into my legal career. I'd probably have more financial responsibilities a decade later, and my brain would have lots of other new and different reasons it was a terrible idea. And I know that's the case because even after taking the biggest risk and jump in leaving one career for another, I still don't feel ready when I need to make pivots in my business or in my life.

In fact, my friend Brenda Lomeli and I coined the term Barf Club to describe what it feels like to be nauseous about taking action and to take it anyway. I've never felt ready for anything really. Big business moves, getting

13: How to Know When You're Ready to Start

married, becoming a stepmom, buying and renovating a house. I felt nauseous every time. But I've been able to move forward because I'm not pacifying myself with the fantasy that I will feel more ready at some later point. That fantasy of feeling ready someday allows us to put off taking action on our dreams indefinitely. Evolutionary biology keeps your brain wanting to stick to the familiar because that feels safe. Society teaches you to second guess your desires and that staying on the prescribed path is the way to safety. So given those inputs, how could you possibly feel totally sure and certain about doing something new or different or something that takes you off the beaten path?

Okay, so now hopefully you're on board with the idea that you may well never feel ready to start something new, like becoming a coach. So then how do you take action when you don't feel ready? That's what I'm going to share with you after this quick break.

So if you're not going to feel ready ever, how do you decide with whether to move forward with becoming a coach or anything else? Any next step, whether that's getting certified, putting yourself out there for clients, making a pivot in your niche, investing in your business. There are a lot of ways to make decisions, but I want to highlight two that I use with my clients all the time. The first is values-based decision-making. Most people operate based on their values some of the time subconsciously, but because they aren't doing it with awareness on purpose, those values can get distorted or overruled by subconscious fears, reactivity, ego, etc. When you articulate your values for yourself out loud and use them to guide your decision-making, you have a good reason to do something even if you don't feel ready.

So sometimes my clients select a few big-picture life values that they apply across the board. Sometimes they select a few values that they want to guide a particular area of their life or even a particular decision they want to make. Whatever scale you're doing it at, using your values to guide your decisions gives you something to anchor to even when you feel

13: How to Know When You're Ready to Start

uncomfortable. Living by your values isn't always comfortable, but it's always meaningful.

The second tool you can use for guidance in making decisions is connecting to your future self. I know this sounds woo, but really what you're doing when you try to live into your future self is that you're accessing the part of your brain that handles strategic thinking and long-term perspective. You can ask your future self how to handle any decision. If your future self is a happily married woman, what does she tell you about how to handle this fight with your partner? If your future self is the CEO of a \$10 million a year business, what does she tell you about whether to make this marketing investment? If your future self is a successful coach, what does she tell you about whether you're ready to get started on the process of becoming a coach?

All that being said, in my experience coaching people who don't feel ready to take action, the problem is rarely that they don't actually know what they want to do. The problem is that they have a lot of thoughts creating doubt, fear, and uncertainty so they don't feel ready. Which means the real solution to their problem is accepting the fact that feeling ready is irrelevant. Ready is not a feeling. And having doubts is unrelated to how good of an idea something is or to how likely you are to succeed. So if you want to move forward in life, you have to release the fantasy that you'll feel ready. I don't just mean listening to this podcast and intellectually understanding what I'm saying. I mean you really have to practice the thought that not feeling ready is irrelevant to how you make decisions or what actions you choose to take.

This is part of emotional maturity, especially if you want to be an entrepreneur. You can't make decisions based on whether you feel scared or your brain has a lot of drama it would like to discuss with you. You have to be willing to take action even when you feel like you want to throw up. That's why we call it Barf Club. It's normal to feel fear. It's normal to have doubts. It's normal to second guess. It is normal for other people not to get

13: How to Know When You're Ready to Start

it. That's a whole other podcast topic we'll get into soon. You can either normalize those things as just part of what it means to take action and achieve your dreams, or you can wait around, twiddling your thumbs for this magical, mystical ready feeling that will never come. I think you know which option has my vote.