

Ep #25: Rewire Your Brain with Gratitude



Full Episode Transcript

With Your Host

Amy Latta

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You are listening to episode 25 of *The Confident Coaches Podcast*, the one where you're going to rewire your brain with gratitude.

Welcome to *The Confident Coaches Podcast*, a place for creating the self-confidence you need to do your best work as a life coach. If you want to bring more boldness, more resilience, and more joy to your work, this is the place for you. I'm your host, Amy Latta. Let's dive in.

Hello, hello my friends. How are my confident coaches doing out there? We're still in the thick of things out here in the world. It's the last week of April and it's April 2020 and it is the time of the coronavirus. Most of us are still home. There's still no end in sight as to when things are going to open back up again. And it got me thinking about how our brain works.

I'm always thinking about how our brain works. Have you guys figured that out by now? If you haven't figured it out, this is episode 25. If this is your first episode, welcome. But if it's not your first episode, then you know, I love thinking about how our brains work, how they're wired, and how to use our brain in our favor instead of against us.

So I started thinking about how right now, so much of what our brain wants to do is go find all of the things that are wrong, that aren't working. And trust me, it can find so much of what's not working right now. There's no shortage of things, no shortage of evidence for your brain to go out and find what's not working, why this is terrible, why this is horrible, why this is the worst thing that's ever happened to so many different people, et cetera.

The thing is our brain will go look for whatever we ask it to. And it got me thinking about which direction we wanted to go seeking into because we have a choice. This is going to be a relatively short episode but I think this is going to be a very powerful episode for so many of us.

If you haven't done this work already of what you're about to see, what you're about to hear in this episode, I invite you to stay here, listen to how

Ep #25: Rewire Your Brain with Gratitude

to get your brain to work for you instead of against you, and put what I'm going to share with you into practice, commit to seven solid days, and just see how you feel a week from now.

So what am I talking about here? I'm talking about gratitude. I'm talking about gratitude. Now wait, don't hit pause, don't turn away. I know, I am not the first person who has talked to you about gratitude. Be more grateful and you'll be happier, like, this is not a new thing. Been there, done that, watched the Oprah special on it, right?

Oprah has been talking about gratitude. I honestly - I can't remember exactly the first time that I ever heard about a gratitude practice. I mean, I think in general, we hear a lot about - throughout our life and the time we were kids, about being grateful about what you have and being more appreciative and being grateful.

And I think it really was Oprah like, 25 years ago. I did not research that. But it's been a good 20, 25 years since she started talking about it. She's done countless interviews around the idea of gratitude. She sells gratitude journals. She teaches masterclasses on this subject. She has 21-day challenges around gratitude. I think she's got a whole business line built around gratitude.

And life coaches love to talk about gratitude. Gratitude this, be more grateful, establish a gratitude practice, have a gratitude journal. I know that fostering gratitude for exactly where you are so that you can create change is a key point in my coaching that I do with my own clients.

But here's the question that I don't know if you've ever pondered. Do you know why gratitude works? We've been told we should be doing it for at least 25 years, if not longer, that we should be grateful for what we have and we should have a gratitude practice. But do you understand why gratitude works?

Ep #25: Rewire Your Brain with Gratitude

Because what gratitude does is it invites you to start being more grateful for what you have and then nothing in your life has to change, but you're going to feel better about it. Do you understand why that works and what's going on in your brain?

Gratitude for what we already have in our life will literally change your brain. *A gratitude practice isn't just a fun thing to do at the end of the day. You will actually rewire how your brain functions.* And you can feel happier in your life where you are right now. Yes, even in the time of coronavirus. You can start to feel better and nothing has to change.

Isn't that so fascinating? So many of us right now are waiting for this to change, are waiting for this to come to an end. A couple of episodes ago, I talked about letting go of normal. So this is kind of an extension of that idea, of letting go of normal. Because so many people are waiting for things to get back to normal. That's not going to happen. We're not going to go back to the way that we used to function.

So now, so many people are trying to figure out what their new normal is. We're waiting for this thing to happen so we can start to feel better, and what I want to offer you is you can start feeling better right now with something as simple as a really basic gratitude practice.

And I can absolutely help you with this because this is work I have done for myself and alongside my coaching clients for the past couple of years. When you start practicing gratitude, here's what happens in your brain. So like I mentioned before, your brain is seeking evidence for whatever it wants to believe all the time.

It's doing this, even if it's on a subconscious level. Even if you have no idea that it's doing this, your brain is constantly seeking out evidence to prove what it wants to believe. So if you're constantly thinking about how you're not liking what's going on right now, you're troubled by what's going on

Ep #25: Rewire Your Brain with Gratitude

right now, you're angry, you're sad, all of the different emotions that you might be experiencing right now.

If you're thinking about that, if you're thinking about how things need to change, if you're spending a lot of time on social media reading about all the horrible things that are happening, your brain's going to keep seeking out more and more of that and you're going to be wiring your brain to find even more evidence and you will naturally start feeling bad without even having to gather more evidence.

So it's this really fascinating thing that happens in our brain, that we start to wire thoughts and feelings together. And your brain, when it becomes so well-practiced in thinking things are terrible and then the feeling that that creates, when it's so well-practiced and it keeps going out and it keeps finding more and more evidence to prove how things are really terrible, you don't even have to find more things that are terrible in the world in order to feel bad. Your brain will just start bypassing the thought that things are terrible and you're just going to feel bad in general.

Isn't that fascinating? So your brain is wired to do this. *Whatever you practice a lot, whatever thoughts you practice really often, whatever thoughts that you think on a regular basis, they create feelings in your body and so the ones that you practice the most, after a while, you don't even have to think that way in order to feel that way.*

What fires together wires together. We've heard that before, right? Well, your thoughts and your feelings are wiring. Your brain does this naturally. And if you aren't paying attention and you are thinking about how things are so shitty right now, it's going to go, "Okay, she wants proof on how things are shitty right now," and it's going to go find the evidence for it.

And all this is happening in the subconscious and you can't even figure out why you feel so terrible. So if your brain works this way, what happens

Ep #25: Rewire Your Brain with Gratitude

when you use this for you instead of against you? And that's where gratitude comes in.

So if your brain is always seeking evidence for what you want to believe, it's going to be doing this behind the scenes every day anyway, what happens when you start seeking things to be grateful for? You get to choose which direction you send your brain off to to find evidence for.

If you don't choose, it's going to go in the easier direction. It's going to go in the more habitual direction. This is why cranky people tend to just get crankier. This is why unhappy people just tend to get unhappier because unless they are consciously redirecting their brain to go find what they want, they're going to keep going down the negative path.

So you might as well use that for you, and allow your brain to start seeking evidence for the good that's going on in the world. It's so fascinating, right? What happens when you set your brain on an intentional path to find the good, find what's working, find what you're proud of, what you're excited about, what you're grateful for?

And then what happens is the more evidence that it finds, those thoughts and those feelings, they start firing and wiring together. So the more evidence you start seeking for the positive in the world, of the good that's happening, the better you will start to feel and nothing in the world has to change.

Now, before I share with you the specific gratitude practice that I use, I want to be really clear. This is not about being a Pollyanna and ignoring what's not going well in the world. We're not talking about ignoring the fact that many people, hundreds of thousands of people have contracted this deadly virus, that there is no treatment and no vaccine and no cure for, that we don't understand, we don't know how it's spread, all of that stuff.

Ep #25: Rewire Your Brain with Gratitude

We're not ignoring the numbers of people, the millions of people who are unemployed. We're not ignoring the things that are going on in the world. We're not ignoring the plight of the human beings. We're not ignoring that at all. We're not turning a blind eye.

We're just saying yes, that's happening in the world, and so is this other stuff. The interesting thing is that when you rewire your brain for gratitude, it's actually so much easier to come up with solutions for the things that aren't working, to be able to brainstorm ideas and figure out how you can help in your community.

Think about this. If you're always thinking shitty things and your brain just keeps finding more and more evidence to back it up and you're always feeling terrible, what's happening on your action line? Remember, if you're brand new to the podcast, I use a very simple coaching model where your thoughts drive your feelings and your feelings drive your actions. Your actions are what you do and what you don't do.

And what do and what you don't do is what creates your results in your life. So if you're constantly thinking terrible things and feeling terrible things, how likely is it for you to find solutions in your life? It's not impossible, but it's a harder road. It's a more difficult road.

But if you rewire your brain with gratitude, to start thinking better and start feeling better, think about how much easier it is to come up with solutions for those very real circumstances. Remember, everything that's happening in the world is neutral. We get to decide how we want to think about it.

We can feel pain, we can feel the heartache, but our suffering comes when we wallow in it and we argue with reality and we think it should be any different than it is. It's very hard to come up with solutions from that place. But from a place of gratitude, solutions are so much easier to find.

Ep #25: Rewire Your Brain with Gratitude

So if your brain's going to be seeing out evidence anyway, you might as well direct it to find the good, not the crap. And I can help you learn to find more gratitude where you are right now and this is the tool that I use with my clients, that I use myself. And I'm going to present a challenge to you today and I'm going to commit to it myself, and we're going to check back in a week with each other and see how we are doing.

So here is the simple gratitude practice that I do. It's the five-three-one gratitude practice. Super simple, and here's how we do it. At the end of every evening, you have a little journal by your notebook and you do five-three-one. Five I-am-grateful-fors, three wins, and one tomorrow-I-will.

So here's what I mean by that. Every night before bed, I write down five things I am grateful for that day. Now, things I am grateful for, they are things that are outside of you. So I'm grateful for electricity. I'm grateful for my husband taking out the trash. I'm grateful for the client that said yes.

And some advanced gratitude can be grateful for when that potential client says no because it helped me learn something. Now, if you're new to the gratitude practice, absolutely, put basic stuff like walls and electricity and clothing and indoor plumbing. If that's all you can come up with, put that on the list.

But challenge yourself to come up with five things that you have gratitude for. Seek them out. The birds chirping, the colors of the flowers blooming, the laughter of your kids when they're not trying to strangle each other. If you have to go with the most basic of stuff in the very beginning, that is okay.

But the more you practice gratitude, the easier it will become because your brain's going to get into that habit of looking for evidence. This practice gets so much easier in just a couple of days. It will start to find the other things, and you'll even be able to start to find gratitude for the things that maybe weren't the result that you wanted, but you learned something from it.

Ep #25: Rewire Your Brain with Gratitude

So if the grateful-fors are the things that are outside of you, the wins are inside of you. So after my five grateful-fors, I write down three wins. Now, this is something that I'm proud of. This is something that I accomplished. This is about what I did. So grateful-fors are outside of you, wins are inside.

So maybe it's I got dressed. I did not snip back when the angsty teen got snippy at me. Maybe it is I signed a new client. What am I proud of today? Did I brush my teeth? Did I make a good dinner? Did I not say the nasty thing when I wanted to? Did I share the praise when I knew it was appropriate? Did I accomplish a major technology snafu that I couldn't figure out? Did I sign the biggest coaching package I've ever signed?

Just like the gratitude, when you first get started, don't be afraid to put wins that are really basic like, well, I got up. Great. Put that down. You got out of bed today. You took a shower, you brushed your teeth, you brushed your hair. If that's where you need to start, then start there. There's nothing wrong with that.

Again, the more you practice the gratitude, the better you're going to start to feel and the easier it will be to achieve those wins and to find them. And then lastly, I write down the one thing I'm going to do tomorrow. So the idea here is so here's five things I'm grateful for, here's three wins I accomplished, and tomorrow, I'm going to what?

I'm going to place my focus, I'm going to place my energy towards what's one thing I know I'm going to look for, I'm going to do the next day. So one thing I will move forward tomorrow. Maybe I'm going to put away that laundry that I washed today. I know, I know you got baskets of laundry.

Maybe I will send that email to that potential client. Maybe I will create that next part of my coaching program. Maybe I will finally make that phone call I've been putting off. Maybe I'll finally bake those brownies with my kid or start that puzzle with my teen, whatever the thing is.

Ep #25: Rewire Your Brain with Gratitude

It's really just the most fun to take actions from a place of gratitude. It feels fabulous. And you attract more fabulousness into your life. Think about this in your business. The more gratitude you have for the business that you have right now, the better you're going to feel, and your potential clients are going to pick up on that. They're going to feel that gratitude coming from you.

It's kind of one of those things. Have you ever walked into a room and you've met someone and all the pieces are there? They're saying the right things, but you just can't quite put your finger on it? You just can't quite connect with them?

And then you can meet someone else and they can have all the same things and they can say all the same words, but man, you like that person. You are picking up their vibe. That's what gratitude can do for you. When you implement a daily gratitude practice, the five-three-one that I just shared, you will start attracting better potential clients when you're connecting with them from a place of gratitude, instead of desperation.

You will start feeling better about your life as it is right now, about your home, about your marriage, about your children, and most importantly, about your coaching business, which is why we're here in this podcast.

So this week, my friends, let's go rewire your brain. Implement and commit to at least seven days of five-three-one gratitude. Five I'm-grateful-fors, three wins, and one tomorrow-I-will. Commit to this for an entire week. Do this with me. Put a journal by your bed. Set an alarm on your phone to remind you. Make it a non-negotiable for at least the next seven days. Can you do that? I know that you can.

Because on the other side of that, don't you want to see what happens? Listen friends, life doesn't change so that you can feel grateful. You feel grateful for your life and then your life gets even better. Let's go get you

Ep #25: Rewire Your Brain with Gratitude

some gratitude. Let's go practice some five-three-one gratitude this week. Alright my friends, let's go do epic stuff.

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Thanks so much for listening to The Confident Coaches Podcast. I invite you to learn more. Come visit me at amylatta.com and until next week, let's go do epic stuff.