

Ep #49: When You Feel Drained



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With Your Host

Kori Linn

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This week we're talking about feeling drained.

You are listening to Love Your Job Before You Leave It, the podcast for ambitious, high-achieving women who are ready to stop feeling stressed about work and kiss burnout goodbye forever. Whether you're starting a business or staying in your day job, this show will give you the coaching and guidance you need to start loving your work today. Here's your host, Career Coach, Kori Linn.

Hey y'all, happy Wednesday. I have a really quick podcast for you this week because it's a pretty simple concept I want to talk about. And because it's real fucking hot in Sacramento right now but I have to leave the air conditioning off to record podcasts. So we're going to make this one real quick so that I can turn my air conditioning back on because it's approximately 1000 degrees here. Okay? Okay.

So this week we're talking about feeling drained and what drains you versus what energizes you. I was just coaching a friend and peer coach before this podcast, and we talked about how she has been feeling really drained while working. And if you're anything like this client you may feel drained sometimes in relation to your work and you probably think it's the work that's draining you.

This is very common. When we feel drained, when we feel burnt out, when we feel annoyed, we tend to give credit for those feelings to whatever we're having the feelings about. Whether it's a specific work task, a person in our office or virtual office, our significant other, whoever. And even though I'm a coach and I know how this shit works, I find myself using this language sometimes. Like, "Uh, this is just so draining, it's such a pain in the ass. I just don't like it." Blah, blah, blah.

So, here's the thing, the thing itself, the task, the person, the situation, that's not what's draining you. I know it feels like it is but go with me on this. What I would like to offer you is the idea that the way you're thinking about the person, task, thing, idea, situation, whatever, is actually what is creating that sensation of being drained.

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Now, I realize that this might go against some information you've heard from other coaches or other places around the internet. There definitely is an idea that certain things, activities, and people can drain you and certain things, activities, and people light you up or energize you. And you should go towards the ones that energize you and away from the ones that drain you.

Listen, that's one way of seeing the world and you're totally allowed to do that if you want to because the thing I want to teach you above and beyond everything else is self-authority and self-agency. So if that's what you want to think and do, go for it. But for a lot of us that's not what we want to think and do because we don't want to stop doing the thing, we don't want to end the relationship necessarily, we're not ready to quit the job. We want to be able to handle the situation instead.

And so if that's the situation for you, then I want you to come over here and think about things in the way I'm offering today versus that other way of seeing them. Not for me, not because I am so right, but just because this is a different framework you can use to engage with the world in order to get whatever it is you want and to create more of the life you want to have, to create more meaning, to create more satisfaction, to create more success, et cetera.

Okay, so here's the basic idea, this person was doing a certain task and she found it really draining. And when I dug in, I was like, "Why is it draining? Why is it draining? Why is it draining?" And she had reasons that sounded like reasons. She was like, "Here are the reasons it's draining." It was about the kind of work it was and what it entailed and what it meant about her and the specific stage of career she was at.

What I know as a coach is that her looking at that task that way is optional. That doesn't mean it's bad or wrong, she's allowed to keep those thoughts. She's allowed to move away from this thing that she thinks is draining her. But she was in a position where she didn't actually want to move away from the thing, she wanted to find a different way to engage with it.

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And if that's what you want, then I think the question for you is are you willing to question and interrogate the thoughts you have about the thing that you believe is draining you? Are you willing to be wrong? Are you willing to see how the opposite is true?

Often when we have a thought like, "This thing is draining, and here are the reasons it's draining," we treat that thought and those reasons like they're total available reality. Like we either have to be drained or we have to like being drained. It's seeing this thing as being draining as the only option. And that's just not true.

Now you might want to choose to keep that thought for whatever fucking reasons you have. But it doesn't mean it's your only option. And I want to be really clear that when we see that we have options, it's not even necessarily about taking the other options. It's just about knowing they're there.

It's like if you're like, "Oh, I just guess if I want a milkshake, I have to have strawberry because strawberry is the only milkshake. And I don't really want strawberry, but it's the milkshake that there is so I guess I'll get it."

I'm just coming in saying like, "Hey, you know, there's also vanilla milkshakes, right? And there's chocolate milkshakes. And if we want to get really creative, we could make a banana milkshake, we can make a Nutella milkshake. We could do whatever you want, really." You're used to having strawberry, you think strawberry is factually the only one available, but it's not.

Now if strawberry is the only one you have ingredients for, it's the only one you're used to making, it might be the only one you know how to just like make in your sleep with your hands tied behind your back. To mix my metaphors here and to like use another expression. That doesn't mean other ones aren't available. You could learn how to make them you could go to the store and get the ingredients, et cetera, et cetera. I've really taken that metaphor pretty far, but I think you get the idea.

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If you want to have a different experience, you can. The first step of having a different experience is realizing that the experience you're having is optional. So I talk a lot about what is working, noticing what is working, noticing what's going well, balancing our natural negativity bias with things that are positive.

And that's a really great skill, but one thing I've noticed is that sometimes when people feel drained, what they'll try to do is they'll try to just shift their attention to what's going well and what's working without questioning and interrogating these other thoughts about what's not working.

Now you can do this in either direction. And when people are new to coaching, I often do have them start by going to what is working. But once you've done that, once you've looked at what is working, what I don't want you to do is be like, "Oh, some things are working. But also this is terrible and draining."

That's not going to work because it's holding on to the premise that this other thing is draining, while simultaneously trying to like step into this new belief that some things are working. One of my coaches, Kara Loewentheil, calls this silver lining thought work. And basically what silver lining thought work means is it's when you accept your negative belief and then just try to like layer some positive beliefs on top of it.

Now listen, it's not wrong to do this. And in the beginning of that work, like I said, a lot of people do do this. And what they're learning to do is to simultaneously have their old belief while having some new beliefs too. Step away from the negativity bias, step into this idea of, okay, some things are working.

But if you're still feeling drained, or if you're not getting what you want yet, it's time for a very transformational next step. And that transformational next step is to really question and interrogate your thoughts about the thing that's "not working." And to take personal responsibility for the ways it's not working. And that part, I have a feeling is going to get some hackles up, it used to get my hackles up a lot.

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What I don't mean is taking personal responsibility for everyone else and what they're doing. You can't take personal responsibility for everyone else and what they're doing, for situations, for the world, for systemic oppression, for any of that. What I want you to take responsibility for is your own thoughts and the way you're engaging with that thing.

Let me be clear, responsibility does not mean blame. I'm going to say that again, responsibility does not mean blame. If you've lived your whole life only believing that there are strawberry milkshakes and you're 26 years old, and you're still looking at the thing going, "I guess I have to have a strawberry milkshake." That's not your fault. It's habitual, it's what you were trained and taught into, it's the world as you've come to know it.

But what I want you to see is it's not all that's available. And once you know it's not all that's available, then you have to take on ownership if you want to create something different because no one else is going to do that shit for you. What we know is that if you don't do it for yourself, you will probably keep living according to the socialization, according to the messaging you've received, and according to the biases your brain has. Basically you'll keep having more of the same.

So if you don't want more of the same, you have to first see how you are involved in creating that without you having been aware your whole life. And then take responsibility for that so that you can make a different choice.

You can say like, "Oh yeah, I guess I've been making strawberry milkshakes for a long time. And there's nothing wrong with me for making the strawberry milkshakes because that's what I was taught to do. And that's how I was taught milkshakes are. But I've made a lot of them, and if I don't want that I can take responsibility for the fact that that's what I've been making without blaming myself for making it. And then I can also be like, I don't want to do that anymore. I want something else."

We have to believe that something else is possible in order to create the something else. Why would you ever take any effort to create something

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else if you believe it's impossible? So believing it's possible is a really important step.

Okay, so let's review. If there's something in your life that you find really draining, and you want to move away from it, you're totally allowed to, because you're a fucking whole ass adult, and you get to live your life your way.

But if you don't want to move away from the thing and you want to have a different relationship with it, you want to enjoy it more, you want to see if you could potentially be energized by it instead of being drained by it, then here's what you need to do.

You need to get a piece of paper and write down every reason why you find that thing draining. All of them, write them down. And then for every reason you've written down, ask yourself how could the opposite be true?

Here's what we're doing when we do that, we're taking your brains thoughts that are creating the sensation of draining and we're looking for evidence to the contrary. Which is we're looking for evidence that potentially these things that have felt draining to you could feel either, A, neutral or, B, energizing.

When you find some things about the thing that you have believed to be draining, that are the opposite, that feel energizing or neutral, here's what you have to do, you have to practice thinking those things. The brain loves habit so it will just keep thinking and doing whatever it's been thinking or doing unless you train it to think and do something new.

So if you've been spending six months or six years of your life, believing that X, Y, Z task, person, idea, situation is draining and you suddenly want to believe something different, we have to teach the brain that new pattern. Just like we would teach a brain to ride a bike. It's not going to be perfect. You might metaphorically fall down and skin your knee, but you just keep going. And when you keep going you get there. That's it. It's really that simple.

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Now, obviously you don't have to do this. I want you to use your internal wisdom and internal guidance to decide which things you want to change your thoughts about. If there are things in your life that you're like, "Absolutely, I do not want to change my thoughts about this. I want to keep thinking is draining and get the fuck away from it." Okay, but I want you to have choices. And one of the best ways to have choices is to realize that the thoughts you think about things in your life are optional and you can change them.

And you can use this methodology to change your thoughts about anything. Whether the thing currently feels draining, or currently feels frustrating or currently feels anything else. Write down all the reasons for why it currently feels the way it feels. For every reason ask yourself how the opposite could be true. And then practice those opposite thoughts. And that will create an entirely different experience for you.

All right, that's what I have for you. So go forth and recharge those batteries instead of draining them and have a lovely week. Bye.

Thank you for listening to Love Your Job Before You Leave It. We'll have another episode for you next week. And in the meantime, if you're feeling super fired up, head on over to korilinn.com for more guidance and resources.