

Ep #258: All or Nothing Thinking



Full Episode Transcript

With Your Host

Stacey Boehman

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Welcome to the *Make Money as a Life Coach*® podcast where sales expert and master coach Stacey Boehman teaches you how to make your first 2K, 20K, and 200K using her proven formula.

Hey, coaches, welcome to episode 258. Today we're going to talk about all or nothing thinking, specific all or nothing thinking. Two thoughts that are very all or nothing, that we coach on literally daily in my 2K for 2K program but also in all of my programs. And I want to really dive into that today. So are you ready? We're going to address two thoughts, it's working and it's not working. So I was coaching on this in my 25K group months ago, actually I think it was even a prior round. So it's been something that's been on my mind for a long time.

I was coaching someone on this. And one of the things I do in my higher level programs is I really start to point out the different forms of their all or nothing thoughts. So maybe let me just rewind and say if you've never heard this idea of all or nothing thinking, it's a thought or a sentence in your brain that you have that has you doing everything or nothing. You're like, "It's all a win or it's all terrible, all good, all bad." Where it's very black and white. There is no nuance. There's no gray area. It just is this and it's not that.

We see this in politics a lot, just very polarized thinking. We see this a lot in relationships. We see this everywhere in the world where people have a thought that throws us into all or nothing thinking. Our brain looks for evidence to support that and then we create entire realities and belief systems using confirmation bias, that's what our brain is trained to do is find confirmation for the bias that we have. We do that over and over and over all day long until we create a life that feels very concrete and circumstantial.

And all of the results that we have in our lives feel very concrete and circumstantial, but only because we're in all or nothing thinking. And we're only spending time and thought work and having conversations with ourselves and other people and finding evidence for it in the world, one end of the spectrum, for whatever particular subject it is. In business, this is what I see a lot is if you imagine this giant spectrum on one end. We repeat

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to ourselves, it's working. It's working. Just keep swimming. Just keep swimming. Just keep swimming. Keep doing the work. Keep doing the work.

And then on the other end, it's not working, the tunnel of doom. I'm going out of business. I'm never going to make it. It's all falling apart. There's not one thing that's going right for me right now. Nothing is good. It's all terrible. Those types of thoughts. And there's thousands of thoughts that are associated on one end of the spectrum with it's working and on the other end of how it's not working.

And I don't think that I've ever seen anyone really point this idea out that the statement, the sentence 'it's working' is all or nothing thinking or that the sentence 'it's not working' is all or nothing thinking. And I think it's very useful to see it this way. When you work with me in any of my containers, one of the things that you are going to have ingrained in your brain, as in we talk about it as almost like a religion is the idea of evaluating.

And the evaluation method that I teach, I have talked about this many times on the podcast is the idea that you start with what's working. And there's a very specific psychological reason for that. You really push your brain to find things that are working to get you in a more neutral place, especially because our brains are so trained to look for things that aren't working. And our brain is only ever interested in those things, all the things that are not working. And so it wants to laser in on all the things that aren't working.

So you have to tell it first, "No, no, no, first we identify what's working then we look at what's not working." And then we formulate a plan for what we're going to do differently. One of the things you learn when you come into 2K for 2K, is that if you do an evaluation after every consult, if you do an evaluation daily or weekly or quarterly, whatever it is for you. If you are constantly evaluating, the one thing you will learn is there is always meat, content, things that go into all three of those questions.

There's never a time where you would ever leave one of those things blank. You would never leave what's working not applicable, like you're filling out a

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form, there's nothing that's working. And you would never fill out, even I have my students do this when they sign a consult, when they sign a client, when they do a launch and it's successful. Great. Do an evaluation. You're going to have lots of things that work, but you might also find things that didn't work that you can clean up for the next time.

And then you will always have something you want to do differently. Even with your highest of highs and your best wins, you will find things that you could iterate on that could be better, so there's never, ever, ever, ever a time wherein a not applicable goes in the line. The evaluation never has one of the three items blank, never, never, never. It's very important to know.

Evaluating evaluations will always get you out of any type of all or nothing thinking again, whether it's relationships. This relationship's terrible. It sucks. It's not healthy for me. What's working about this relationship, what's not working, what am I going to do differently? Whatever it is, we could do it with literally everything. So whatever it is, you're always going to be able to find those three things. What it will do is put you into middle ground. That's the way I like to describe it. Middle ground, more neutrality than maybe you have before.

So that's the answer, I'm just going to tell you that ahead of time. The answer is always that you're evaluating, it will keep you out of this. But I see it so often in our communities, this just, blanket description of business, it's either working or it's not working. And I want to offer that even, it's working, people think that this thought, it's working is hugely beneficial to them. They think it's a good thing. I'm finding it's working in my body. I'm really working on believing it's working.

And I want to challenge you that I don't think it's a good use of your time because it is also all or nothing thinking. And I'm going to break down why both of them are not useful. I think it's more easily obvious that it's not useful to just say it's not working. But it's not useful to say it's working either, using it in an all or nothing way. And so I'm going to break them both

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down separately, what I think happens, what I've seen thousands of coaches do when they're saying these statements in an all or nothing way.

But the thing that I want to challenge you is to just think about for you, my coach always asks me to do this. Any time I say a sentence she's like, "Tell me how that feels in your body." A lot of times I give her another thought. And then she'll just ask me again, "No, but how does it feel in your body?"

If you were really digging deep to what it actually feels like to say this sentence and then once you find the emotion that happens in your body, when you say that sentence, does that emotion support the result you want or the work required to get that result or not? Meaning is it useful, is it supportive or not? So I'm going to walk you through it's working and it's not working with how it feels in your body.

So I want you to think about when you say, if you were in the boat where you're trying to convince yourself it's working. You're trying to believe that it's working. But you have spent months and months or weeks and weeks, whatever the timeframe is, working on something and you're not getting the result you want. The answer is not to believe it is going to eventually work out, which is what I actually think it's working means to a lot of people when they're using it in an all or nothing way. It's eventually working. It will eventually work. It has to work at some point.

Those types of thoughts are actually what is behind it's working, especially when you're working to believe that. I'm working to believe actively that it's working when I don't have a result that shows me that that's true. When I don't have a result or measurement to show that it's working and I tell myself it's working, I try to get myself to believe it's working like Dory from Nemo, just keep swimming. Just keep swimming. Just keep working. Just keep working. That's what it has you do.

It produces hope and faith in your body and that might seem lovely and great, except hope and faith are not supportive, I don't think. Maybe overall as this overall having hope and faith in your business is always a good idea. But as a direct strategy to improvement, I don't think it's useful.

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Because here's what happens, if you have hope and faith that if the underlying thought to it's working is it will eventually work, it has to work out, at some point it will work eventually.

If it's any type of in the future, if it's any flavor of if I just keep working, eventually something will happen differently. Any flavor of that has you ultimately doing the same thing over and over without change, expecting a different result. And the reason you do that is because while you are busy hoping and faithing that something different will change, even though you haven't evaluated because you haven't looked at what's not working.

Literally what you do is you don't look at what's not working because you're so busy trying to believe that it is working. Because, and what I see through Ask a Coach, when we coach a lot in Ask a Coach through 2K for 2K. What we see a lot is the sentence, 'it's not working' feels so bad in your body as an all or nothing thought. Meaning I don't give any airtime to the thought it's working. I'm only thinking about it not working. And that thought, nothing is working. It's all falling apart. I'm going to go out of business. I'm never going to make it. There's no progress. Nothing is working.

In the deep it's not working, all or nothing thought, at the very, very end of the spectrum feels terrible. Or sometimes just the version of it's not working, any normal flavor of it feels so bad. That people are like, "I have to convince myself out of it." It feels so terrible to look at what's not working, any version of it feels so terrible that I would just rather convince myself that it is working. And while you are convincing yourself that it's working, what you're not doing is giving any airtime neutrally with power and responsibility like we talked about last week.

You're not giving that airtime to what's not working. And you need that information. That's how you evaluate. You have to have both pieces of the information to inform you what to do differently. And over time, what happens when you're hoping and you're faithing, and then you're convincing yourself to believe it even deeper that it is working. And then you're doing the same thing over and over without change expecting a

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different result. Because you aren't looking for what's not working because it feels so terrible.

What happens is you don't gather a culmination of all of the things that have worked and bring what's working with you to build upon. You don't gather accumulation of what's not worked and store those of, yeah, that didn't work in the past. And you don't have a track record of having done different things each time. So last week we talked about one of the most crazy making things is to just do the same thing over and over and over and not evaluate.

And so you could go two years with the exact same result because you never did anything differently. Or a lot of times, you guys do a lot of things differently but you don't think differently. So you do two years of throwing everything at the wall, trying all of the hottest marketing techniques, trying all the social media platforms, trying all the sales techniques, buying all the coaching. But you don't change how you are thinking, who you are, the thoughts you think daily, the things you do daily, the way you take, how seriously you take yourself, your self-concept.

The way you strategize, you don't change the thoughts in your brain. And if you don't then evaluate on top of that then the culmination, you could go two years with the exact same thoughts. Doing lots and lots of things differently and not have any result that's changed. Or imagine if you evaluated every single day for an entire year. And in that evaluation you identified not just strategically the actions that worked and didn't work and what you were going to do differently.

But also the thinking that worked and the thinking that didn't work and the thinking that you're going to have that's different, who you're going to be different. Imagine if you did that every single time and then you actually implemented your evaluation, you actually thought something different, believed something different about yourself. Worked over a year to believe different things about yourself and your business and thought in different ways, chose different sentences on top of different strategies.

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Imagine who you would become at the end, if you filled an entire notebook up of evaluating your actions and your thinking. And you reported back on what you did differently and what you learned from it. And then you went out and did that again over and over and over for a full year. Imagine the person you would become and what you would learn. You'll keep yourself from doing this when you put yourself into that all or nothing thinking, when you put yourself into, it's working, when you put yourself into, it's not working as a circumstance.

This is just the truth, the measurable truth of the matter. When you repeat to yourself, it's not working and any flavor of that where it's circumstantially not working, everything's terrible. For those of you that are on that end of the spectrum where you can't even imagine believing anything is working. What you do on that end of the spectrum is you don't train your brain to look for any sort of progress. You don't see each individual attempt towards the result you want.

You don't see that each time you did something differently. You don't get the key info, the key information you need each time you do something on how and what to do differently. I'm literally looking at one of my notebooks right now. You don't have the notebook full of knowledge, the deep work that you've done along the way. You don't get access to that knowledge to become someone wiser and more experienced along the way. Again, there is a middle ground.

There are things that are working and there are things that aren't working and there are things that I'm improving. And if you train your brain to look for that, you will always find tangible signs and intangible signs. There are things you can measure. There are things you can look for. There are things you can track to show you that you are becoming someone different, that how you are doing things is different. And the reactions you're getting from people are different.

And sometimes different things break each time, if you're in that mode where you're in launch mode, you're far enough along where you're selling groups and you're doing webinars and you're selling through email. And

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you have a more complex business, different things can break every single time. If you're telling yourself nothing is working, you will not see those individual things.

If you're telling yourself, let's just say you're hitting your numbers. And so you're telling yourself all the time that it's working. You miss the areas that aren't working and they will surprise you. They will show up as big problems later on. I have done this unintentionally. I've ridden the wave of success and stopped evaluating and stopped looking critically. And then missed things until they became really big problems.

I am reading this book by the Starbucks creator, it's called *Onward*. I've talked about it so many times in the past couple of months. I just finished it. But one of the things that he talks about that I think the reason it resonates with me so much and I keep talking about it is I feel like the book is literally my last few years in business. And so much of how I've worked to solve all the things, operational issues in my business or all the things that have broken at the \$10 million level.

All of the things I've done, he's done. So it's also been this great gratification of I'm heading in the right direction. And all the mistakes I've made, he has talked about making them. And so it also helps me feel not alone. I'm like, "Oh, it's not just me and I'm a terrible business person", which is what is another form of all or nothing thinking, I'm a terrible business person. I'm irresponsible or I don't know what I'm doing. Versus there's just things I know, things I don't know and things I'm working on finding out.

But one of the things he talks about in the book is that when they were in their biggest growth periods, I'll give you guys tangible examples because I just think that's so helpful. But for example, he wasn't looking at budgets as closely as he needed to. When the money was just pouring in and there was so much overflow, he didn't think or he didn't spend time on as this is an active and important thing to do is to look at are we running operations as effectively as we could be in case things aren't flowing in one day as

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fast? In case there's a more difficult economy or in case we have a product that tanks, whatever it is.

I don't remember all of the issues that they had at the beginning of the book that he talks about. But all of those issues, he wasn't looking at all of the things that weren't working to prevent those issues. So they all kind of piled up at the same time. The whole book is him working through all of those things piling up and kind of showing up in the results. Because they were happening all along but the company just wasn't looking for them because the company was so busy celebrating and focusing on growth and looking at all the things that we're working and then trying to maximize those things that were working.

And so they missed some of the things that weren't working or that may not work forever. It's one of the things if you're in 200K Mastermind that is so powerful about the three year plan. One of the questions in that book is, what's working now that may not work in the future? Because this is not my first rodeo. This is my ninth year. Am I going into my ninth year? I don't know. Maybe my eighth year. Yeah, I'm going to be going, 2024 will be my ninth year. So this is not my first rodeo, you all. I've been doing this a long time and different levels of it.

I've gone through different levels of this, but one of the most important things to ask yourself is, what am I doing now that's working that in the future may not? Again, it keeps you out of not just confirming your bias all the time and stacking evidence and creating hard, fast truths about one end of the spectrum, it's working or it's not working. The more you can keep yourself in the evaluation phase, in the middle ground, in the more neutral place what will happen is the more information you will allow to flow through you.

So another helpful way to think about thoughts that are all or nothing, specifically it's working or it's not working is both of those stop the flow of information. They stop your ability to respond in your business. They give you less to go on. They have you more blinded. They create a situation

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where you are less resourceful. That you see less resources because there's less information flowing.

So any time you are in your business, whether you are massively succeeding or massively failing, the thing that you always need to be at your highest power, with your highest ability to respond, to getting the absolute best results. The thing you need is flow of information and you need lots of flow of information. You want to know lots of things that are working and lots of things that aren't working. You want to have a significant amount of flow of information in the direction of what you could do differently.

Some people get overwhelmed when they come into my 200K Mastermind because there's so much good information for creating and maintaining and growing beyond a 200K business, so much. With 2K for 2K, I keep the content very constrained because it's the most important thing when you're new and your brain is freaking out all the time anyways. So just keep things constrained to the most important thing, which is just getting a client and getting money and getting experience under your belt as fast as possible with the least amount of steps.

But when you come into the 200K room, your brain is a little bit more open to now I have more space to learn a lot more things. And there are a lot more things to learn. There's a lot more tools, a lot more things that you can grow upon as a business owner, as an entrepreneur for years and years and years in your business. Beyond just mastering, selling on a consult and closing clients and that piece of the making money.

So for example in 200K, you will learn how to write emails and really improve your copy and troubleshoot your launches and put together a really great launch in advance that isn't stressful and overwhelming. You'll learn how to do webinars. I teach seven different formats for webinars. There's so many amazing things that you can add to your toolbelt. And so it could be so easy to get overwhelmed.

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But what I want people to think and what I think is the most useful is look how much possibility there is to move the needle forward. And then if you have a laundry list of all the things that you could do differently, all the things you could learn, all the things you can improve upon, all the options for what you're going to do differently. If you have a giant list, that's a good thing. It doesn't mean you have to implement the entire list all at once.

This is something else that was so profound that I do that I felt validated with, with this book is he creates this agenda for change. And then they don't go out and tackle the agenda for change all in one setting. They make priorities of what's the most important and what do we work on first. And I teach that in 200K and Two Million Dollar Group. We teach this idea of three essentials.

Each round you come in, you choose three main things that will have the greatest impact on your business. Sometimes it's one thing, could be a really big thing. You're like, "If I could just solve this one thing, it would be worth the investment and it would transform my business in a big way." And sometimes there's two things sometimes. But anything above three things, that's where people start getting overwhelmed. And so I try to bring them down the list of all the things that you could do to move the needle forward, all the things that you could do differently.

That list could be 10 pages long and that's a good thing. And then you just get to decide what are the three that matter most that I'm going to take action on now. And then when I really feel like I've nailed those, I can check those off and move on. I love that I have endless ideas of how to improve my business. That is always a good thing. And it comes from being willing to stay out of everything's working and everything's not working and stay in this middle ground of evaluation of there's always going to be things that are working.

Some of those things will work always. Some of them are working temporarily. Then there are things that aren't working or that could not work in the future that I need to consider right now. Have a little eye on it and be like, "Okay, I can see this not working forever." And work towards a solution

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eventually. And then there are things that I could be doing differently now that will move the needle forward.

Because when we think about the thing that gets us stuck the most, what we talked about last week, the thing that gets us stuck the most is the all or nothing sentences that we tell ourselves. When we throw ourselves into a place where we aren't seeking information, we're just seeking confirmation of the bias we already have. We don't want to be blind and miss all the things that are working. We don't want to be blind and miss all the things that aren't working.

And we definitely don't want to have a very short list of things that we could do differently. We want that list to be stacked in our favor of there are always things. And I want you to think about this. When you have a list, a list of things that you could be doing differently, that actually does create a positive, useful hope and faith. It's motivating. It's purposeful. You have a place to go.

Imagine if you're like, "I want to go to dinner tonight." And you go on OpenTable and there's two reservations and you don't like either of them. Now imagine if there's 30 and you're like, "Whoa. And there's a bunch of new restaurants on here we've never even tried. What do you want to do tonight?" My husband and I, one time we did this, I feel like it was before we had the baby. We were like, "We may not get as many dinners out." And it was when I started eating again and we were like, "Let's go out and have as much variety of experiences as we can before the baby comes."

I think that was when we did it. It might have been before I got pregnant. I don't remember, but I just remember a period of time, we were like, "Let's write down all the restaurants we haven't tried in Louisville and let's start hitting them. And then we'll mix them in with some of our favorites." Because we tend to get in a rut and just go to the same places over and over. Let's go to different ones and let's create all these new experiences. That's such a different energy for your body of there's so many things to try.

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There's so much hope, literally, because there is so much information and there's so many things I can try. But not from a blind hope or a blind faith of just, well, ultimately, if I just keep doing things over and over and over, things will somehow change. I know they will change. It's informed hope, informed faith, because I know what I'm implementing. I know what I'm doing differently. Even if other people don't see it, I know.

For me there are things that are in our business that we don't have the measurable result yet. But I know that the needle has been moved forward because I know the amount of hours that I've put into it, the things we've done differently, the things. So much of this year has been changes that have been made in my company that no one on the outside would know about or see. But what's going to happen is there's going to be a culmination of that in the results that people will see all at once. And they'll be like, "Oh, whoa, all of a sudden, Stacey's different."

No, all of a sudden I've been working that evaluation in that middle ground for so long. And I trained my brain to look for that progress. And I have this so much informed hope because if that doesn't work, I'm going to move on to the next thing and I'm going to move on to the next thing and then I'm going to move on to the next thing.

And that was something that was so validated in Howard's book is he talks about that. He's like, "Here's the transformation agenda. And this is my best theory for how we're going to move forward, but we're going to keep iterating." And he had failures along the way. He had this product called Sorbetto that he was so excited about. It failed miserably for so many reasons that he talks in the book. But he's like, "Okay, we thought that was going to be one of the things, but it wasn't and we moved forward."

But he knew before it even hit the papers and before it hit the stock prices and before profit started showing up, he knew things were changing because he had informed faith, informed hope. He had measurable, tangible signs of things that were working because he wasn't just doing the same things over and over or hoping for some radical quantum leap of success that was a surprise.

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This is also how you know if you're in all or nothing thinking is you would be surprised somehow by positive or negative results or if you're looking to be surprised. I always know when my launches are going to perform typically before the launch even starts. I have an idea of how it will perform. And I communicate it to my team and my team is always astonished that I'm right. And not in a way that I'm proving it with my thinking. I'm not saying that.

But because I'm so informed with what's working, what's not working, and what we need to do differently that I typically know what we need to do differently now, because I've evaluated so much. I know what needs to be done differently before the launch even starts. It's just some things you can't fix, the train's already leaving the station. In the scheduling and in the doing I come up with ideas of what I want to do differently. And I'm like, "This is great. This is what we have at our disposal right now and what we want to do differently now. In the future is this thing over here?"

Or we'll come up with, so many times, we'll come up with ideas that we just don't have time to implement and we're so excited. And I'm like, "Okay, that goes in the what we'll do differently next time." An inspired idea. But you'll lose out on this information when you just confirm your bias all day long or try to believe, go to work to actually create belief around your bias.

It's working, is not something that I would necessarily spend lots and lots of time believing unless you have exercised it's not working so much that you couldn't even find one thing that's working. And so you're like, "Okay." But even then, you're not trying to believe it's working. You're just evaluating. There are some things that are working, here they are. And there are also maybe lots of things that aren't working, okay, I can handle that. I can emotionally take that on.

That I have three things in my it's working list and 10 in my it's not working. And then I have lots of things to do differently. That's okay, alright, now I'm informed. And now I don't have to convince myself that it's working. I see the things that are working, but I also see the things that aren't working. What I think is the most powerful place to be as an entrepreneur is to be an

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entrepreneur who doesn't need to believe it's working in order to keep going in an all or nothing way.

Who would you be if you could emotionally handle, there are three things that are working, there are 10 that aren't working and there are things that I can do differently? Probably more than 10 things. There's probably, if you have 10 things that aren't working, there's probably 50 things you could be doing differently. Can I, if that were the circumstance, three things working, 10 things not working, 50 things I could try differently, who would you be if you could find safety and comfort there, if you could find calm there?

If you didn't have to be someone that convinces themselves it's working in order to keep going to feel good or you weren't the person that went all the time immediately to everything that's not working and stayed there. There's so much power in that third option. No matter what the equation works out to be, if it's three, 10, 50, that's okay. If you keep working it, eventually you'll have 10 things that are working and maybe you'll have five things that aren't working.

And those five things still might be painful things, and they still might not be creating the result you want, but you'll see that something has flipped in your favor. But who would you be if you could work your business and troubleshoot and move the needle forward, no matter how that equation, the evaluation equation? No matter what was in there, no matter how many things were in the, it's working and how many things were in the it's not working. You were able to emotionally handle seeing all of the information, all of it, the good, the bad and the ugly.

What if you were married to your business in the way you might be married to your spouse unconditionally where I can look at all of you. I can smell your morning breath and see your crazy morning hair. Be with you when you're not your highest, best self and love you. And be with you and be calm with you and feel acceptance with you just as much as when we're dressed up and hot and on a date and everything's going well, we're totally vibing with each other.

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The all or nothing thinking, it's working, it's not working is literally the only thing keeping you from moving the needle forward in your business and enjoying it. I want to invite you to come on the transformation journey, the evaluation journey with me and look at what is working, what is not working. Get all the information. Make your list of what you're going to do differently and move forward. Alright, I love you all. Have a beautiful week and I'll talk to you next week.

Hey, if you are ready to make money as a life coach, I want to invite you to join my 2K for 2K program where you're going to make your first 2,000 the hardest part and then 200,000 using my proven formula. It's risk free, you either make your 2K or I give you your 2K back. Just head over to www.staceyboehman.com/2kfor2k. We'll see you inside.