

Ep #178: Unnecessary Apologies



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Maisie Hill

The Maisie Hill Experience with Maisie Hill

Ep #178: Unnecessary Apologies

You are listening to episode 178 of *The Maisie Hill Experience*. Today we are talking all about over-apologising.

If you want to do things differently but need some help making it happen then tune in for your weekly dose of coaching from me, Maisie Hill, Master Life Coach and author of *Period Power*. Welcome to *The Maisie Hill Experience*.

Hey, everyone, this is Megan, one of Maisie's podcast producers. This week, Maisie asked us to reshare an episode with you about a common habit that you might not even realise that you have, over-apologising. Now, we're not talking the genuine heartfelt apologies, the types that mend relationships and express regret, but rather, the unnecessary apologies that creep into everyday interactions, you know the ones. Sorry to bother you. Sorry the place is a mess. Sorry for the late response and so on.

This episode will help you understand the reasons and the social conditioning behind this habit as well as offer practical tips to break free from it so you too can stop apologising for things that you don't really need to apologise for. You'll uncover the impact of these reflexive apologies and learn to replace them with more empowering statements and responses. So without further ado, let's dive into the episode.

Hello lovely ones, how are you today? I'm hoping that you're having a brilliant day and I also want to thank you for leaving such touching reviews of the podcast. I had a bit of a moment the other day just reading through them because as I have been speaking about recently, I am on a very serious mission to help as many people as possible for free through the podcast. And the numbers are going up and that's in part because you're helping it to reach more people.

When you take a moment to rate and review the podcast, literally just type in one sentence more people are able to find the podcast. And I know that some of you have also been sending episodes to your mates as well, so thank you for that. And I want to give a listener shout out to Beatrice Rose who says, "Maisie, where have you been all my life? I've only recently

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discovered this podcast and I'm so glad I have. It's all starting to make sense. I've bought the book, I'm on the waiting list for The Flow Collective. I am sold."

Beatrice, welcome, I'm so glad that you found us, and I love that things are starting to make sense for you because that's always my aim. And that's true for today's episode as well because today I want to talk about something that you might be doing more often than you realise or certainly more often than you intend to, and that's apologising. It's something that I've been paying attention to for years, but I've been lasered in on it and particularly observing it this year.

So what I mean by apologising is not the meaningful intentional and heartfelt apologies. They're important. I'm all for those. I'm talking about when you apologise when it's completely unnecessary. And I have been seeing so much of this. I have a friend who apologises lots. She apologises all the time including to me for reasons that are completely unknown to me. When she does it, I'm like, "Why are you apologising?" And I say that to her because it just doesn't make any sense. It's just like this reflective thing that comes out.

And actually as I say that it's not true. There are reasons. There is social conditioning behind it. I understand those reasons but there is no need for her to apologise in this way. Maybe you're someone who apologises unnecessarily. You may not even realise that you do it. Or perhaps you also know someone who does this. But I promise you that if you pay attention to how often your friends do this, how often your colleagues do it, family members, and even complete strangers who apologise you will see just how prevalent this is.

And of course I'm talking about particularly in those people who have been socialised as female. So I really encourage you to watch for the situations where an apologise just leaps out of you because it really does leap. It's like when you say, "Sorry to bother you. Sorry I'm late. Sorry the place is such a mess." Whereas an apology that is heartfelt is usually slower. It

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involves awareness and reflection. And apologies of this kind can feel exposing and vulnerable.

So there's more likely to be a hesitancy to say those words, to say I'm sorry. There will be a pause of some kind and that pause can be for a moment, it can hours, or days, or years. Do you see the difference? Because the type of apologising that I'm talking about today is the kind where there is no intentional thought behind it. There's no pause, it just comes out. And I have to say, I think I'm pretty good at not doing this. I used to do it far more often, but I've done some work on this in the past.

But I actually caught myself doing this a few months ago and it was quite amusing to observe. So here's what happened. Someone came over to our house and I apologised for the state of the house. And as I said it, I realised what I was saying, and I decided to stop doing this. And in the subsequent weeks any time that I went to someone else's house, a female friend, I realised that most women do this regardless of what their home is actually like. And I have never ever heard a man do this, have you?

Have you ever gone to someone's house and a man say, "I'm so sorry the place is such a mess?" I can't think of one example where a man has said that. Whereas my female friends say it literally all the time. So I started pointing it out to my female friends. And just saying, "Have you noticed how we all do this? We all apologise for our homes? And just know that you never need to apologise for your home. I really don't care what it's like." And I just started pointing it out and talking about it.

So to all of you listening how about we all just agree to stop doing this, to stop apologising for the state of our homes, whether they're tidy or clean, or whatever. Because in all honesty if you're going to come to my place and judge me for the clothes that haven't been put away, and just the stuff of life. Then really you have no business being my friend. That's not the kind of friendship I want. Unless of course you come over and you see that I'm struggling and you're concerned and you want to help, that's different.

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But I am a human and human life is messy. And I am willing for you to see me in my messiness, actual mess around my home and the messiness within myself too. And also if someone wants to have thoughts about mess then those thoughts are for them to have. If you want to think those thoughts, then it's really none of my business. You're the one who has to deal with those thoughts, not me, they don't actually impact me unless I believe them and take them on as my own. They're actually just causing you to feel however you feel, not me.

I'm all good with the mess. I mean I would definitely love some more storage and we are going to be doing some work on our home. But I'm not going to judge myself for a pile of books or clothes, or whatever it may be. And by the way, have you ever noticed how when someone apologises for the state of their home, it's actually pretty clean and tidy? So what the hell are we all apologising for? It's this reflective habit that we're all in and I'm going to strongly suggest that you stop doing it.

Because some of you are literally apologising for your existence. I even see it happening on our wins thread in the membership. Every week there's usually at least one person who apologises in some way for 'being late' to comment either by overtly saying sorry or implicitly apologising by commenting on how late they are to comment. So first of all this is a post that we put up once a week, it just happens to go up on a Friday. That doesn't mean that you have to post or comment on a Friday. You can comment any time you want. You can create your own post.

But secondly, this is a post about celebration. Celebrating your wins and failures and bigging yourself up. And when you do this, you are putting yourself down, when you comment that you're late to comment. You're doing literally the complete opposite of the intention of the post. You're going against the whole point of the post because the post is there for you to give yourself props and celebrate yourself and be celebrated.

When you start your post with, "Better late than never", how does that feel? How does your body feel? Does it feel like a celebration? Does it feel expansive, and open, and delightful, and like you're glowing? Or does it

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feel small, and dull, and tight? Because when you start your celebration this way, you're limiting the impact of whatever follows for you because the wins thread is for you to change your neural pathways and unwind all the ways that you have been socialised and taught to hide. And to minimise your success and to minimise yourself.

And listen, there are good reasons why we do this. Well, maybe not good reasons, understandable ones. And when I share them with you, I think it will make sense of why some of you do this on the wins thread. And it's important to address over-apologising because it comes at a cost. Always saying, I'm sorry can lead others to think that you're not confident. And it can be a real turnoff to colleagues and friends. But as I said, there are understandable reasons for it and when you notice yourself apologising like this just try to pause and bring awareness to why you're doing it.

Bring in some curiosity and some compassion towards yourself for doing it. We don't have to be all judgy pants about it. Just try to figure out why you're doing it. So here is some of the reasons why you might be doing it. Do you feel scared in some way? And this can be really subtle. Feeling scared doesn't have to be terrified. It might be a more subtle flavour of scared like apprehensive or worried. Maybe you're worried about being told off, even if on a cognitive level, you know it's unlikely that someone will tell you off.

But maybe that's what your nervous system fears happening. Maybe you've had experiences in your life of being told off that have stayed with you in some kind of significant way. So you apologise in advance of saying or doing something in order to pacify the other person and keep yourself safe. See what I mean about how it's very understandable in terms of a habit for you to be in? But by bringing it into focus we get to question it and make changes.

And this is what happens on the wins thread because I think some of you are scared to celebrate and be seen so you make yourself smaller before you celebrate. And I want to encourage you to skip that part and to just celebrate yourself. There may also be a real likelihood of someone actually

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telling you off, not on the wins thread but in other situations. And that's where I'd get into coaching you on if that's what they're actually doing. Are they actually going to tell you off? Do they have a history of that? Is that something that they do?

Or is that what you perceive them to be doing? And it can be either or a bit of both, but we want to explore what's going on there. And if they are behaving in a way that is unacceptable, they're actually telling you off then what are you going to do with that? How does your nervous system respond to a situation like that? Where does your brain go? And are there situations why you're tolerating it and why? What needs to change and how do we support that?

And if you just answer those questions for yourself, you'll get so much out of the answers, so much awareness. And this is what we do in the membership all the time by the way, situations like this, questions like these are what it's all about. So it can be about avoiding conflict, and this is such a fruitful topic to coach on because it gets us into what's happening at a nervous system level and we can also look at the thoughts behind it, the emotions that come up.

And I love to coach on these things because many of my clients and many of you are scared of conflict and you go to great lengths to avoid it. But if we can get you to a place where you feel able to experience some of the discomfort around conflict, then imagine how that will shift things for you. And of course most of the time I'm pleased to say that no actual conflict happens. It's just your brain trying to keep you safe. And then we get to show it like, "Hey, it's okay, look, nothing bad happened."

Or if something 'bad' did happen, we survived it, we did it anyway. I mean how cool is that? That's what I want for all of you. And we're going to be getting into this all throughout the course of the autumn in The Flow Collective. So if you want to do this work then make sure your name is on the waitlist and come and join us. You could also be over-apologising because you feel responsible for how other people feel.

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So if you say or do something that has the potential to upset the other person somehow and you think that you are the cause of that, then you might apologise in advance for how you think they're going to feel because you'll think that you're to blame. Even though you actually have no idea how they're going to feel, and you may have a sense, but you don't actually know. And it's not your business to be deciding how other people will feel. That's being over-responsible and over-functioning.

And a lot of the time you might actually be thinking the worst of someone and that's not helpful. So you're not even giving them a chance in your own head or in the actual situation outside of your head. That's very limiting. So there's this difference here between being considerate and respectful and being overly concerned and overly responsible for others. And I will always encourage you to treat adults like adults and see how capable other humans are and how capable you are too because we are all responsible for how we feel.

And that doesn't mean we have to be arseholes to one another. But I firmly believe that if we all took responsibility for ourselves both in terms of how we show up and how we treat others, and in terms of what we feel then that would completely change the world and our experience of it. So give people a chance to respond or react. Don't decide in advance and make decisions based on what you think is going to happen.

Give them a chance. And the way to do that is to learn how to create safety for yourself by befriending your nervous system which is what I teach you how to do in The Flow Collective. Seriously you should join because this will change your life forever. You might have also been taught that it's polite to apologise. Maybe you want the person you're saying I'm sorry to, to reassure you somehow. Maybe that's what you're looking for something from them, could that be the motivation behind you doing it?

Because over-apologising can also come from low self-esteem and low self-worth. And I can help you with that as well by the way. And if you're a perfectionist, then you could find yourself apologising a lot for things not being perfect like if you're holding yourself up to an impossible standard of

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perfectionism. Then you probably feel like you have to apologise for that. So then we want to look at you seeing how you are enough already and that you don't have to be perfect.

You are worthy always regardless of what you do or don't do. You are lovable even when things aren't perfect. It's so liberating to do this work; it completely shifts your internal experience and that in turn influences how you are in the world and how other people see you. But the great thing is that by that point it doesn't matter because you don't need other people to validate you like that. And when I say validate, I want to point out that it's very human, very normal to want to receive validation from others. It's not about removing that part of you because I don't think that's possible.

It's about not propping yourself up and relying on validation from others because you can validate yourself. That's different. And if any of this is ringing true for you, I strongly encourage you to join The Flow Collective when we open up in September because these are the things that we get into inside there. But before we finish up for today, I want to give you some tips for over-apologising. As I said, just notice when you do it either as you go to do it or after.

You can do things like search your inbox for the word 'sorry' and also your phone's text messages and see when you do it and to whom and figure out why. So understanding why is really key. What's your best guess at why you felt a need to say sorry in that situation? Instead of apologising for being late or slow to respond to someone in an email or text, try thanks for your patience. If you're late to arrive at a meeting whether it's a personal one or a professional one, try, thanks for waiting for me, or just, okay, let's get started.

If someone chases me for something by email which does happen, I'll say, thanks for the nudge, because listen, my autistic brain needs nudging on things especially with email. My brain works very quickly, and I focus on what I love to do which is very useful to me by the way, but it means that there are things that I do not prioritise like most emails. I much prefer voice notes or using messaging software. And inside my company we have a no

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email rule, so I actually spend very little time emailing. But I'm usually very appreciative when someone nudges me for something.

So I say thanks, thanks for the nudge, instead of getting into, I'm so sorry, I'm so sorry I didn't reply and then explaining myself because that's what often happens is we apologise and then we explain. And I just want to offer that you can skip that. Maybe an apology is not necessary. Maybe there's, it's just a habit that you are in, but that also means it's a habit that you can get out of. So look for the places that you are saying sorry unnecessarily, try to understand why and find a substitute instead.

I can't wait to hear how this goes. Let me know over on Instagram or in the reviews for the podcast and I'll be back next week.

Hey, if you love listening to this podcast then come and check out my membership, *The Flow Collective*, where you get my best resources and all the coaching you need to transform your inner and outer life. Sign up to the waitlist at theflowcollective.co/join, and I'll see you in the community.