

Ep #180: Unconventional Paths to Success



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With Your Host

Maisie Hill

The Maisie Hill Experience with Maisie Hill

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This is episode 180 and I'm giving you a different approach to going for it. It's one that I have used a lot in my own life, but it wasn't until recently that I realised it's not common to do things this way, that wasn't until someone pointed it out to me so I'm going to tell you all about it. Let's dive in.

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*.

Hello, gorgeous ones. I am back from my trip to New York. We went there for my son's half term school holiday, and it was a great trip. It was also very weird for me because I lived in New York in my early 20s from 2001 till 2005. And then I was also there again for significant chunks of time in my late 20s/early 30s and a few times a year I would go there for a month, sometimes for three months. And New York has always felt like home to me, from the minute I walked out of the subway station at West 4th.

I was like, "I love this place." More so than London or anywhere else, until we came to Margate, even then it's a tough competition. But it's been 12 or so years since I was last there. Paul has been there a bunch too, but the last time he was there was before we got together. So it's been a while for both of us. And it all felt very familiar to me.

I still felt this sense of being at home, but it was a very different experience because we had Nelson with us. And walking around with him, holding my hand was so lovely because he doesn't hold my hand as much as he used to, but it was also a really interesting bodily experience for me, because although I have the sensory memories of my body and his and that kind of familiarity of our bodies together like holding hands. I don't have that memory in New York. And I have so many memories of New York, of course, without a child.

And so it was just this very interesting experience to observe in myself of the melding of myself in New York and my New York memories and then Nelson there with me and being a mother. It was just, I mean, I don't think

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I've quite processed it yet, it was just really interesting. And it was also really cool to watch Nelson interacting with kids and adults there. Top parenting tip, by the way, I read this somewhere on the internet when Nelson was younger.

And basically, as soon as he was capable of asking for the bill, when we were out getting food or coffees or something like that, we would have him ask for the bill. And I'd read about this as a tip to help young kids build confidence, interacting with strangers and it worked so well for him. Of course, who he is as a person comes into it. But his willingness to ask strangers for what he wants is something that I am learning from him. He's modelling that to me because all the times that I can end up reverting to, oh no, we can't do that, we can't make a fuss.

And I'll be noticing that in myself and coaching myself on making a fuss even though it's not really making a fuss. So I'm doing all of that, and lo and behold, he's already up doing it. He's already up talking to someone and saying, "Can we have this", whatever. So that's very cool. But it was also just so lovely to be in these parks and he'd be shooting hoops with adults on their lunch breaks, running around under the sprinklers with kids. New York parks are just so great, they're done so well.

But the best interaction that I got to witness was him meeting and hanging out with my old photography professor, Curtis. So I studied fine arts at FIT. And I didn't actually graduate because in my final semester I got mono, which is what we call glandular fever in the UK. So my attendance wasn't high enough to complete that semester, so they said I had to repeat it. And I wasn't prepared to take out another student loan in order to do that, so I never graduated.

But I got to do a semester of photography with Curtis, and I joined the photography club. And then after I left college, Curtis would still find ways for me to take part in the photo club. I would be the model for the students to shoot, or I'd assist their shoots in some way. And he just really looked out for me during a tough time. That final year in New York in my 20s, I was so broke financially and mentally, it just wasn't the best. And for those of

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you who know the city, in that final year I was living on Rivington and Clinton.

I was living in my boss's apartment. He's also a good friend of mine. And I lived there with someone else who was doing similar work. And it was a pretty good setup in many ways, but I didn't have enough money. And so at the weekends I would walk from Rivington and Clinton to 37th and 8th, where the office was, so we're talking 50/60 blocks, which is over an hour's walk, two and a half hours there and back. And I would do that walk so that I could take food from the fridge in the office whilst nobody was there at the weekend. And I'd walk it because I didn't have the money for the subway.

So it was that really challenging scenario of, is it worth expending the energy to eat a little bit of food enough that wouldn't be noticed, or should I just skip doing this altogether? But the thing is, it also gave me something to do and to move my body and that did help. But during this period of time, Curtis was someone who really looked out for me. This was 20 years ago now, but Curtis and I have stayed in touch, and we got to hang out for the day.

He brought cameras and Polaroid film for Nelson to play with. We went to Governors Island and Curtis tasked Nelson with taking portraits of people, strangers. So Nelson was going up to people, asking if he could take, and we weren't there. We could see him. We were watching him, but we were letting him go up and ask people. And then Curtis was getting him to assess the Polaroids and how he'd framed them, the background, all of these things. It was so cool to watch him do what he did with me 20 years ago.

And then we found out that the group of young women that Nelson was taking photos of had literally just graduated from FIT so there was this lovely synchronicity to it all. So it was a very cool trip for all sorts of reasons.

But today I want to talk to you about flipping conventional wisdom on its head. So you know the old saying, don't put the cart before the horse. Well,

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I'm here to tell you why sometimes the best thing you can do is to put the cart before the horse. I have many examples of this from my own life, including literal ones. Because Paul pointed out that this year I did literally put the cart before the horse because my friend Chloe and I went halves on a horse trailer, but I don't have a car that has the towing capacity for it yet.

And that yet is an important word in that sentence. It's one that you can use as we kind of get into this topic. When he pointed this out, it got me thinking about how I often do things this way. It's just quite an automatic way of doing things, I would say. It's not like I give it a lot of thought, it's just how I go about stuff, it's my process. So I've got some other examples for you, but I want to get into why this might be exactly what you need to give yourself some momentum and get yourself taking steps forwards because it really is about commitment.

Putting yourself in a position where you have no choice but to move ahead. You always have the choice, of course you do, but this is really about being invested. And it might sound like a counterintuitive approach, but it has worked so well for me. So I wanted to share it with you because it might just be the thing that you need to unlock something in you and to free yourself up and do things differently, which you know I am all about.

What I will say though, is be prepared for people to express surprise and concern. They might be quite fearful of you doing this. They might be scared. They might be very worried. All of that is okay and it doesn't have to mean anything about you. It's more likely showing you where their brain is at and the thoughts that they have in their life. But I flag this up because it can be testing to experience this if your belief in yourself isn't rock solid but being tested by what others are saying.

And I don't mean they're testing you. I mean your experience of them saying these things is testing somehow. That doesn't have to be a problem, and it can actually create a perfect environment for you to intentionally navigate these particular waters. So most of the advice that we hear about goals is following logical sequential steps in order to achieve that goal. But

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how about just shaking things up a bit and starting with what seems like the end, the final step that you should take.

Because sometimes just purchasing the gear before you're fully ready or signing up for the challenge without all the prerequisites, that's a really good thing to do. And it's not even necessarily reckless, even though it might feel that way, you might think that it is, people might tell you that it is. But for me, it's really just about committing yourself in a way that leaves less room for backing out. So I'm going to give you a few more examples from my own life.

Now, I don't know how old you are. Perhaps you remember the Nirvana singles box coming out. There was a box set of Nirvana singles in the 90s that came out and I bought it as soon as it came out. I love Nirvana. I was very excited by this box set. I thought I've got to get it even though I didn't actually own a CD player at all. At the time what I had was my pink Tandy, I think was the name, the brand, my pink Tandy double cassette player but I was committed to upgrading my technology, if we can call it technology.

I was committed to getting one of the humongous multi CD players that were all the rage in the 90s, they were these huge things, the biggest thing you could get but they were all the rage, and I was determined to get one and I did in fact get one.

And then we have the time back in January at the very start of this year where I signed up for horse camp when I didn't actually own a horse to take. So the camp is actually coming up at the start of July. I'm getting very excited. But back in December, when my friend signed up for it, I didn't have a horse, but I knew I didn't want to miss out on going and the spaces go quickly, there's not many of them, and I wanted to do it with my friend. So I signed up and as I signed up, I said to the people running it, "By the way, I don't have a horse yet. If you happen to hear of one suitable for a novice, let me know."

And they had never had anyone do this before and were understandably concerned about taking my money, which I think was a really great way for

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them to behave, to do things in this ethical way, to really check in with me, are you happy to do this? Because I guess to them it sounded a little crazy. But my attitude was, well, if I do have a horse, then I don't want to miss out on this because they both did it last year and loved it and I didn't do it. So I was also determined to find a horse in the six months or so between booking it and the camp happening.

And this was by the way, after two failed attempts at buying a horse. So I could have definitely told myself a story of, it's going to take forever. There's going to be all these more failed attempts and I probably won't. I could have thought that way I guess, but I didn't. So I was just determined to make it happen. And I ended up actually buying my horse from the people running the camp because they replied saying, "We might have one coming up that you'd like." And six weeks later I bought him.

And I had no idea that's how it would all play out, but I was committed. And in buying my horse from them, of course there were many conversations that we had. And so I later found out that they'd never had anyone do that before, and that they were quite shocked and amused by it. And to a lot of people this approach sounds unusual and perhaps risky. And it would be better to do things sensibly and in these sequences etc. But to me this is the sensible way of doing things.

Buying the horse trailer without having a car that can tow it might also seem backward, but to me it's just a clear investment in my future with horses. It's motivating me to solve the next piece of the puzzle and to buy a car that can do that. So this approach is just about having skin in the game. It's about making a bold declaration to yourself, to the universe, whatever, that you are serious about your goals.

Because when you are laying down your money, time, effort, attention, resources of any kind on something that's in your future. You're not just dreaming about the future, you're doing it. You're committing to it. You are stacking up the dominoes. You're setting up the dominoes in such a way that the only next step is forward motion. And by the way, that doesn't

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mean that they're all going to neatly fall down in order. One might be slightly off kilter, but you can address that and then get going again.

So this works because it changes your mindset, it shifts you from hesitancy and thinking well, that would be nice or maybe I could do that. And in that procrastination phase, it takes you from that to action. And yeah, let's say it is a bit risky, let's say it means you might have to hustle a bit to make things happen, to catch up. I use that phrase loosely. But I'm talking about the good kind of hustling, the effort, the stretch that's good for you, not the burning yourself out, kind of hustling, which we don't do around here.

And of course, this doesn't mean throwing caution to the wind without any plan whatsoever. It's about calculated risks. Maybe you don't know how things will pan out, but you have a sense of how it might and the ways that it could. It's just about knowing what you're capable of and just stretching, stretching into that, expanding into that. So, before you put the cart before your horse, think about what it will take to get that horse in place. So reconcile that, figure that out and then take the leap.

So what is your cart before the horse? What can you commit to you today, take action on now that will just give you some skin in the game and get you going? Because sometimes the best way to make sure that you do follow through is to start with a step that seems like it should be the last. And then we've got that commitment. There's a deadline of some kind rather than something just stretching out forever, which often happens.

And in doing that, you're just bringing your vision forward, you're putting your desires and transforming them into action, even if it means starting from where you are supposed to finish. These things are all made up anyway. You can do whatever the hell you want.

Alright folks, thanks for joining me today. Remember, sometimes the unconventional path is what's going to take you to the most extraordinary and delightful destinations. So dare to do things differently. Dare to put the cart before the horse.

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