

## Ep #190: How to Shift from Criticism to Compassion



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With Your Host

**Maisie Hill**

**The Maisie Hill Experience** with Maisie Hill

## Ep #190: How to Shift from Criticism to Compassion

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, hello my lovelies. How are you today? I am feeling joyous, and energised and full of life. I'm in the first half of my cycle. It's a sunny day. And I'm just feeling good. I think a lot of it is to do with the fact that last week I was on a course for two days. And I shared a little bit about it over on my stories on Instagram. And many of you have been wanting to know what exactly I was getting up to and all about it. So, I'm going to fill you in. I'm going to start off with a bit of back story first though.

So many years ago, when I was working as a practitioner, I went to Turkey on a yoga retreat with an amazing yoga teacher called Nadia Narain. But I wasn't there to do the yoga. I was actually there to work. And I was giving treatments to the people who'd come on the retreat. And it was incredible, such a special week, so much great stuff came out of that week for me. Although I wasn't doing the yoga, I did join in on a couple of non-yoga sessions, that were still related to movement and the body.

And one of these sessions was all about TRE which Nadia and her sister, Katia are both trained in. And it was an incredible session. Now, if you're wondering what TRE stands for, it stands for trauma release exercises. It's actually since been expanded to be called tension, trauma, and stress release exercises.

And it's basically this set of very simple exercises that you do which brings some tension into the body. And then you get into a position lying down and once you're in this position and you let your body do its thing, your body starts to tremble. And this is something that's passive. You're not doing it actively. You're not going, "Let me move my arms like this or move my legs like this." Your body just does it. And it's a way for you to discharge tension and trauma from the body.

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And this is something that is inbuilt in mammals, it's called a tremor mechanism. And you've probably seen it in action. Think about if you've ever seen a lion hunt a zebra, or a gazelle or something, or any kind of predator going after its prey out on the savannah. If the prey manage to get away and when it's safe for them to do so they quiver. Yeah, they shake themselves and they release tension. And predators actually do it too. So, lions can do it after a hunt.

And you may have seen it if you've got pets, maybe if you have a pet dog then you might have seen them tremble sometimes like during a thunderstorm. And humans can shake as well either by dancing around to 80s music, which for me is one of my favourite forms of medicine, or by doing something like TRE. And through doing this we release trauma, and tension, and stress from the body. It's very cool. And the geek in me loves it. I love learning about the nervous system and experiencing techniques like this.

So, I've been recommending TRE to clients for years. And I have considered training in it several times. I've kind of gone around the houses with it. But the reason that I was doing that was because I could sense that there was this graspingness in me wanting to do so. And it was actually more like I thought that I needed to for various reasons. And that was all to do with insecurities I had, there was definitely curiosity and geekiness there. But there was also a lot of thinking that training in it would make me a better practitioner somehow which again that can be true.

Having additional tools in your toolbelt can be very useful, but it was coming from insufficiency, like I wasn't already good enough basically. And I spoke about this on the Being Ambitious episode, which so many of you have been in contact to say that you loved. And I'm really proud that I did this course just for me with no attachment to using it professionally, just for the joy of it. And actually, that was enough for me.

I was considering doing the professional training, but I did it for me, nobody else and that was really special for me to do. And it was a great opportunity for me to take stock of how much work I've done around this and how much

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I've changed. So, I don't think I'm going to be going on to do the subsequent training. And this is something that we've been reflecting on in The Flow Collective recently too. The community have been looking at their achievements and taking time to be proud of themselves and to celebrate each other.

Right, let's get stuck into the actual topic for today. I feel like we've covered a lot already. We haven't even got started. Okay, how to go about improving your cycle and your life is really important. I imagine it's why most of you are listening to this podcast every week. And I coach on this a lot with my clients in The Flow Collective and my private clients too. But I realised this week that I haven't really addressed it here on the podcast. I've kind of dropped it in from time to time but I haven't spoken about it in any great detail. So, we're doing that today.

Now, you might think this is going to be all about specific strategies that you can use. It's not. It's understandable if that's where you want me to go. I get it, I've been there too, when you're struggling you just want relief. You want the how in terms of what action to take and that is so important. It's like if you cut yourself you need the bleeding to stop. Or if you're flooding with your period, you just need that to ease up. Going straight to dealing with the problem, jumping in with the how in terms of strategies is appropriate and necessary particularly in acute situations.

But when I say how, I mean how are you approaching improving your cycle, your health, and your life? But when I say how, I mean how are you approaching improving your cycle, or your health, or your life? Because before we get onto any kind of treatment strategy you might use or the things you might say or do in your relationships, or your professional life, we have to look at where those actions or intended actions are coming from.

And if you're listening to this wanting to hear the one thing that will radically change your health, believe me when I say that this will. It might not be what you were expecting to hear but it will change everything.

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Okay, let me tell you what I often see going on with my clients and often in the messages that I hear from you. I see the desire or need to improve things coming from self-criticism, self-judgement, restriction, punishment, and shame, and plenty of other not so great emotions too.

So, take a moment to check-in with something that you want to improve. This might be to do with your cycle or another aspect of your health, it could be your diet, and by that I mean your relationship with food, could be your relationships, your parenting, your professional life, even the aesthetics of your home or the state of your inbox could come into play here. So, what do you want to improve? And is the desire or urge to improve it coming from self-criticism, self-judgement, restriction, punishment, or shame?

If it's not, fantastic. But be onto yourself because this can be subtle. These are not places to be changing things from. Firstly, they feel like shit, they really do. And secondly, if you don't deal with these feelings, you'll still feel them once you've got the result you wanted, if you even get the result that you wanted. You start off experiencing a negative emotion of some kind. And I've said plenty of times on here, there really is no such thing as negative emotion but for the context of this conversation let's just call them negative emotions.

So, you're experiencing a negative emotion of some kind and from that place you try some things and maybe they work. Some of them will work, but we expect that because something has worked we will all of a sudden feel better. And for sure when it comes to improvement of physical symptoms you will experience some relief like with period pain.

But we're often shocked to discover, that apart from the relief of symptom improvements we don't feel relieved. And the reason for that is because of all the self-criticism, and the judgement, and the shame. They're all still there. You're still lugging all those emotions around with you. And this comes up a lot with weight loss.

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So, let's say you feel like crap because you're a certain weight or dress size. And actually, you don't feel like crap because of your body shape or weight, you feel like crap because you have some negative thoughts about your body, which, quite frankly, is no surprise given the constant negative conversation around weight, size, and body type, and particularly when it comes to the female body. We're valued for how we look. We exist for the male gaze. Thinness is valued and our bodies are not for ourselves, they are for other people. That's just how we are socialised.

So, you have these negative thoughts and feelings and that's where you try to change things from. And let's say you do lose weight, which I would certainly debate if that's a suitable goal to have in the first place. But for the sake of this let's have it as a goal. And let's also say that your efforts to lose weight, work. It's so hard for my brain to resist arguing whether weight loss actually works and the negative impact of the vast majority of weight loss techniques and methods but I'm going to park that for now, just bear with me.

Okay, deep breaths. So, let's say you do lose weight, maybe you've reached your target weight but lo and behold you still feel like crap. And that's because those efforts have come from your crappy thoughts about yourself. They're understandable thoughts if you have them but they are crappy thoughts. Losing weight won't make those thoughts suddenly disappear. Not forgetting of course that you're probably in nutritional deficit and your body's in all likelihood craving some macronutrients of some kind, protein, fat, carbs, all that good stuff.

Definitely be mindful of this if you've been restricting your diet to lose weight, but you've had mood changes or you've suddenly got PMS. Maybe all you need to do is eat. I've had so many clients over the years come to me because they've suddenly got awful PMS. And then it emerges that they've been doing one of those weight loss programmes that are advertised everywhere. I won't name any names. And they've been eating water dense foods which is what a client recently told me, and I just about lost it on that call, not at her but at the diet industry.

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So, please for the love of all things wonderful, get away from anything that uses language like that. In fact, I want to say this for all of you to benefit from. This was the coaching I offered to my client in The Flow Collective this week and I want you all to hear it. “Your dress doesn’t mean anything about you. It’s a number that helps you to establish which piece of clothing might fit you.” And I say might because we all know how sizes vary but they can point you in a direction to a piece of clothing that may or may not fit you. That’s all it is.

Your dress size and your weight do not mean anything about you as a person. And whilst we’re on this subject, weight and health are not the same. In fact, when I was coaching this client on improving an aspect of her health, but she was kind of resisting her own intuition about what she needed because of her concerns about weight gain and not fitting into her clothes. And I just told her, “I have a really simple solution for you. Do you want it?” And she’s like, “Yes please.”

And I told her, “Go and buy some clothes that fit you and look fabulous. That’s it. Simple.” And it’s been amazing to see how many other members have done just that because we all know how shit it feels to cram yourself into clothes that don’t fit and feel good. That’s no way to go through life. This is what I mean by let’s check-in on how you are approaching things. This is the how, not the strategies, it’s, are you loving yourself as you go about doing these things? There’s a reason why the self-love and criticism themes in The Flow Collective are so popular.

I like to start by working on self-love, compassion, acceptance, dropping the constant criticism. My suggestion is always work on health, not weight, and on following the wisdom of your body, deepening the connection to yourself, and loving yourself exactly as you are. Can you see how radically different this is? Now, that doesn’t mean that you can’t take any action until you’ve fully resolved all of these things in every area of your life.

Sometimes it only takes a little bit of self-coaching to change how you’re doing things, or being coached by someone else, or just bringing attention to this. Bringing in that awareness that I’m always talking about and if it

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feels appropriate to do so, changing your approach. But some of you will realise that there's something significant or meaningful there for you and you'll choose to work through that before you get onto taking any kind of action, which is wonderful. And the same goes for not taking action.

Another client of mine was trying to figure out whether to take some medication that had been proposed as a way for her to support her cycle. And to be very clear with you here, it's never my job to tell someone what to do, not my job at all. My job as a coach is to show them what's going on in their brain and help them to make a decision but that's all on them. I don't make the decision for them.

And what I shared with her was my observation that she was making this decision or trying to make this decision from fear and worry. So, the how initially seems like choosing to take the medication or not. But we rewound it to look at how she was feeling as she was trying to decide and we looked at all of that, cleared it up. And she really took the coaching and went off and did some self-coaching and came back and shared that in the community. And that's what I teach you how to do in The Flow Collective for yourself.

And she approached that decision from a very different place, so I just want to congratulate her anonymously and this other client as well. My clients, you're all doing such a great job of really taking the coaching and going with it and doing that work yourselves.

So, the message here is before you go jumping in with the things that you want to do or think you should do to improve things, the action that you're going to be taking I really encourage you to stop and ask yourself one question. Why do you want to improve things? And don't just ask why once, keep asking why until you've explored all of it. If you're not approaching things with love, compassion, and care then I encourage you to do that work first. And that doesn't mean it's all going to be fluffy and feel great by the way.



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Often doing things from love means doing the things that are challenging and uncomfortable. But when you do them with love for yourself you'll be able to do them and it's going to feel so much better.

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