

Ep #81: What is Coaching?



Full Episode Transcript

With Your Host

Maisie Hill

Period Power with Maisie Hill

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If you are in the horrors with menstrual cycle issues or you want to learn how to harness your hormones, then you are in the right place.

Welcome to the *Period Power* podcast. I'm your host Maisie Hill menstrual health expert, acupuncturist, certified life coach and author of *Period Power*. I'm on a mission to help you get your cycle working for you so that you can use it to get what you want out of life. Are you ready? Let's go.

Hello, hello folks. Today I want to talk to you about coaching. I had an experience a while back that ended up just being a really great analogy for describing what coaching is all about. And I want to share that story with you because I know some of you have never experienced coaching before. Maybe you don't know what it's all about. Or maybe you have experienced coaching but you're still not entirely sure about it. Or maybe you're curious about how I coach because there are different ways of coaching.

People refer to coaching a lot and sometimes I would argue what they're talking about is not actually coaching. So the way I coach is a mix of all my expertise. And it's basically life coaching through the lens of understanding the impact of our hormones and our nervous systems. I cannot tell you how much I love coaching. It's the best. But before we get into it, and I talk you through this experience that I had. I want to let you know that I'm creating some additional ways for you to work with me so that you can get some life coaching Maisie style.

So I'm going to be offering a free group coaching call in July just for fun. I've never done this before but some of you requested this on Instagram recently. And my whole body was just instantly, yeah, we should definitely do that, that sounds fun. So here we are, we're doing it, I don't know when it's going to be exactly. At the time I'm recording this I haven't decided. It's probably going to be quite soon after this episode comes out. And you need to be on my email list to receive your invitation to come along as well as the form to apply to be coached on the call.

So get on that as soon as you can by going to my website, maisiehill.com and signing up for my emails. And you can also follow the link in the show

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notes to make your way there. Now, if you are listening to this and you are a coach, or a practitioner, or therapist of some kind, or maybe you're a doula, a birth worker or a yoga teacher, or a Pilate teacher, anyone in the kind of healing and helping people business and you want my eyes on your business and on your brain then send me a direct message over on Instagram and tell me about what you do and what you'd like my help with.

And then I can let you know if I think where you're at would be a good fit for the intimate group that I'm putting together. And then I can fill you in on all the details so that you can apply for business coaching with me. This is something I have wanted to do for a long time, over seven years. That's when I started planning this group, a long, long time ago, way before I was pregnant with Nelson because I love coaching on anything to do with business because basically autistic people have special interests and business owning like entrepreneurship is one of my special interests.

So I'm very into it. I love coaching people on marketing, running a business, strategy, mindset, all of those things. But all this time I've been wanting to put something together, but I've intentionally not offered it until now because that's the thing about being an entrepreneur and a businessowner. You have to master the art of constraint and really focus on things instead of always getting distracted with all your brilliant ideas of which I have many. So I had this plan that's been sat on the side-lines for seven years.

And in the meantime, I've just been getting my business coaching kicks by coaching my clients on their businesses when it comes up, coaching my colleagues, guest coaching in high level business masterminds. And now I can take this plan that's been on the side-lines and put it straight in front of me. So if you want your business and your brain to be the thing that's straight in front of me to receive my coaching and my mentoring then come say hi to me over on Instagram and let's talk. Okay, now to move onto this thing that happened.

So Nelson my son has weekly swimming lessons. But he has a body that wants to climb, not swim, which makes learning to swim, it's like it takes his

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body a while to get used to stretching out in the pool in order to float and swim successfully. This is how his teacher was explaining it to me. She was like, "His body just wants to climb." Because he loves climbing. That's just how his body is. And when I get information like that, that's the kind of thing that my brain really thrives with, and my brain just clicks into gear.

And I just instantly knew as soon as she explained that to me that once a week isn't quite enough for him to build the muscle memory in order to advance his swimming and kind of get the hang of it. Well, that's not quite correct. I'm sure it would eventually but it would just take longer and that's often what coaching is. It's like, yeah, you don't need coaching, you're fine without it but do you want to speed things up and do you want to get there quicker? And that's what I really wanted for him with his swimming because we live in a seaside town.

And I was thinking ahead because this is a few months ago. I was thinking ahead to how great it would be if he was swimming by the time summer rolled around. So I decided to sign us up to join a local gym that has a pool so that we could go there together. And we started going a couple of times a week. But we're not swimming because there's just no way he's going to follow my instructions. We're just there to play games and just so that bit by bit he gets more accustomed to being in the pool, and to swimming, and to floating, and all of those things.

And I got a bit fed up with him kind of hanging off me and wanting to do things on my body probably because it was in the second half of my cycle. So I realised that I needed to change what we were doing just so that it was fun for him, but it also supported my needs. And I'd love for you to consider if you need to do that somewhere in your life. So maybe it's not with kids but it could be in your working life or your routine, or your friendships. Maybe there's something that you could just shift a little bit so that it's supporting your needs within the mix.

So I bought these toys that you play with in the pool, and they gradually sink to the bottom. Nelson loves diving down underneath, and I can't do that, I just don't like it. I love doing backstroke because my face is out of the

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water. And I'm the person who swims on their front but keeps their head out of the water, it's all to do with the sensory experience of it. If I'm scuba diving and I'm remaining under the water that's not a problem. It's very relaxing to me actually. I haven't done it in I don't know, 20 years. But when I did it, I loved it.

But that in and out of the water, and the change of things, it can be challenging to me. So we were playing with these toys the whole time and then towards the end it's time for us to go and we didn't have all of them. We were able to immediately see a couple, but we couldn't see the rest. And as we were looking for them, I realised that how we were looking for them was a perfect representation of what coaching is. So to begin with we're both in the pool.

And Nelson is moving around in the water in a way that's kind of agitating the surface of the water, making it hard to see down to the bottom. And this is what it's like when you're in a situation and maybe you're a bit stressed or you're feeling emotions that are intense or challenging for you, or your nervous system is being activated in some way. And you're basically reacting, which is a very human thing to do, just reacting. But when you do that it's like the surface of the pool is rough.

And you're kind of subject to whatever the waves are doing. You might be able to assess what's going on to a degree, but you don't necessarily have the clarity to see easily because you are in it. And you are involved, and reacting, and you're close to what's going on. And maybe you're just trying to keep your head above the water. Or maybe you're being like Dory in Finding Nemo where she's just like, "Just keep swimming. Just keep swimming", however she sings it. And when we were in the pool together and the water was choppy we couldn't see any of the toys.

So I encouraged Nelson to not move as much, and the water became more still which increased the visibility in the pool. And this is what it's like when you're working with your nervous system, and you are building awareness of when you are in a stress response. It's also what happens when you make space for your emotions, and you process them. And just a reminder,

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when I say process your emotions I don't necessarily mean secluding yourself in the bathroom or bedroom and crying for ages. It can be that.

And those crying sessions are important and valid but there's lots of other versions of what processing emotion looks like. Sometimes I'll be taking a few breaths like last night. Last night I was getting annoyed at Nelson because he was finding every excuse to not go to bed. And I wanted him to do what I wanted him to do. Because it's very annoying when the other humans in our lives don't do what we want them to do. But it's not them making us annoyed, we get annoyed because of our thoughts about what other people should be doing or not doing.

So you might start off thinking that so and so is being so annoying but really all you're doing is annoying yourself with your thoughts about them and how you think they should be. So me being annoyed wasn't because of him, it was because of my thought about him not doing as he was told. Because I could have thought that it was endearing that he was showing me artwork that he made when he was three years old and then I would have experienced love, and connection with him and then gone on to just tell him, "Yeah, this is lovely, amazing but let's get into bed now."

Which is what I ended up doing last night once I had taken some breaths and made space for me feeling annoyed. Because thoughts like that become an option if we have access to them. And it's harder to access them when you're feeling like a bottle of fizzy drink that's been shaken up and just ready to explode. So this is just one of many reasons why noticing and processing our reactions, our emotions is so important. So can you see how what we're thinking completely changes how we feel and the actions that we take?

So as a reminder this is what it's like when we're in the pool and the water is choppy. There's a reaction going on, a very valid one because emotions are always valid. We don't have to accept or believe the thought that's behind them but being aware and accepting the emotions you experience is so helpful. And it's a skill that we build over time. But what we often do is judge ourselves for how we feel. So in my parenting example I could have

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not just been feeling annoyed but then adding to that, layers of judgement because of my reaction or shaming myself in some way.

Judgement, criticism, and shame are the three big whoppers that tend to show up. But instead I was able to have compassion for myself in that moment. And just by taking less than a minute to process the annoyance I was able to still those waters and get some clarity. So processing emotion can be that big cathartic cry. But a lot of the time it's noticing how you feel, naming the emotion or the emotions that you're experiencing and then bringing awareness to how the emotion shows up in your body.

Annoyance, I really feel that in my chest and up towards my throat. It has this expansive quality to it that when we are considering the fight or flight response of the nervous system really makes a lot of sense because that's when blood starts being shunted from the periphery of the body and from organs that aren't needed during times of threat because you don't need to be digesting your lunch when you're trying to run away from a danger. And you don't need to be prioritising reproduction when you need to get your fists up and fight.

What you need is oxygen at the ready and blood flow to your vital organs so that you can expend energy and run away or protect yourself. And if I'm feeling annoyed and maybe my nervous system is being activated then it makes a lot of sense to be feeling that energy and that emotion in my chest, and at the front of my body, and in my shoulders, and my throat. Because I'm gearing up to attack or defend myself. That's what we often want to do when we feel annoyed, we want to defend ourselves or attack back.

So back to our image of the pool, that's what you can do in the moment to still the waters and get some clarity on your situation and maybe see some options. Now, what I noticed next was I was in the pool looking for these toys, and that if I looked a little bit in front of me a meter or two it was easy to see the bottom of the pool and I could spot a toy. Whereas even if the surface was still, if I was looking straight down, the perspective of it actually made it hard to see. And it was kind of making behind my eyes hurt.

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And this is the value of perspective. I'm getting a bit of distance from the situation. And you can do this yourself through self-coaching. So this is what my clients are always reporting back, that when they do some self-coaching they're able to get some distance and some understanding of what's going on. This is the value of being aware and watching yourself, of being the watcher of your thoughts, and your feelings, and your behaviour. And I want to explain what I mean by self-coaching.

This is what I teach you how to do inside The Flow Collective using a specific framework. But I'm going to give you the abridged version of it so that you can use it right away. And the first part of self-coaching is just emptying out your brain onto paper or a device if you need or prefer to use a screen. This is where you just write down what's in your brain without editing or censoring yourself. You can just let rip with what's there.

And just doing this is so helpful because then you can see your thoughts for what they are. Otherwise they're just circling around your head, just going round and round a roundabout endlessly. When what you could do instead is just opt to find somewhere safe to pore over, take stock of where you are and get clarity to then make a decision and take the relevant action. So the first step is just write what's going on, write about how you're feeling, what happened in your day, or in a particular moment. You can keep it very general, or you can pick a specific situation or topic.

Or you could write about a date you've got coming up, a meeting that you had, whatever's on your mind, whether it's something that's already happened, or it could even be way back from your past, or it could be something that's coming up in the future. Or the absence of something as well. So just this process alone can help to still those waters. But the main reason for it is it gives you a bit of distance. So when it's in front of you on paper or a screen and it's not just in your brain you can see things differently.

So it's like being in the pool instead of looking straight down, it has just enough distance to see things. And then you can start to notice things. And this is the think, feel and do cycle that I covered in episode 41. I think it's

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called The Self-Coaching Protocol. And you can do that in a variety of ways.

Option one is you take a thought, one of the sentences in your head that's now on paper or your screen, and you notice how you feel when you think that thought. What's the emotion that thought generates? And then what do you do or not do when you're feeling that way?

Option two is that you start with a feeling, an emotion like feeling sad or inspired. And you explore what are the things happening on either side of that emotion. What did you do or not do when you felt this way? And then what's the thought that created that emotion? So this is what I did during bedtime last night. I noticed I was feeling annoyed. It was a strong emotion for me.

And I could see that I was getting a little bit short and snappy with Nelson because of it as in because of the emotion that was there. And then I realised it was all because I had this idea, this thought that he should do what he's told.

Option three is you take a look at the things that you have been doing or not doing. And then seek to understand them. So let's say that in a meeting you wanted to speak up and say something, but you didn't. So that's your behaviour, the action that we're looking at, what you've done. And then you'd look at what emotion and thought led to that. So maybe you felt intimidated because you were thinking that you're not as knowledgeable as the other people. Or maybe you felt anxious because you were concerned that you'd get in trouble if you said something.

This is what thought work is. This is self-coaching. There's more to it than that. I'm giving it to you in its most boiled down version but seriously, if you just do this your life will change because it gives you that all important bit of distance and perspective that comes with doing it. And this is what I love seeing my clients experience. They create a post in our community, or they submit something to Ask a Coach which is our individual written coaching

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service. And just the process of writing it down is helpful in and of itself. And then as coaches we get to take it deeper with them.

So back to our pool analogy, I'm in there with Nelson and we're able to find some of the toys by looking further in front of us. But there was a couple that we couldn't find. So I got out of the pool, and I walked around the edge and I saw them both in an instant because I had enough distance from the situation to be able to see very clearly and to offer help. And this my friends is the value of talking to someone who isn't in the pool with you which is what coaching is all about.

Because as coaches we're not in the pool with you. If we were we wouldn't be able to coach you particularly well because we'd just be in the experience with you and agreeing with how awful everything is. That's not particularly helpful. It's lovely when you get it, maybe from friends and things, because this is what we do in our relationships most of the time. If you're telling someone about an experience and friends, colleagues, they just tend to go along with whatever you say and you go along with whatever they say.

Maybe you might challenge a friend occasionally but if they tell you, "So and so said this, and they did that", and they talk about how awful it is. You're probably going to agree with their experience and offer some sympathy or empathy. Maybe you've had a similar experience to them, and you can share that. And that's great to have in friendships. But you're very much there in the pool together and there's not much clarity or other options, different perspectives happening.

But what good is a coach to you if they just accept everything that you tell them? Imagine telling me about a situation that's bothering you, an area of your life that you're unsatisfied with you want to change and as you tell me about it I just sit there nodding along and say, "Oh, yeah, I mean that's not good is it?" It might feel great to have me nodding along and agreeing with you but it's not what you've come to me for. Because when I'm out of the pool I'm not in it with you.

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I'm for sure by your side and on your team. And I feel compassion towards you, and I can offer understanding, but I also have enough distance to be able to be helpful to you. And my opinion doesn't matter, my opinion stays out of it. I was talking to my dad about coaching recently and I think he'd read a newspaper article or something like that and he said how he doesn't get how 25-year-old life coaches do what they do. Who would go to a 25-year-old for advice on life because what do they know about life?

And I have several thoughts about a comment like that which I did share with him because I know some amazing coaches in their early 20s just as I know amazing coaches in their 50s, and 60s, and 70s. But coaching isn't about advice. It's about your coach asking questions and holding the non-judgemental space for you so that you can explore your own minds and your experience. And then we can get to the root of things together.

And from there you can determine what you want to do because when we do this you don't need my advice because who said that I know what's best? I guarantee it isn't because you are the expert in your life, not me. I can offer perspective because I'm the one that's out of the pool. And I can offer you what I'm seeing as your coach but it's always an offer. So the conversations that you have with a coach are very different to the ones that you have with your friends, your family, or your co-workers.

I'm holding the space for your experience and whatever you bring to coaching as well as whatever comes up during the coaching because often you end up getting coaching that you didn't think, that's the thing that you were going to get coached on. That's what one of my clients in The Flow Collective said this week. She's like, "Oh, I totally thought we were going to coach on this." But as we got into it actually it was all about this other thing.

And I love coaching so much for that reason because I never have any idea what we're going to coach on or where we'll end up. But I trust my clients and I trust myself and together we create this amazing space where you can explore, and understand, and unravel things, you can process things and you can shift them. So if you want to come to a free coaching session with me, make sure you're on my email list, I've never offered this before,

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but you asked for it. It sounds fun. I know it's going to be fun so we're doing it and I hope to see you there.

And just remember, you can follow what I've outlined for you today in your own life, write things down, explore them, ask yourself why. If you just do that you will get huge shifts. So that's it for today, that is what coaching is all about. I'll catch you next week.

Thanks for listening to this week's episode of the *Period Power* podcast. If you enjoyed learning how to make your cycle work for you, head over to maisiehill.com for more.