

Ep #48: Changing Your Mind



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With Your Host

Maisie Hill

Period Power with Maisie Hill

Ep #48: Changing Your Mind

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 lovely ones. This is episode 48 of the *Period Power* podcast. And I have really enjoyed making my brain work for this episode. Often there are processes that I go through that are just very natural to my brain, either because that's the way my brain works, or I've just done them so many times that they've become effortless. So sometimes I forget that there's actually processes that I go through, and we all do this in our own way.

But I spend a lot of time thinking about the things that are automatic for me but perhaps aren't for you so that I can just break them down and share what I do, how I do it and why I do it with you. Now, if it's going to help you, you can take it and use it. And today's episode is one where I've thought really careful about how I coach myself in certain situations. And I've gone back and read through my self-coaching over the past few years. And just really noticed the steps that I take. And I'm going to be sharing that with you today or some of it at least.

And this has come up because we just kicked off our people pleasing month in The Flow Collective. And there's something I told the members in this week's webinar that was particularly powerful for them and that I want to share with you and expand on and give you a step-by-step process for you to follow in case you want to. So I was telling them this story from my own life in which I changed my mind about something. And it was something that was a big deal to me, something that I never imagined I would change my mind about because it was a resounding yes at the time.

And I had been wanting this thing to happen for a long time and then it suddenly became an option, it became reality. And like I said, it was exactly

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what I wanted to happen. But then some time went by and in that time there were some significant changes that went on for me, things in myself, things in my life, and I basically realised that I no longer wanted the thing.

So think about where you've had this in your life, maybe a romantic relationship, or a date, physical intimacy, a friendship, a goal of some kind, a job, a place that you live, whether it's an actual home or a geographical location. You wanted it, it became possible and then you changed your mind. And this can happen in a moment, or it can happen many years later. I want to talk to you about how I used to respond to realisations like this and how I respond to them now because there's a massive difference.

And when I say realisations, I of course mean thoughts. So I used to believe my thoughts and act on them, that was my process. Very simple, it was actually a lack of a process, it just happened. I would just have a thought, believe it and take action according to that thought. So in a long-term relationship I might start thinking, we've got nothing to talk about anymore. And we don't have enough in common to have a meaningful connection anymore. I'm just not attracted to them anymore. We've grown apart. We're too different. It's too hard to make it work and on and on.

And I would accept this story in my brain as truth and break up with them. And the reason I say that this is all story is because there's no facts here. They felt very factual to me. But they're all thoughts, they're all optional. So I want to show you what happens when we think thoughts like these and the impact of them using the thought work protocol that I recently shared with you in another episode. It's the think, feel, do cycle.

So if you're thinking we have nothing to talk about anymore, how do you think you'd feel thinking that thought? Resigned, sad, disconnected, maybe decided, well, it's not going to work. And because you're feeling whatever emotion you're experiencing what do you then do or not do? In all likelihood you won't then suddenly find things to talk about. You won't see the things that you already do talk about because your brain has this negativity bias to

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see what's not working. And then you're thinking things aren't working as well.

So what ends up happening is that you just prove yourself right, because our brains also love to be right, I know mine does. And being right might really serve you because your brain's job is to conserve energy. And it probably feels like effort to find things to talk about and to talk about them. But does it really serve you? Because it may seem like the less energy intensive option but that may or may not be true in the long run.

Alternatively what would happen if you thought, of course there are things for us to talk about, notice the difference in you as I say that. Think about someone you know and the difference in how you would feel emotionally if you were thinking, we have nothing to talk about anymore versus of course there are things for us to talk about. I'm guessing you might feel more open, curious, interested, inquisitive, determined, something along those lines when you're thinking, of course there's things for us to talk about.

So then what happens is you actually find things to talk about and you talk about them. So this is how our thoughts ultimately create our reality like how if you're going through life thinking that nobody cares about you, then you probably then feel lonely or isolated and then you withdraw from the people around you. And you don't give them a chance to care about you. And you don't actually care about yourself in that process.

So I stopped believing that my thoughts are facts. I mean I still do. Sometimes, my coach friends or the coaches that I work with will point out, "You know that's just a thought." So that's why I always get coached. But when I'm making a decision, I slow down and I go through a process instead which is what I'm going to share with you now. And this is really important because we often sabotage ourselves simply by believing our thoughts.

So I'm going to walk you through what I do and I'm going to use some examples, well, a particular example because I know you find it helpful

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when I bring it to life for you with examples, a lot of you reach out and let me know that. So here we go.

I recently had a conversation with someone, and they were telling me that they had told their family members that they could all go on holiday together. So the person I was talking to, and her partner had told a set or maybe even both sets of parents that they could come on a trip with them over the holidays. Now, this wasn't a coaching situation. So I wasn't speaking to this person as their coach but it's a really great example to show you my process. So had I been coaching her this is what I would have walked her through in some form.

Okay, so you can do this yourself, think of something that you've changed your mind about, maybe something you no longer want to do or something that you would actually like to do. So step one is to write down all your thoughts about the situation. And the more honest you can be with yourself the better. So just really let yourself empty your brain out onto paper, or a screen, whatever works best or is accessible to you, just get them all out. Don't let them just keep circling around your head, get them out then we can see them for what they are.

And then what you're going to do is interrogate them. So I don't know what this person's thoughts were. We didn't really get into it. It wasn't that kind of conversation but I'm guessing that they might have been along the lines of, they'll be so disappointed if I tell them that we want to go on our own. A very common thought to have. But what that thought is really is I'm going to disappoint them. But you are not responsible for their feelings, they are.

If they feel disappointed that's because of a thought they have like I was really looking forward to going on holiday with them. That might result in them feeling disappointed but it's okay for other people to experience disappointment in life. And they could equally also have another thought that could leave them feeling understanding or compassionate about your decision. They might even feel relieved.

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Another thought could be, well, if we change the plan this will really affect our relationship. Maybe it won't, maybe it will. We don't know. It could swing in either direction. It could actually strengthen your relationship. They could really value you showing up authentically to the relationship but only if you value that first.

Another one could be I'm going to ruin their holidays because our brains love to be dramatic. But you're not that powerful. I mean I think you're really powerful but you're not powerful enough to ruin someone's holidays. Their thoughts about you changing plans might ruin their holidays but that's a choice that they are making, that's on them. And we often go to extremes with this and think how it's just going to be the worst thing ever, but it might not be so dramatic. Just saying.

Okay, a big one that I hear a lot in all kinds of situations is someone thinking, I'm going to let them down. And this is a heavy one, this just feels so heavy to me. And when we have strong emotions, we're more inclined to think our thoughts are real because we're feeling so much that they feel very real. But how do we know you're going to let them down? We don't. And again, they feel let down, that's because of a thought.

Another big one, I'm being selfish. Even if you are being selfish and we could debate that, who cares? Probably only you. You might be thinking I should be grateful, grateful to be able to do this, grateful that our parents are alive and able to take a trip like this, grateful that we have the money, because we have a tendency to make opportunities a problem. But now for the thought that I really want to draw your attention to because it's so prevalent and so damaging. Are you ready?

I've already said yes so I can't change my mind. And this is what I was telling the members on this week's call that blew their minds. I told them that you always get to change your mind, that you can always withdraw consent. It doesn't matter what we're talking about, you always get to change your mind.

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And the example I described for my own life was quite impactful for them to hear about. And I do think it's useful when we hear examples of how other people have done this and gone through it themselves because as someone said to me after the call, "I didn't know that we get to do that." Because their brain hadn't ever entertained the possibility of doing the thing that I told them about. And sometimes like I said, these examples from others are helpful. We get to see what's allowed which is really whatever you want.

But I think it's so useful for you to look at your own life and to consider what you would do differently if someone gave you permission to change things. Because often we are waiting for someone to give us permission. So what are you waiting to receive permission for? And then you can just give yourself permission. So that's step one. Do an honest inventory of your thoughts and interrogate them.

Step two. This is a bit more advanced. So some of you, especially if you're in The Flow Collective or if you've been doing thought work for a while this might be more obvious. So this step is kind of optional. You don't have to force it. It's just something to explore if you want to or if something kind of jumps out at you. Is there an underlying belief that is the foundation of everything else?

So that could be a belief that when you change things, bad things happen. Or that other people's emotions are your responsibility. Or that changing your mind makes you unreliable, or a bad person, or a prick tease. And none of these are true, but although me telling you these things might bring you some relief I want you to really find all the ways that that thought, your underlying belief isn't true.

So step three is doing that. Okay so let's say you believe that you changing your mind will damage your relationship with someone. So what you would then do is think of all the times when you've changed your mind and it hasn't damaged a relationship. And just let your brain come up with as much evidence as possible, even if the examples sound ridiculous to you.

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So here's some ones that I came up with especially for you. All of these points are examples of where I have changed my mind and the relationship hasn't been damaged.

So I suggested to a friend that we go out and get a bottle of wine together and then on the day I decided I fancied a gin and tonic instead and the world didn't end, the relationship did not end.

I agreed to paint a room a certain colour and then changed my mind about the colour after it had been painted and it was okay, annoying yes, but it was okay to change my mind about that colour. And we got to laugh about it as a couple.

And I know these examples might sound silly to you at first but it's important to let your brain loose otherwise it won't find any evidence. So we just want to bring as much in as we can to reinforce the thought that it's safe, it's okay for you to change your mind. And it also brings in a bit of humour and I think that's always useful.

I love being in humour whenever we can use it. Because when we're busy thinking that we're awful humans because we've changed our minds and as a result of that we're causing everyone else to feel emotional pain, it's not always the most useful way of going about examining things and potentially changing them.

Okay, so other examples, I told my kid that on reflection I didn't actually have time to take him for an ice-cream. To be fair, he was pretty devastated, and I think I was too. But it didn't damage our relationship that I'm aware of. Maybe in 20 years' time he'll tell me that it did, but I don't think it has.

And I also know and accept that my son will be disappointed in me one way or another. It doesn't stop me from trying to be the best parent I'm able to be for him, but I do so knowing that he will have thoughts about how I've disappointed him. That's literally part of the job description of being a parent. At least that's how I see it.

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I told a friend that I'd love to meet her but then ended up being pretty tired and wanted to chill at home and she was totally cool with it and still willing to be my friend.

I told a date that I'd changed my mind about going on a date with them, I didn't want to date them anymore. Again, may not be the best example because it resulted in a non-relationship, but my point is that it's an example where I changed my mind and I survived. Because your nervous system might be trying to tell you that it's not safe for you to do this. And one way we can support the nervous system is to remind it that we are actually safe.

And we've also got this whole webinar on creating safety in The Flow Collective and it covers multiple approaches to this. And we just had this amazing bonus sematic session with Victoria Albina who was on the podcast recently as well. So if you're in the membership and haven't checked those calls out yet, make sure that you do.

Now, can you see how finding this evidence just helps your brain to get onboard with it being okay to change your mind? Instead of just going to the dramatics of how it's awful. I just want to level the playing field a bit. So, so far what we've done is you've found your thoughts, interrogated them, looked at if there's an underlying thought or belief and then kind of tried to prove that incorrect. The next step might sound like a step backwards but just bear with me.

The next step is to sell yourself on going through with whatever it is you originally said you would do. And I hope when I say this that it's clear that I'm not talking about you talking yourself into something which is a clear no for you, like having sex with someone for example. That's not what we're talking about here. It's so important for you to honour those no's and you don't have to use thought work to convince yourself to a yes. So that's not what we're talking about here. But here's what I mean by selling yourself.

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If you originally agreed to go on a trip with your parents over the holidays, or you originally said you would spend Christmas with your in-laws or whatever example you want to use from your life. What you do is you come up with all the reasons why you would want to do that.

So that might be that it's an opportunity that hasn't been an option for the past couple of years with the pandemic. The kids love seeing their grandparents. The grandparents love seeing their kids. Free babysitting. You'll be able to spend time together as a couple. It's good to be able to do these things whilst you can. The more of us go – I don't know – the more affordable the accommodation is perhaps. You might want to just spend all that time together and have those memories, for them to have those memories. Do you see what I mean? Just sell yourself on still doing it.

And then you're going to go in the other direction and sell yourself on not doing it. So that might look like, well, this is an opportunity for us to spend time together as a family, as in not with the extended family. We haven't been away at all, and it would be nice if it was just us. We would pick a different location to go if it was just us, one that we really want to do and isn't a compromise. It might be your dad gets weird when he's had a drink. You bring in all sorts of here.

And as I'm talking you through this you might be thinking that this exercise is going to get you nowhere because you're just thinking about, well, I could do this, lots of reasons to do it or I could do that, lots of reasons to do that. So then how do you end up making a decision? So thinking that this is going to get you nowhere is one way of thinking about it. But what I want to suggest is that by doing this what happens is that you can go anywhere, not in terms of a destination for a trip. What I mean is that you can go with any option.

And this is very different from making decisions out of fear of what will happen, or worry, anxiety about what others will think of you. So through this process what happens is choice is available to you. But we've left all of what I would describe as reasons I don't like out of the equation. So that's

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the, well, I said I'd do it, we've already invited them, we should be grateful, we're going to ruin their holidays. We've got rid of those kind of not so good reasons. And you're left with the reasons that you do like for both options.

And at this point there's a final step that will probably emerge quite naturally, but I think it's helpful to pull it out as an actual step and it's to just know what you want, to decide what you want. Forget about all the reasons, the justifying, what do you want? Because once you've dealt with the reasons you don't like, you've sold yourself on going in either direction, it all comes down to what do you want to do.

And none of this is an excuse to just always get out of commitments. But usually my clients are dealing with the impact of overcommitting, overcommitting themselves because of people pleasing tendencies. And those tendencies are there because of how their nervous systems respond particularly to requests and other things going on in their environment. But they just think if someone makes a request that they have to say yes in order to stay safe in some way.

So this is a process that you can use when you're evaluating the things that you said yes to that are actually a no, or that were once a yes for you but no longer are. And sometimes other people won't like the things that you do. They won't like the things that you don't do. But the worst that will happen is that they'll have a thought about you. And this is why you go through with the things that you don't want to do because you want to stop people from having those thoughts about you.

I talk all about this in episode 21 but for now just know that it's okay for them to have their thoughts. And you can let people be wrong about you. I highly recommend it because life gets so much easier when you let them have their thoughts and you get back to your own.

Okay folks, that is it for this week. I will catch you next time.

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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.