

## Ep #134: Your Questions Answered



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With Your Host

**Maisie Hill**

**The Maisie Hill Experience** with Maisie Hill

## Ep #134: Your Questions Answered

This is episode 134 of *The Maisie Hill Experience* and today I'm answering your questions. We've got all kinds of questions, including some very personal ones so let's get started.

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. It is wonderful to be with you today. I've just got back from a horse-riding lesson, and it was amazing. It was the first one that I've done with my son but oh, my days, did our instructor stitch me up. Well, actually I stitched myself up because apparently I have very little awareness of my little fingers. And when I ride I don't curl my little fingers into a tight fist and kind of hold on to the reins in the way that I'm meant to, which is not ideal because the reins basically gradually slip through them. And I don't have them at the right length and kind of lose the contact with the horse.

And throughout my lessons, Julia, my instructor, will often just yell, "Fingers", at me, which always cracks me up. So today, she said to my son, "Nelson, every time I have to tell your mum about her fingers, I'm going to fine her and you're going to get the money." So, I'm laughing away thinking, this is so fun. She's helping him feel so at home and kind of like he's in charge and things like that, that's really great of her. And I'm just thinking it's going to be 10 pence a time or something. But she says, "Right, it's £2 every time I have to tell you. But, Nelson, if I have to tell you to shorten your reins, you have to do two hours of housework."

So now I'm like, "Yeah, this is sounding great." By the end of the hour, I had zero hours of housework and I owed Nelson \$22. £22. So, it was a great lesson. It cost me more than I was expecting though.

Alright, today's episode is a mix up selection of questions that members of *The Flow Collective* have asked me. So, shout out to everyone who asked a question. Some of them I am answering today and some of your questions, I'm actually going to do whole episodes about, so let's get going.

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I'm going to start with a biggie. This is a question that several of you asked in a variety of ways, and that's how did you know you wanted a child? How did you decide that you wanted to have a child?

I knew I wanted it because I felt it in me. I felt that desire, that longing, that urge. I let myself feel that. I think some people are scared to let themselves want it, particularly when it involves having children. And that's very understandable especially as so much of that journey is out of our hands. So, it's a very protective thing to do or rather the reason behind it is protective. I'm not sure it actually is. So, this is something that I was already feeling before I met Paul and before we got together.

I didn't want kids in my 20s, well, I definitely didn't want to have kids in my 20s. But I don't mean that I was against having them, but I didn't want them as in the desire to have them wasn't there. But I started to want them, I think around the age of 30, I'm not entirely sure though, it's kind of hard to remember exactly. But Paul and I got together when I had just turned 33 so, there was time. But I was very upfront about that being on the cards for me as something that I wanted.

Paul is five years older than me, and I didn't mince my words when it came to the topic. I did have a strong opinion about it happening sooner rather than later if it was something that we were going to do. And I know that many of you would love for there to be a way to decide, if this is a situation that you're in, something that you're contemplating trying to decide. Our brains love certainty. And there are so many things that are uncertain about trying to conceive and pregnancy as well as parenting and relationships. None of it is certain. Nothing is guaranteed.

So just decide to do it anyway or decide not to. You can always kind of make that decision again if you need to or want to. And nobody actually asked this question, but I do think it's useful for me to add in that we decided to have one kid. I was up for having more because I loved being pregnant. I loved that postpartum time. It wasn't without its challenges, but I really loved it. And I was up for doing it again, but I never wanted to. I didn't feel that urge. So, Paul and I just never had that conversation.

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And I'm really glad that we didn't have another. In many ways I think writing *Period Power* was my second child and we were in the one and done camp.

Alright, next question. Why have you chosen your current partner as your life partner? I love the phrasing of this question because it makes it seem like he was hand selected, and I guess he was, but he also chose me. I think we were both very intentional about deciding to be together. I felt at home with him. He's a very safe person to be with. He's trustworthy and loyal and very attractive in terms of looks and personality. He's always made me laugh. To this day, he cracks me up on a regular basis.

And he's ambitious, but in different ways to me. And he demands respect and I don't mean that in the kind of you must respect me or else kind of way, but in a like he won't tolerate being treated poorly way. And that's the same for me. That was something that we were talking about last night is that as I was kind of reflecting on this question and we were just talking it through. I was like, yeah, I think if I spoke to you disrespectfully in some way then he just wouldn't tolerate that. I think it would completely alter our relationship and the same if it was the other way around. So, there's a lot of mutual respect between us.

And that kind of takes us neatly on to the next question about relationships, which is how do you deal with relationship conflicts? I don't have many, I really don't. Sometimes there'll be a little bit of something, but it's not much. And for me, that's all down to that level of mutual respect. And knowing that things won't be tolerated, for both of us, especially if I'm talking about Paul. So, I want to approach things in am I being respectful of the other person? Am I respecting myself? Am I respecting our relationship?

Something Maggie Reyes taught me is to remind myself that we are on the same team. So, when there is a bit of something going on, I just tell myself, hey, we're on the same team. He's not the problem because he really isn't. And then that informs how I approach it all. I also remind myself that we have nervous systems that are interacting with each other and that our behaviours are driven by those protective measures that our nervous

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systems are taking, so, getting defensive, wanting to get away or change the topic, leaving the room.

Kind of changes in body language, not making eye contact or experiencing changing levels of connection or disconnection, all those things. They all involve stress responses. And just knowing how that all works and comes into play is incredibly useful. That's why I teach all my clients how to do this. And in the past when there would be conflict, I used to dissociate as soon as there was any of that going on in a relationship. So, I've really addressed this through coaching and it's why I love teaching it and coaching on these things in *The Flow Collective*.

Okay, how do you honour the need for rest versus procrastination or avoiding work? I've been really struggling with this lately knowing I need a lot of rest, but also feeling like I've started to avoid getting back into my work. I had to really think about this one, but before I answer I have to point out that you know when you're resting versus avoiding just by the way your question was phrased. And that's really the biggest part of it.

So, for me personally, there's a big difference between resting, which can take on various forms. It can be doing something that's soothing or replenishing or doing something that's pleasurable in some way or fun. But with all of those flavours of resting, the energy around that is increasing or it's moving. Whereas when I'm avoiding and resisting, has a very different energy to it and it's also creating a different energy. So that energy is stagnant or stuck. And one way to think about it is it kind of feels like I'm putting my foot on the gas and the brake at the same time.

So having that awareness is what tells me everything. And usually, the things that I'm procrastinating on are things that don't take up a lot of time, they might require quite a lot of me in order to do them, but it's not like they take a lot of energy to do. They might require me to coach myself in my head to understand why I'm procrastinating or to use coaching to spur me on, but they're usually quick things. And I've also got better at building in accommodations for things that are a struggle for me, particularly around being autistic.

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And I actually have something huge, so huge to celebrate with you because a couple of weeks ago I received some clothes from an online order that I placed, and I sent them back on the same day. Some of my friends who are going to be listening to this, they're just going to be blown away. So, there's a shop around the corner from us that has lockers outside of it, and I realised that one way of returning parcels from certain companies is you can just take the parcel, scan the QR code that they give you and a locker opens, you put it in there and that's it and it's changed my life.

So, I'm very proud of myself for that because Post Office interactions are one of the things that challenge me the most. So, to be able to do this and have a much more neurodivergent friendly way of doing things is just the best.

Okay, next question. I'm really curious about how your autism is an asset in your coaching. I love this question. I think in so many ways, I'm very good at noticing. So, I pick up on a lot, tone of voice expression, eye movements. I'm taking it all in. I think I'm also noticing the things that aren't being said as well and that aren't being expressed that are perhaps there. I have great pattern recognition which helps me to spot things, they can be things that are being said or unsaid. And I can very quickly kind of get a theory about what's going on. And I'm not always right, I'm pretty much, it's a high rate I would say.

But I don't always present them to my clients, largely because I prefer not to influence things and for my clients to come to their own understandings of their own accord. But I do ask questions and there are times when I do point things out when I notice them, when it feels appropriate and helpful to do so. I'm also very comfortable with silence, so when I'm coaching someone I'm very comfortable with there being silences, and that is really beneficial for my clients to have that time to process and think particularly, I would say in my one-on-one work just because the length of the session is so substantial.

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I'm completely okay with displays of emotion. In coaching people cry, laugh, get angry, they grieve. I've had people swear loudly as they've realised or released something and I'm good with all of that, which means that my clients don't have to pass all themselves up in a certain way or at least that's my hope, that they get to be themselves. And that's something that has come with me from my days as a practitioner as well, where that was the feedback and the experience of my clients when I worked as a practitioner.

It also takes a lot to shock me. My clients tell me all sorts of things and I don't think I've ever been shocked, which means I don't react in the way that probably other people in their lives do. And that means that you don't get my opinion or my judgement. I'm just very open and curious and I think that's really helpful. I have slow audio processing. It can take a while for me to really hear things properly and then to reply. So, there are these gaps in the conversation that again give everyone time to process and think.

I'm very precise with my words too. That's something actually, it's one of those things that can be an asset, or it can hold you back, it can be a hindrance. So, it's actually something that I've worked on loosening up with in order to improve my coaching. When I did Master Coach training, that was one of my goals that I went into it with. I just wanted to kind of free myself up a bit and just say the things that come to me rather than monitoring myself to the degree that I used to. As she says that very slowly, as I really consider my words, I'm cracking up over here.

And I think that has really paid off in my coaching, but it's also paid off, it's had a ripple effect into the rest of my life where I'm just a lot more freer in my communication. So, this person has said that they had a theory on how my autism helps with my coaching. I'd love to know what you think after you've heard this. The other thing I will say about being autistic and coaching is my brain is firing off in all sorts of directions all the time.

So, the image I have of it in my head is like a firework going off and then each of the sparks from that firework create their own firework and it just goes on like that. So, for me, that's so much fun for me, that in coaching the

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possibilities are endless. That's delightful for me. So, that's a really good thing, but it can be kind of tricky to keep track of it or stay with things, so that's a place.

But that's why I find writing things down whilst I'm coaching someone really useful, because sometimes I'm writing down what they have said. Other times I'm writing down the things that are popping up to me and I just have them there. I don't necessarily always use them or come back to them, but I do find it useful for me.

Okay, next question. If you're having a bad day for whatever reason and you have to go into an outward facing role with colleagues or clients, how do you approach this? Is it by being honest and upfront or is there ever a case of fake it till you make it? This was a fun question to get and again I had to really think about it because I don't have bad days. Now, I understand what this question means, and I will answer it, but I don't ever think of my days as good or bad. And I just say that in case it's a useful thing for any of you to hear.

I do have days that are challenging, and I would say that really those days are the ones where I'm feeling very autistic, but I have also set my business up to factor in being autistic, it's built around my autism. For example, we rarely have team meetings. I barely have any meetings of any kind. We don't do any emails within the company apart from one specific reason, well, I mean, it's not that I'm against it. I don't want any emails. The others, they can email if it works for them, if that's what's best for their brain but I hate email.

If you want to get hold of me, email is not the way to do it. I experience a lot of demand avoidance with emails, they're a no for me. And that kind of is also true for texts and Slack, etc, they're not my strong suit. But of course, there's some stuff that has to be done. So how I've approached that is (a) hired people who are all very resourceful and who can work independently without needing to be in constant contact with me. That's been paramount.



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I think if I had a different team, because I have an amazing team, if the team were different. I think it's kind of fair to say I might have changed my business plan, things might be a bit different. So, hiring amazing people who are all independent, resourceful etc, has been fantastic. (b) I have created repeatable processes, there's an SOP, a Standard Operating Procedure for everything in the business and that means that people are able to do their jobs basically.

And (c), I hired Beck or rehired Beck. So, Beck used to be my assistant when I first started out in the online world. And she came back, I guess, six months ago, something like that, as the Director of Operations. And that has made a massive difference for me, because having these three things in place mean that I get to do my job, everyone else gets to do their job as well, and it means that when there are days where my autism is kind of kicking things up a notch, let's say. Then there's stuff in place that it doesn't actually matter or matter so much.

And I know that's not what you asked, but rather than dealing with a 'bad day', how about setting things up to account for your brain or your cycle, your neurodiversity, your health or whatever for when those days happen? Because I think that's actually now I'm thinking about it, why I don't have bad days, because I can have a day where things are going on for me, but things continue. And I know that some of you will be listening to this and thinking well, it's okay for you to do this, Maisie, it's your business, you're the boss.

But see what you can do rather than focusing on what you can't. Find all the places that you can create accommodations and support. And if you don't have a hard day protocol in place, make sure you listen to that podcast episode that I created. Now, as for when I'm having a day where my sensory stuff is impacting me or if I lose my words and go non-verbal, because sometimes I stop being able to speak. Then if I've got clients on those days, I just text them and let them know and just be like, "Look, I can't do today." I do always say why.

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And I did the same back when I was a practitioner and I had really bad period pain and other things going on. So, for me it's easiest to be upfront with people because I'm not concocting things or trying to hide stuff. And don't get me wrong, there might be environments and people where that is actually the best thing to do. You be the judge of that.

But for me, I think it's always been and still is really useful for my clients to see me and have it modelled to them like this way of just being like, "I've got this thing going on so I can't do this", or "I've got this thing going on. I can do this like this, but that's what I can do." So, I just let them know what I can do, if anything. And my private clients, if there's anything pressing going on for them that they want to send me a voice note or text about and then I'll reply with some coaching that way, then we can do that.

When it comes to calls inside *The Flow Collective* or if I'm doing a webinar or doing my podcast or guesting on someone else's too, then I'll reschedule if I feel that I need to, but that's if I feel that I can't do my job and my clients are going to get a less than experience let's say. But if I'm just feeling a bit dysregulated, I wouldn't say I fake it till I make it, I just take care of myself, and I do it.

Next question. During your journey have you lost or faded from many friends? If so, did you find it easier to do the more you experienced it? Yes, I've had friendships fade. To me, that's very normal and I've never found it hard throughout my life. The only one I've ever found hard was when someone stopped talking to me overnight in my early 20s and they didn't tell me why. And we were in the same social group, in a lot of the same places and it was excruciating for me not to know why they'd stopped talking to me and especially as I pride myself on being able to figure things out.

So, I think that's one thing about having an autistic brain. I'm very good at making sense of things like puzzles and I mean that in the actual doing puzzles and the puzzle of life, I love it. That's just a great joy for me is figuring these things out. So, to be in a situation and have no clue why I was in that situation, was really challenging for me. It really was

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excruciating. I've really thought about this. I do think I would have been able to accept their reasoning, but it was painful not to know. And I still don't know to this day, they just didn't talk to me for years.

But it's also normal for me to be very close to someone, consider them a really dear friend and only speak to them once a year or even less than that. So, the way I interact in friendships and the way that I think about friendships is perhaps different to how it is for other people.

I always remember sometimes there's people, you know in the acknowledgement section of books where you get to thank the people who have helped you or who are meaningful to you in some way? There's people that I thanked in my books and they've been astonished to discover. And I think it's always a nice thing, they mentioned me.

But there's some people who I've actually only hung out with a handful of times but those conversations, they meant something to me for a variety of reasons and so I would consider them a close friend. But in terms of, I think how society views friendships generally, which is amount of time with someone, going through things that are significant. There's a lot based on quantity rather than quality I would say, so there we go.

But similar to that, we have our final question for today. I remember in one podcast episode you mentioned throughout your life, you haven't had trouble letting go of things and relationships. What makes it easy for you to let go? What thoughts or feelings contribute to the right mindset to let go? Well, you're in *The Flow Collective*, you know me. There's no such thing as a right mindset, it's just whatever works for you. And I think this is important because I think I am just someone who is able to do this for a variety of reasons. I will get into that.

I think partly it's because I do a fair bit of work before I get to that point. So, with my divorce for instance we went to therapy, I gave it a go. Although, to be honest, I think I was already decided before that point. Basically, if I'm not in it, whatever it is, I'm not in it, that's it. I'm pretty black and white in that respect. And I think that really serves me both in terms of making

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decisions and moving on. I don't do a lot of looking back. Well, not looking back with regret. I do look back and reflect and seek to understand, etc, but once I make a move in a direction that is where I'm going.

I don't have my head pointing one way with my feet saying something else and pointing somewhere else. I'm also not attached to things. I'd say that I'm not attached to people either. Paul and I have been together for 10 years. We're in a loving, committed relationship, no doubt about that, but I still choose to be with him, knowing that I don't have to be with him. I think it's the highest compliment that that's how I approach things? He might disagree.

When I was saying this to him last night, he was just cracking up. He's like, "I know you think that's a compliment, but I don't think most people would get that that's a compliment." But I'm very good with walking away from possessions and people. My career has evolved and moved on. I didn't get stuck thinking that because my degree was in acupuncture, that I should keep being an acupuncturist.

But I don't think I could walk away from coaching. I feel like I'm in it for the long haul with that because I just love it so much and really coaching is the thread through all the previous things that I've done. It's always been there in some form. I'm actually going to do a whole episode about being an entrepreneur and being a coach and having a business because there were some questions there that would be really fun to get into. So, we'll stick a pin in that side of things.

But I don't know if I could walk away from horse-riding. I feel pretty attached to that, but I think that is a large part with why I find it so doable to just move on from people and things and stuff like that is, for me, and this sounds so cheesy, it's a very corny thing to say. But it is really like the journey of life. That's what I'm interested in. So, I don't approach things in, I just want to keep it like it is now because it's so good. I'm more curious about what's around the corner, where are we going next, what's happening?

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Alright, my loves, that's it for this week. Thank you for your questions and I will catch you next time.

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