

Ep #136: Becoming Self-Confident



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Maisie Hill

The Maisie Hill Experience with Maisie Hill

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You're listening to episode 136 of *The Maisie Hill Experience*. This week we are revisiting an episode all about building self-confidence.

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*.

Hi fellow listeners of Maisie's podcast, this is Devon, one of Maisie's podcast producers. Maisie asked me to pick an episode to revisit this week and I chose this one about self-confidence because when I heard it the first time it made a really big impact on me. She mentions how this is an episode you'll want to come back to time and time again and it's so true. Who doesn't want more self-confidence? So, grab your pen and paper and let's dive in.

This is an episode that I recommend you listen to several times. I'm going to be covering a lot. It's going to be a very juicy episode and I want you to catch all the goodness so take notes, listen to it a couple of times.

And also know that we always provide a transcript of every episode. And you can access that by clicking the episode link that's in the show notes and that just takes you through to my website or you can go straight to maisiehill.com and head to the podcast tab which is where you'll find a page for each episode, that always has links to anything relevant that I mention as well as a full transcript.

Okay, confidence. I'm going to start off by talking about some common misconceptions about confidence. Being self-confident does not mean that you always succeed at everything. And I know that a lot of you think that because I have a lot of self-confidence that I always succeed at everything. I don't.

And another misconception that some people have is that it's easy for me to feel self-confident because I'm already successful. That I'm self-confident because I have two bestselling books, or because I have a

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successful business, or because lots of people listen to the podcast and want to work with me etc, etc.

Please, please, please if you are telling yourself that in any way, shape, or form, stop doing this to yourself because it's not true. And when you do this what you're actually doing is putting a distance between us and you see us as different and that things are possible for me that aren't possible for you. And when you do that, you just aren't seeing how amazing and powerful you are, or what's possible for you. You are just shutting the door to what's possible.

And of course you and I are different, but I have a human brain just like you. Mine is also filled with thoughts that are more or less the same as yours. I just know how to manage my mind, and I get coached, and I use all the tools that I teach my clients. Anyway, to come back to my point. I don't have self-confidence because I wrote two books. I do have confidence from doing it and I'm going to explain the difference between confidence and self-confidence as I see it.

Confidence is what you get from experience and practice. Self-confidence on the other hand is your belief and trust in yourself to do something even if you've never done it before like with writing books. I now know from doing it what's involved in writing and publishing a book. So I have confidence in doing it. But I had self-confidence in my ability to write a book way before I ever started writing *Period Power*, long before I got a publishing contract or an agent.

So self-confidence is having the belief in advance of doing it. It's trusting in yourself to do it and that can be trust in your capacity or your ability to do it. But I think it's more about trusting in yourself that you can handle the failures along the way. Trust that you will love yourself no matter what. Trust that you won't make not achieving something mean all sorts of horrible things about you. Trust that you won't criticise and shame yourself if it doesn't work out. Trust that you are able to experience the feelings that are going to come up along with whatever set of results that you have.

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And by the way, success doesn't always feel amazing. I sent an email out about this recently. And this is why it's so damaging to place your emotional wellbeing and your self-worth on your goals because then you always have to be ticking goals off in order to feel worthy. And if you don't meet a goal which is going to happen then you'll plunge into self-judgment and shame. And you'll always be looking for and relying upon external evidence in order to feel confident. And this is a very human tendency, to use experience in something to create confidence.

So if you've never done something before like driving a car then you won't have the confidence that comes from the experience of driving. But there might be confidence that you can borrow from something else in your life and then just kind of transfer that confidence over. So I remember learning to drive when I was 17 and thinking, well, I know how to ride a bike. And even though a car is far more complex than riding a bike, I knew how to manoeuvre on a bike.

So I'd never done a three-point turn in a car, but I had done one on a bike, so I was able to bring that confidence and ability from riding my bike over to driving a car. And I was able to do that because of how I was thinking. These are all thoughts that I was having. So I was probably thinking things like, I know how to turn around. I have done this before. Driving a car is different to a bike but turning like this is familiar to me. And thinking that way gave me some confidence.

But what's interesting is that even after passing a test and years of driving, some people still aren't confident drivers. So it isn't always the case that experience leads to confidence. This is another big misconception when it comes to confidence. So you can have lots of experience but if you're still thinking thoughts that create doubt or anxiety then of course you're not going to feel confident.

And I hear this a lot when my clients are talking about their careers. So either they're considering a new job or a career change and they're not feeling confident about going for it. Or they've been in a job for a long time and still don't feel confident and are a bit mystified about what's going on.

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So generally speaking I would say that confidence is something that comes from experience. You do something multiple times and you gain confidence in your ability to do it like with boundaries.

If you're not used to giving a boundary, then you may not feel confident in doing it. But once you've done it once or a few times then you get used to working that muscle and you build confidence in your ability to give a boundary. It requires less of you to do it. And of course there might be times when you feel tested, and it does require something of you. But you're able to look at the other times that you've done it and use that to help you give the boundary.

But what I want to focus on today is self-confidence which is different to confidence. There's definitely some crossover but I think it's helpful to view confidence and self-confidence as distinct in their differences. And I'm going to tell you why this is so important in a moment. So just to recap, so far, we've covered that confidence is something that comes from experience of doing something, but it doesn't always result in a feeling of confidence because you've got to remember confidence is a feeling. So if you're not thinking thoughts that create it, you won't feel confident.

And of course as time goes by something becomes habitual and requires less thoughts but by that point the thoughts you've thought hundreds of times over have become a belief that you have about yourself, and it just runs as a program in the background.

So next let's consider self-confidence. I think of self-confidence as confidence that comes or is created ahead of time. It's a feeling you have in advance of actually doing something. So it's the confidence that you have before you have any evidence that you can do it, you don't have any proof that you can. And what's fantastic about self-confidence is that it's all about trusting yourself. It requires self-trust.

This is so important because if you're always relying on experience of something in order to feel confident then you're trapped because how do you get the confidence from having experience if you don't have the

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confidence to get the experience in the first place? It's a catch 22. And this is what Evie described, one of my clients. She said, "I never actually knew I lacked confidence until joining The Flow Collective." That's so interesting to me.

It's fascinating because often we just hear these words spoken about without really examining what these words mean and looking at how they show up. So sometimes someone's like, "No, that's not an issue for me." And we talk about that, "No, this does show up."

So Evie said, "Personally, my lack of confidence never stopped me from accomplishing things but hanging out in The Flow Collective and using all the resources made me aware that I never celebrate my wins. This is where my lack of confidence was showing up. When I accomplish something, my brain just jumps to the next thing to accomplish. And I recently realised that keeping my brain busy with the next steps was a way of avoiding sitting with myself and acknowledging that things have worked out or gone right.

Sometimes acknowledging that everything is good or that you have done a good job is hard." So she continues, "This lack of confidence had a direct impact on my work and family. I always made sure not to take up too much space and always put others in the spotlight. This then created negative feelings towards my colleagues or family as I felt that I was not getting the recognition or place in the group I deserved." This is such a common experience by the way. It's so perfectly described.

"Through The Flow Collective I've started working on celebrating big and small wins. This has had such a huge impact on my daily life. I feel more present and grounded, and the word 'self-value' actually means something to me now. I recently vocalised my feelings to my team and family, and I am already feeling more valued and part of the group." What's so good about this, Evie, I don't know if you've realised this, I will comment on the post as well, but you valued yourself. You made yourself part of the group.

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That's what's so interesting. We're always thinking it's about other people and it's not. It's all about us and how we do that for ourselves. Now, I've got some definition of self-confidence to share with you that is going to help us to explore self-confidence. So here's the first.

Self-confidence means trusting in your own judgement, capacities, and abilities. It's about valuing yourself and feeling worthy regardless of any 'imperfections' or what others may believe about you. I cannot tell you how much I love this definition. I actually think it's a perfect summary of my work and what we do inside The Flow Collective. Because when I look at our clients' journeys, how they're showing up in their lives and the internal and external changes that they're making in their lives it all comes down to self-confidence and trust.

This is what's been on my mind a lot recently. And just knowing that you're worthy and lovable exactly as you are in all of your humanness. And that other people are going to have thoughts about you, they can have thoughts about you that you don't agree with and that's okay. Their thoughts are their responsibility, they're not yours.

This is such a great time to lean into doing this inner work because the energy of summer can make it more available to you. It can be easier to access these qualities when we're in the summer season of the year. And then what you're doing is you're building these skills ahead of time so that you can then maintain that self-confidence and inner trust through the darker seasons. You're taking care of yourself ahead of time. And there may be a point in your cycle where you can really tap into feeling and being self-confident, where you feel more trusting of yourself.

And maybe you're even up for doing something that feels a bit risky, that typically happens when oestrogen and testosterone are peaking right as you're about to ovulate. So you might get – I don't know – two to three days or so of feeling this way just because your hormones and your neurotransmitters are all fired up. But for some of you it might occur at other points in the cycle. Either way it's great if there's an existing window

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of opportunity where you feel this way within the cycle or the seasons of the year.

Because we can then pay attention to it, bringing awareness to the thoughts that you're having and harvesting those thoughts, literally picking them up and writing them down somewhere. And then you can think them on purpose at other times in order to create the feeling of confidence. And listen, I know that if your period is about to start and you have very low hormones then some of the thoughts that you had at ovulation may well seem ludicrous to you, and that's okay. I'm a big fan of just working with what we've got and with what feels doable.

And that's why one of the first things that you do as a member is you come up with your hard day protocol and I also teach you a thought work technique that means you can find the thoughts that are believable even when you have no hormones and your period's due, and it feels like your world is about to implode or end somehow. It's so important to work with the thoughts that are believable rather than attempting the ones that quite frankly feel laughable at that moment in time.

And it is really helpful and sustainable to start where you are and take one step rather than forcing yourself into taking a huge leap that's maybe it's just too much for your nervous system and where you're at right now. Because then it can be a bit like pulling a rubber band, you pull it, you stretch it but then you let go and it just snaps back, and it can hurt. And then you're back where you were in the first place but now you also have the additional thought that nothing has changed even though you put effort into it. And so your belief in things being able to shift for you goes down.

And don't get me wrong, giant leaps are available, I'm all for them but let's build a foundation first, let's get those core skills honed in just like athletes do. They don't just do the high jump without any preparation. They get their body ready for that. They learn those core skills, they build muscle, they bring in flexibility. I don't know what else they do, but they do all of that. They learn how to fall on purpose and not get hurt and then to get up again. And that's what I want for you as well.

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So here's what my client Katie had to say about this. Katie shared, "Lack of confidence and trust in myself has sabotaged my relationships, both romantic and friends and family, my work life by not pushing myself or believing that I could achieve great things and not celebrating myself when I did achieve them. And it made me fearful of taking risks, having ambition, or getting out of my comfort zone for anything. Lack of confidence and trust in myself made me stand still and feel safe there.

I'm still learning to increase my self-confidence by celebrating my achievements no matter how small. I'm recognising my abilities, the weekly win thread really helps me see that I do win every week and it is a thought provoking gamechanger for me." I love what Katie shared because it's a great example of meeting yourself where you are, understanding why you're in the place that you are, the impact of it and of taking 'small steps'. And they're really not small. They're doable. They might be what's available to you.

And by building in that habit of acknowledging and celebrating yourself your confidence muscle is getting flexed probably in more ways than you realise at the time. And listen, this is something that you can all start doing today, right now so feel free to steal that tip from Katie.

My client Gemma, shared, "My lack of self-confidence meant that I have repeatedly settled for second best or worst. And I'd love for you all to think about the ways in which you might be doing that because I believe that this is all I was worth. It has definitely impacted all parts of my life from personal relationships, progression in my career, my opinions on how good a daughter and parent I am etc, low self-confidence means to protect myself, I wouldn't even try things to avoid failure and feeling useless.

A life of self-sabotage, hiding my capabilities, not feeling able to celebrate my successes, or like I have a voice." And Gemma has really described how pervasive that lack of confidence and trust in yourself is. And how it can seep into every area of your life. And I know that as I'm saying this, that might sound really damning but if you flip it around it means that if you

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focus on this one thing then it will impact every area of your life. It will improve every area of your life.

And if this is ringing true for you and you're like, "Yeah, that sounds a bit like me", it's very understandable given our socialisation. Gemma also said, "I am definitely a working progress." I feel like Gemma may be kind of underestimating her progress. We will return to coach on that in the community. "So it's not easy to alter lifelong habits, goal setting and celebrating my successes as encouraged in The Flow Collective helps me to see my achievements however small." Okay, we're going to coach on that too, Gemma.

"Trying to be more open with those closest to me about how I'm feeling, taking up more space for example by not apologising for being me or blaming myself when things go wrong. Taking life for what it is, half good, half bad." And I'm really grateful to Gemma for touching on this because this is often ongoing work. It's messy, it can feel like crap sometimes but it's so worth it. Now, listen to what she said next. "The biggest shifts have to be that I feel less of a failure. I feel more worthy of good things and I'm learning that it's okay to not feel okay and believing it too.

I'm guilty of being out of touch with my emotions, like really out of touch. When I think I feel something it's all modelled up and transferred to other things, feelings, words like my brain has been lying to me my whole life. But actually I've just created a very complicated and very clever way to protect myself. Working through this and believing in myself more is giving me my life back. I'm learning to take up space."

This is important for you all to understand, your nervous system is always trying to protect you. And it will come up with very clever and complicated ways of doing so because your brain just wants to keep you alive. So these ways of being, these patterns of behaviour, they were created for good reason. At the time you came up with this system it was protective. But often what was originally protective can become unhelpful and actually end up trapping you and it actually doesn't protect you.

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Maria went on to describe her experience and she said, “I’ve looked externally most of my life for answers. Very seldom trusted my gut instinct which often turned out to be right eventually, became dependent on other people’s approval and point of view to make a decision. Heart wrenching anxiety whenever I was faced with a choice and above all I just could not for the life of me celebrate and be proud of my successes because I was so afraid to come across as braggy or full of myself.”

And heart wrenching is such a great way of describing what this feels like because I even feel it when I see you all experiencing this because it’s just so heart wrenching and sad to see someone not trusting themselves, but it’s also hugely motivating for me to help you and to be your coach as you go through this. And it’s just so incredible to witness the changes in all of you. And this ties into what I mentioned earlier about how even when you have confidence from the experience of doing something and you succeed, you won’t necessarily gain self-confidence.

And Maria went on to say, “What’s helped is starting to listen to my instinct and really implementing all the tools you’ve taught us, especially bringing awareness to my thoughts. That’s what’s uncovered how harsh and demanding I am towards myself and how much self-love and confidence can bring me joy and peace. I just feel so much happier, life feels easier and flows better. I marvel at how much beauty and potential there is, and I feel so much more confident about challenging myself and expanding the vision for my life.”

Building self-confidence and trust changes so much. Can you hear that in these descriptions that I’m sharing from my clients? I’m going to read out what my client Beth shared next. And if you’re in The Flow Collective make sure you read this whole thread. It’s gold. And as you’re listening to this now as I read Beth’s words out, I want you to consider just how much self-trust is sitting behind what Beth is describing.

So, Beth said, “I can honestly say I am a completely different person. Things I have done include arranging a progress meeting with my boss where I outlined the parts of my job where I felt like I was stagnating and

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suggested new goals. As a result my boss and I came up with an action plan to work on some of the training points I had outlined. I have never had this conversation before. I called someone in the office out when they tried to openly criticise my work methods without first asking me about why I'd done the particular piece of work in that way.

They were very sorry and guess what? They weren't even angry. They thanked me for pointing this out to them and asked me to tell them if they ever do it again. Past me would have been thinking, I don't want to let them know that bothered me because they will be mad. But my new thought was, I want to let them know because it would be helpful to me if they didn't do this again. My feelings switched from anxiety to hopeful with a smidgin of you got this."

This is why we pay so much attention to our thoughts because when we just focus on our actions without addressing the thoughts and the feelings that are there, it's a bit like trying on your mum's high heels as a kid if you ever did that, I certainly did. You want to wear them and you kind of like how they look even though they don't fit you. But they just don't feel right and in order to walk you have to walk in a very strange way in order to keep them on. And that's what kind of taking action without addressing the thoughts and the feelings that are also there can be like.

Just I love the level of self-trust that Beth has kind of brought into her life. So as my clients have so beautifully illustrated and thank you to all of you for your comments here. When you're self-confident you know you can handle whatever happens, that you have the self-confidence to figure things out, that when things don't go as you hoped or planned, that you don't criticise yourself. And when you attempt something that does result in a failure, you don't make that mean that you are a failure.

When you're self-confident you get to make mistakes and you grow from them, you learn from them, you stay focused on where you want to get to, rather than reverting to negative thinking about all the times in the past when you failed. Oh my gosh, I used to do this to myself so much. Make

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one tiny mistake that didn't even have much of a consequence for me or anyone else.

And just I mean I would literally in my mind go through all the times when I failed including a reading test when I was – I'm trying to think how old I would have been, really, really young, maybe my son's age, six or seven. And I got one word wrong, it was tongue by the way, I said it as ton-gue. It's the only one I got wrong and literally that's where I would go to any time I made a mistake of any kind. I would just think of all the failures I've had and how I'm such a failure. I mean pat on my back for the changes that I have made. It's so wonderful to not do that anymore.

So you get to make mistakes when you're feeling self-confident, and you don't revert to those negative thinking and all those times in the past when you've failed. And I shared last week, I think about how I have attempted the same goal five times in a row, and I failed every time. Those so-called failures don't mean anything about me as a person. They just mean I haven't created that result yet. I haven't been in the right model yet.

And those of you in The Flow Collective know what I mean when I say the model. But for those of you who aren't a member the model is what we call the thought work framework that I teach inside the membership so that you can learn how to coach yourself. And what I mean by I haven't been in the right model is that I've been thinking, and feeling, and behaving in a certain way which have all led to various sets of results that I've created so far. So I just haven't been in the model that creates the desired result yet, the particular goal I've been working on.

So along the way I've been thinking, feeling, doing things that have created amazing results. The failures are still huge wins to me, but I haven't been in the thought, feeling and set of actions that lead to the goals that I originally set and I'm still working towards. So as I consider this goal that I'm working on, I can reflect on my previous attempts and use them to evaluate. That's incredibly helpful and valuable to do. But what I'm not doing is using them to beat myself up and talk crap about myself.

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I also have confidence from doing five attempts at this goal at this stage, I'm very practiced at this goal. But I had self-confidence to do it from the beginning which has meant that all the failures I can just keep going. And I had no idea how I would do it when I first set the goal and that's something to consider too because what I often see in a lot of our clients is what I call how greed where they just want to get to how they're going to achieve a result rather than focusing on who they will be in order to achieve it.

Because once you figure out who you will be and you explore how you want to feel and what you need to be thinking in order to go about it, the how then becomes obvious. So I've touched on mistakes that you're going to make along the way, because you're definitely going to make mistakes and you're going to fail and that's perfect. That's what we encourage our clients to do so that you are increasing your capacity for failure and learning to create safety for yourself as you do that. And through doing so you come into a very loving relationship with yourself.

This is so freeing because then what happens is you don't need to meticulously plan and be in control of everything that's going to happen which in case this is news to you, just isn't possible anyway. And this is how you can let go of any control enthusiast tendencies that you may have as well as perfectionism and procrastination. This is why I love seeing you all make these shifts. And you can do this because you trust that you can handle any emotion.

Think about it, no matter what happens at the end of it you will experience an emotion. Sometimes you will feel proud, amazed at yourself, relieved that it's done. Sometimes you're going to feel disappointed and upset, maybe frustrated, or dismayed, but emotions are an expression of energy in the body. And you are literally designed to feel and experience emotions, you just might need some help doing so especially if you don't have much experience of this, or if feeling emotion has historically felt unsafe to you in some way and that's what we can help you with.

So if you can trust yourself and your capacity to experience any emotion then failing isn't such a big deal especially when you stop shaming yourself

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and you can reflect and evaluate things without criticising yourself, as in you as a human. And that means that then you can actually handle criticism and feedback from others which leads me onto this great definition from the University of Florida.

So they state that self-confidence is an attitude about your skills and abilities. It means you accept and trust yourself and have a sense of control in your life. You know your strengths and weaknesses well and have a positive view of yourself. You set realistic expectations and goals, communicate assertively, and can handle criticism. I mean I could get into the nuance of what realistic expectations and goals means but I'll leave that for another time. You probably know my thoughts on that already if you've been listening to the podcast for a while.

But this is what I see happening with my clients, how Beth took charge of her career, and Beth also reflected on her experience of doing a PhD and she shared, "I did a PhD and was immediately comparing myself to others, focusing on my weaknesses and flaws. I am also a very open person, not a bad thing, but I found that the more I was openly very insecure, people wouldn't want to burden me with additional responsibilities or opportunities.

Sometimes my supervisor would help to manage my workload for me by removing things from my list of jobs and assigning these tasks to other people. My supervisor would even say to me, "I know you don't have a lot of confidence", which would in turn reinforce to me that it was true when really these are just words and even though they may have been my truth too, I shouldn't have let it bother me that my supervisor also had this thought about me. Essentially my own development was out of my hands, and I felt like I had no control over it."

My client Marianna also shared, "The Flow Collective and your podcasts have completely changed how I interpret how I feel and stuff I do. I have become softer on myself, way more understanding, I know my body better and feel more at home in it. I don't take my thoughts too seriously. I do thought work which is extremely empowering. I feel more like me. I talk more about how I feel. I think about what I want out of life. I notice

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relationships around me improve. I keep learning and growing. I feel more comfortable with boundaries.”

So my loves, self-confidence is all about trusting in yourself. And I’m going to let my client Julia take us home with what she shared. “Feeling being hemmed in by everything that needs doing is shifting to a feeling of expansiveness. The Flow Collective is showing me that I’m not being driven by external forces beyond my control which is what so many of us go through life thinking. I am responsible for my choices and that phrase now feels liberating rather than constricting. A real surprise with this coaching has been noticing the language we use with our thinking.”

Julia, I am right there with you. I love how you said, “I am responsible for my choices and that phrase now feels liberating rather than constricting.” This is such a hugely important shift in mindset, Julia, so congratulations. So if this episode has been speaking to you then I invite you to come along with us and join The Flow Collective because this is what we do, all day every day. We bring awareness to our thoughts, to how we’re feeling. We have compassion for ourselves as we seek to understand our experiences.

And then we shift into expansiveness and what’s really possible. All of it requires self-trust and the podcast is really just the top layer of my work. There are so many more layers for you to discover in the membership. This is deep work to be doing. It’s not for everyone.

And it’s all about shifting the patterns of behaviour that are keeping you trapped and moving into a compassionate loving relationship with yourself, one where your inner critic isn’t bullying you every day, one where you can love yourself, even the parts of you that maybe right now you wish you could change and that you judge yourself for. Imagine not beating yourself up like that. And being able to make mistakes and just learn from them and move on.

Everything I teach you is about getting to know yourself, to explore all the layers of you and to build trust and self-confidence because I know that if you do that then you can do anything. And you can do anything.

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