

Ep #155: Interacting With Your Ideas



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With Your Host

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The Maisie Hill Experience with Maisie Hill

Ep #155: Interacting With Your Ideas

This is episode 155 and it's a follow-up to an episode that aired a few episodes back about nurturing your big idea and I really wanted to continue the conversation.

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*.

Okay, my lovelies, welcome to the podcast. A few episodes back I spoke about Nurturing Your Next Big Idea. That was in episode 151. And today I am continuing the conversation because after that episode aired, several of you reached out with a common question that was along the lines of, well I have so many ideas, what do I do with them? And I have a lot to say about that because I am also someone who has lots of ideas. Much like I mentioned in that episode, it all boils down to how you interact with your ideas.

And the notion that having lots of ideas is a problem only arises if you haven't yet honed those skills to manage your ideas effectively. And before we delve into what those skills are and how to develop them, the first and most crucial step is to embrace your nature as an idea generator. I often hear from listeners who believe that they aren't creative or that they don't have good ideas, and none of that's true, by the way. They're just thoughts that you have about yourself. They're not factual, they're optional.

So, if you are someone that has lots of ideas, that's amazing. That's wonderful. Don't make it a problem. I am a visionary. I spend a lot of time contemplating the future. I have a strong vision for my life, my work, even for the lives of my clients and all of you who are listening. And so, because I have that strong vision, that fuels an abundance of ideas, way more than I could ever possibly follow through on but having all those ideas isn't a problem for me. It's just part of who I am.

But it could become a problem if I expected that I should be able to initiate every single one of them all the way through to a fully formed idea. Every

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idea that you have doesn't have to make it all the way from seed to a fully formed mature tree. That just isn't going to be possible if you're someone who has lots of ideas. It's potentially going to be quite disruptive, confusing, having to switch things all the time. So, you have to be able to make decisions and you need to be a bit ruthless about it.

You have to kill your darlings. This is a concept that is used in writing that refers to the decision of eliminating elements that you may personally be very fond of but that don't serve the larger goal, the larger piece of work. And when you can let go of a cherished idea, it makes room for more viable ones to flourish. So, if you're emotionally attached to your idea, this can be challenging, but it's a necessary skill for effective idea management.

And we actually see this concept of selective focus and potential in all sorts of places, including the menstrual cycle. So, think about your ovaries if you have ovaries and the multitude of eggs that they contain. When you were a baby in the womb your ovaries contained seven million egg cells. And then as you've aged, most of those have naturally died off and been reabsorbed by the body. And this isn't just something that happens as you reach your 30s and 40s and 50s.

It's a process that begins way, way earlier, before you're even born. Because before you're born that seven million has already dwindled to one million. And then at puberty it's around 400,000 and of those only around 400 will actually be released as mature eggs at ovulation. And in every menstrual cycle, several follicles are recruited for each cycle to potentially make it through to ovulation, but typically only one or two make it to that point. And this selective process in the ovaries is how we can approach our ideas.

Because just like only one or two follicles reach ovulation, not all ideas will or should come to fruition. Some ideas, even though they don't make it to the final cut, still serve an important purpose though. They might inspire other ideas, contribute to your learning, or just indicate what doesn't work, which is as valuable as knowing what does. So how do you decide which

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ideas to pursue and which to let go of or maybe just park to one side for a bit? I've got a few strategies for you that I use myself.

First things first, does the idea align with your long-term vision and goals? If it doesn't contribute to the bigger picture that you're trying to create, it might be a darling that needs to go. And especially, please hear me on this, especially if your idea is a distraction. Is your idea a shiny, pretty new thing that's luring you away from what's really important, the thing that's important that you need to do to bring your vision into reality? These very attractive ideas will tempt you, they will.

They will challenge your commitment to your long-term goal, and it might be so tempting to just start afresh. It's like doing the hard work in a long term committed relationship, when you pass the honeymoon phase and no longer seeing things with rose tinted glasses and showing up in that relationship, even when it's challenging and confronting and there's issues. Or the opposite option is maybe breaking up and just starting off fresh with someone else, a blank slate that is full of possibility and fun and everything's lovely.

You have to remember that a lure of newness often masks the depth and the value of what you're already working on. It's easy to be seduced by the excitement of a new project or new idea. But it's the ongoing consistent work on your current path that builds something truly meaningful. So, the key is to differentiate between a genuinely valuable new direction and a distraction that looks appealing simply because it's new and it's different. So, ask yourself, does this new idea genuinely offer something that my current path doesn't or is it just appealing because it's new and unexplored?

Sometimes the best course of action is to recommit to your current path, to dig deeper into what you've already started and to see it through the challenging phases. This doesn't mean you should never pivot or adapt or do something else, but those decisions need to be made in alignment with your overarching vision, not as an escape from the hard work required to achieve it.

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And aligning your ideas with your vision is about staying true to your core objectives and your values. It's about not getting sidetracked by the new and shiny things at the expense of the depth and the richness of what you're already creating. And just recognising that the most rewarding paths often will usually include challenges and sticking with them through those challenges to achieve something truly worthwhile, is worthwhile.

Another aspect to consider when you're evaluating your idea is the assessment of resources and feasibility. So, do you have the necessary resources in terms of time, money, energy, attention to bring this idea to fruition? Is it feasible within your current circumstances? Sometimes you might encounter a fantastic idea, but the timing or available resources just aren't in your favour.

I say this with some hesitation as a significant part of the coaching that I coach my clients on in *The Flow Collective* revolves around challenging and expanding the beliefs that we have about what's possible with what's available to us. Because often my clients and me are constrained by thoughts like I don't have enough time for that. I don't have enough money. I don't have enough energy, etc. And overcoming those limiting beliefs can be incredibly empowering and eye opening. But at the same time, I do want to acknowledge that ideas need some nurturing.

And like many of you, I operate with finite resources. And through extensive self-coaching and getting coached by others, I know how to manage my mind around those things, and I know how to maximise what I do have. And that mindset shift, by just really understanding and optimising the resources that we do have at our disposal is something that I love exploring with my clients.

But let's also be realistic, if you're juggling 10 ideas all at once and trying to allocate equal resources to each of them, it is likely that you will spread yourself too thin. So, the art lies in striking a balance, managing our resources wisely and being selective with our commitments. That doesn't mean we have to limit our creativity or our ambition or our dreams. It's just

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about focusing our energy and resources on ideas that are not only inspiring but also viable within our current context.

And as I touched on earlier, all of this process hinges on your ability to make decisions, and I know many of you struggle with that. We've got a webinar on how to make decisions inside *The Flow Collective*. I highly recommend it. It's very thorough and will help you make decisions. That's the whole point of it. So, make a decision, join and watch that webinar.

So, here's how I interact with ideas that I'm like, "I really like that idea and I'm not sure if now's the time to do it." I'll just mentally bookmark it by saying yes, but not yet. I just have an idea, I'm like, "Ooh, yes, but not yet." And I might even put it in my diary for a point in time when I do want to return to it. Often I find that I don't need to do that just because the idea takes root and works itself inside me.

But the yes, but not yet approach works well, provided you can comfortably let those ideas simmer without feeling overwhelmed or feeling any pressure to do something with them. So, I think of it in terms of the natural life cycle of seeds. Some ideas like seeds, just require a longer germination period. They need time to incubate, to develop under the surface before they're ready to sprout. And seeds even when they're tucked away in drawers, in envelopes, still hold all of their potential.

And your ideas retain their potential and their vitality, even when they're set aside. So, they're not forgotten, they're just patiently waiting in their dormant state. And seeds also have different life cycles. Some sprout very quickly and might need immediate attention and care. Others can remain dormant for years in the soil, only to awaken when the conditions are optimal for them.

So, the same goes for your ideas. Some are going to demand immediate action and kind of thrive on that energy of the moment and others will benefit from being shelved and just maturing in the back of your mind until they emerge, but can you have that level of self-trust? That's the question. So, when you mentally say yes, but not yet to an idea, you're

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acknowledging its potential, whilst also recognising that its time hasn't come yet, just like storing a seed in an envelope, knowing that when you finally plant it, it's going to have a really strong chance of flourishing.

So, this helps you to manage your resources effectively and focus on the ideas that are ready to grow now while still nurturing the future potential of others. You just have to be onto yourself that you're not parking your ideas because of limiting beliefs about yourself and what's possible for you. So now let's expand this metaphor into the idea of the garden itself.

Imagine if every seed you had, every idea that crossed your mind was planted in your garden at the same time, what would happen? It would most likely become overcrowded, chaotic and unsustainable. Each plant, each idea needs its own space to grow, its own share of sunlight, water and nutrients. And in a crowded garden they would compete for those resources and as a result many of them, maybe most of them wouldn't be able to flourish to their fullest potential.

And this is precisely what happens when we try to act on all our ideas simultaneously, our time, energy, other resources. They're just like the sunlight and the nutrients needed by plants. There's only so much to go around. If we spread them too thinly across too many ideas, we end up stunting their growth. And we can't nurture any single idea to its fullest expression because it's constantly competing for resources.

So, we've got to be selective about which seeds we plant in our garden. And sometimes that means we have to manage our minds around that because you might be thinking, oh no, I've got to do all of them because you don't fully believe in one of them or you don't fully believe in yourself and trust in yourself and your ability to make things happen. I can help you with that. This doesn't mean discarding ideas permanently. We're just prioritising which ideas to nurture now and which ones to save for later.

Some ideas might be perfect for the current season of your life, or your business and others just might be better suited for a future time. So, think about your garden as a carefully curated space. Each plant, each idea you

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choose to nurture, should have the room it needs to grow and thrive. This might mean saying no to really good ideas, at least for now, to give your best ideas the attention and care they deserve. But by doing so, you're ensuring that your garden is a place of beauty and abundance, where each plant can reach its greatest expression.

You can also experiment with an idea on a small scale to test its viability. If it doesn't work out, you've just got some valuable insights to roll with, it's easier to move on. That does come with failure, but failure is good because we get results and then you know what to do next. So, if you're going to do this, then I do recommend being very intentional and constrained in your approach.

Because usually what I see is people starting off with doing some, yeah, I'm just going to test this a little bit. And then before they know it, they've invested huge amounts into it because they haven't been able to be constrained. So that's why being intentional in advance and having a plan, having clear parameters is going to be really useful.

Now, let's explore the balance between spreading your creative energy across a range of ideas, so diversification versus channelling it into a few carefully selected ones and having that focus. Both approaches have their own value and understanding when to apply each can really enhance how we manage and nurture our ideas. So, diversification is like planting a variety of seeds in your garden, each with its own potential.

And this can be beneficial when you don't really know the environment that well, maybe it's a rapidly changing environment. And a winning idea isn't immediately apparent, and you might just kind of, it's like having a bundle of mixed seeds and just like, well, let's just see what takes root, see what works. But the challenge, as I've just touched on, lies in resource allocation.

So, when we diversify too much, that can lead to a scenario where none of your ideas receive enough nourishment to truly thrive so that's where being very intentional is useful. On the other hand, having an intense focus where

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you're dedicating your resources to maybe one or a few selected ideas. That allows for deep understanding and likely more significant progress. But it carries the risk of what we could usually say in conversation, refer to it as missing out on new opportunities due to that tunnel vision. But remember the fear of missing out is also just a thought, it's not reality.

So, as with all of this, we have to be aware of the mindset from which we're approaching things, because that's going to show up in our results. So, consider your current situation and your goals, are you in a phase of exploration or are you ready to commit deeply to a well-developed idea or recommit deeply to a well-developed idea. This decision doesn't have to be black and white, by the way. Reflect on where you are right now.

What does your intuition tell you about the balance you need to strike between diversification and focus? Your answer to this question will guide you in choosing the right approach for your creative journey with whatever it is that you are working on or wanting to work on.

So, we've touched on a whole bunch of things so far, but I have to mention another key element in the creative process that usually gets left out and that's the role of rest and downtime. Don't overlook the importance of stepping back and allowing yourself to recharge. Rest isn't just a pause, it's an active part of the creative process. It's during these periods of stepping back that our minds engage in subconscious processing, which is so supportive of creative thinking.

When we're constantly on and actively working on our ideas, we might miss the forest for the trees. But when we step back, that's when we often gain that fresh perspective, and we can see our ideas and challenges in a new light. So, when you're very close to your work, your ideas and when I say work, I mean that can be in your personal life or in your professional life. But when you're coming up against frustrating things and struggles, often pausing and stepping back is what's going to help you see what needs to happen next.

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So, I love to think about this as letting the soil of your garden rest, because just as earth needs time to replenish its nutrients for the next season of growth, our minds need that time to rest and rejuvenate too. And that downtime can exist in many forms. It can be an actual walk in nature, a day spent without an agenda, it could be a holiday. But it could also just be going, of course I'm going to say going horse riding, it's the best. It's the best mental holiday you can ever take, and it only takes 30 minutes.

But the key is to just disconnect from the active pursuit of your ideas and allow your mind to wander freely during those periods of rest. I love doing puzzles for this as well. So, it's just a focus, but it's a switching off from the other stuff. And when you do this, you might find that the solutions to problems just simultaneously emerge, or new innovative ideas come to the forefront.

It's just like planting that seed and then stepping away. Nature takes over and sometimes the seed grows better without our constant attention and fretting over it. So, this is where I can kind of do the flip on everything I've said earlier about resources and think, well, does it actually need all the resources that you think it does? Can you just let it be and let it do its thing? Because sometimes that works out fantastically.

I also have another idea for you when it comes to handling all of your ideas. And that's the art of sharing them, just like those seeds you've carefully stored in an envelope to plant in your garden. You just hand them over to someone else because sometimes those seeds, your ideas might just grow better in someone else's garden. Think about it.

You've got this brilliant idea. It's just not fitting into your life right now. Maybe it's not quite your area of expertise or you've got other projects on the go that are priority. Imagine giving that idea to someone whose skills or network or passion are a perfect match for it. It's like entrusting your seeds to a gardener with the greenest thumb for that particular plant. And by sharing or collaborating like that, you're not losing an idea, you're giving it a chance to bloom in a way that it couldn't have with you alone.

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And in that, we get to experience the joy of collective creativity. There's something thrilling about watching an idea take shape, even if you're not the one steering the ship, even if you've handed it over to someone else. It's like planting a tree in a community garden and watching it grow and watching everyone take part in that and enjoy it. But it requires commitment to your idea versus ownership of it. It's not about who thought of it first. It's about how well it's brought to life.

And the real value of an idea, I think, lies in its impact, how it comes to life and the difference that it makes. That's where the gold is. Not in holding onto it because it was yours, letting go of that sense of ownership can be just incredibly freeing and it opens doors to new collaborations, new opportunities and friendships.

Okay, I have one final point for you. And this is something that often lurks in the shadows unnoticed when we're talking about having lots of ideas and wanting to take action on all of them. And although it kind of lurks around unnoticed, it can be the biggest roadblock in our journey with our ideas. So, I want you to ask yourself, are all these ideas that you're juggling a sneaky way to avoid failure or perhaps to avoid success? These wonderful sparks of creativity can be a smokescreen, a way to keep busy, to feel productive without actually moving forward.

It's like having a map, loads of destinations, loads of options, but never actually going out on a journey. So, we do this because as long as we're planning, we're not failing, at least that's according to our brains. It's not actually the case because we're not succeeding either. And this avoidance can be subtle, it often dresses up as being responsible, exploring all the options or just, I've just got so many ideas, allowing yourself to be confused rather than actually do something.

But deep down, it's fear, fear of what happens if we truly commit to an idea and it doesn't work out or on the flipside, fear of what success might bring, the changes, the expectations, being noticed, being in the spotlight. So instead, we just kind of shuffle our ideas around, but never actually do anything with them. It's actually an uncomfortable place to be. But it's very

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familiar to be in the cycle of perpetual ideation and preparation. But it's in the doing, the experiencing, the risking, that life happens.

And that doesn't mean that every idea has to be a finished masterpiece. Nor does every venture have to redefine your life's trajectory. Sometimes an idea is just a step, a necessary and brave step towards figuring out what does work, along with what doesn't. And most importantly, it means that you truly engage with the process of creation and growth, which is really important to me, and I suspect it's really important to you as well.

So, as we wrap up today's conversation, I want you to look at your garden of ideas and how it's going. Are you tending to it? Are you hiding in it? Just some ideas. Do you need to get your gardening shears out and trim things back or maybe do some weeding? Are you nurturing your ideas? Are you using them as a shield? It's a question only you can answer. Alright folks, that is it for this week, I'll see you next time.

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