

Ep #200: Applying My Teachings to Real Life



Full Episode Transcript

With Your Host

Maisie Hill

The Maisie Hill Experience with Maisie Hill

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You're listening to episode 200 of *The Maisie Hill Experience*. And today's episode is going to be a bit different to usual. I'm going to be filling you in on some things from my personal life. So, let's do it.

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. Usually on the podcast I like to take a particular topic and explore it with you. But today I'm going to mention a whole bunch of concepts and approaches that I have spoken about on the podcast before that I teach my clients in *The Flow Collective*, just because I thought it would be good to do a great overview and look at how all of these things can be applied into individual situations. So, whether you're new to the podcast or you've been around since the beginning, I'm going to be talking about my personal life and how I've been using all the things that we cover here in my own life.

So, everything that I teach you comes through me using it and coming up with it in my own life. And then I teach it to you, but I keep using it. I keep applying these things to my life. And recently I've really been leaning into the exact things that I teach you. So, I thought it would be fun to share that with you as an example of how to actually apply it all. Now, as you're listening to this, please remember you don't have to do exactly as I do, you're welcome to but you don't have to.

Always be sure to integrate what I share in a way that works for you. So, I've been looking back on my personal and professional transformations that have taken place over the past year. And it really blows me away to do this. Once or twice a year I like to look through my notebooks that have all my self-coaching in them and just see what I coached myself on six months ago, a year ago, two years ago. Because most of the things aren't situations that I would need to coach myself on if they were to come up again now.

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In fact, those things do still happen but they're no big deal to me in the way that they used to because I was willing to look at them back then and coach myself on them. This is why I love self-coaching so much. I love to work with coaches, but for me, self-coaching has been so deeply transformative. And it's just really fun to look back at my self-coaching and really acknowledge the internal shifts that have taken place as a result of doing it.

And if you're a client of mine in *The Flow Collective*, I encourage you to look back at your self-coaching whether that was two months ago, a year ago, or three years ago, if you're one of the members who's been with us from the very beginning. So, my life has changed quite dramatically in the last two months. There are several things that have happened but today I'm going to focus on one of them and that's learning how to ride a horse. But this isn't an episode where I'm going to be teaching you how to ride.

It's just an example of how I have used everything that I teach to approach something. Just so that you can see how it all gets integrated and then you can use it in your own life, whatever your goals happen to be. Most of them I'm sure have nothing to do with horse riding. Okay, first off before I get into this I just want to give a huge shout out to everybody at Nelson Riding Centre. I love riding there. I really recommend them if you're ever in the area or you live here.

I have lessons with Casey, Julia and Ella and they're all just such fantastic instructors. And I am very particular about teaching. I have very high standards so that says a lot. And for context, I don't have a lot of experience with horses. I lived in the countryside when I was very young, we lived in the Cotswolds when I think it must have been two to six years old, something in that age range. So, we spent a lot of time playing in stacks of straw in the barns and I had some pony lessons.

It sounds really idyllic, and in many ways it was for us as kids. I've got lots of happy memories of being outdoors, being around animals whether it was feeding the lambs or capturing frogs and caterpillars, but it was so hard on my mum. It was during the 80s recession, so my dad stayed in London to work. We moved out, they eventually separated and there was a lot of

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stigma back then about effectively being a single parent. And we didn't have a lot of money and so we were able to have occasional lessons, but it wasn't something that we could do a lot of.

And then in my teenage years we would sometimes go back to that area and my mum was friends with someone who trained racehorses. So, I'd get to sit on them, but I don't think I did much else other than that. And I'm pretty sure that most of the time was just spent mucking out the stables, which I actually really enjoyed doing. And that was really it until September of 2019 which is when my mum died. And I wanted to do something that was for me. So, I started doing some riding lessons. I didn't do many, less than 10. And I stopped and then I didn't go again until two months ago.

So that's the background and you might be wondering well, what happened two months ago? And it's just that I was driving through Margate one day with son Nelson and we saw someone riding a horse and he just burst into tears, I mean properly burst into tears, big old tears and he said that he missed Buddy. Now, Buddy is a pony that he literally sat on twice I think when he was three or four years old. He's seven now but he's retained that memory. So, I thought, okay, I'm going to book him in for a lesson. Someone had recommended Nelson Riding Centre.

So he went, he loved it and he's been having weekly lessons since. And after two weeks of watching him do his lessons, I was like, "Why should he have all the fun? I'm going to do some." Now, everything that I've said so far sounds very simple but there's actually a bunch of things here that I want to slow down and talk you through. They were very simple for me to experience but some of you get tripped up in these beginning stages. So, the first is that I was envious of my son, and I let myself feel that envy.

Feeling envious could be viewed as a negative thing. I don't think it has to be. Experiencing envy is informative and it can be used as a way into motivation and taking action on things that are important to us for some reason. But this is one where context matters because in another situation envy, it could involve thinking of yourself in a negative way or using other people's success against yourself. But in this situation it just felt very clean.

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So, I wanted to do what he was doing, and I was able to be in the wanting. It sounds so simple, and it is but that doesn't mean it's easy.

And many of my clients struggle with this, which is why I talk about practising wanting. Wanting is a skill. I did a whole episode about this, episode 90. So, can you let yourself want something and be in the desire of it? I also took action, again, sounds obvious but how often do you prevent yourself from doing something that you want to do? It happens all the time. And I could have talked myself out of it. There are so many excuses I could have used.

I think the main one is I could have told myself that I don't have the time especially with what my workload has been like over this timeframe. I wouldn't say it's been full on, but I've been in a really committed stretch of work. So, I definitely could have told myself, I just don't have the time. That's not a priority right now, I'll get around to it later on when I do have the time, when this thing's done. But there's always something, so we've just got to stop lying to ourselves there.

So, I didn't do that, instead I told myself that this was essential especially because of my work. So, I made it non-negotiable in my mind and then that went through into actually looking at what my calendar looked like and making the time for it. But it started off with me deciding that it was non-negotiable.

So, I could have come up with excuses also about not having the right clothing but actually the thought that popped into my head at one point was well, I don't want to be the person with all the gear and no idea. Because to begin with you can borrow a riding hat for each lesson but then you have to get your own. And I read some articles about the ones that are the safest and then went with that. I was also getting blisters on my fingers from holding the reins, so I got some gloves. So, this is just it's basic stuff, safety. But this idea of having all the gear and no idea came up for me.

So of course, I just coached myself on it, it was pretty straightforward to get past and to do that very quickly. But I could have let thoughts about all sorts

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of things stand in my way of starting. Well, what if I only do it for a couple of months like I did a few years ago.

And lots of my clients worry about this too and about making the right decision because they worry about realising that they don't want to do that thing and that they will have therefore 'wasted resources' on taking action, whether that's time, money, energy or attention, but it's never wasted. I don't let myself think that way. And it's very natural to me to think this way now. And I think either that kind of way of thinking has been around for a while for me because I've switched and changed my educational pathway and career so many times.

And I definitely could think I wasted my time on that or I spent all that money on that and then I don't do that thing anymore, what a waste. Not a waste of doing those things and those resources but what a waste to think that way so I don't think that way. And actually because of that, all the previous knowledge and experiences that I've had, I still use them. So, the gardening course that I started but didn't finish, managing a rock bar. These are things that I use every day in my thinking and in my being. They were never wasted.

Another thought that could have blocked me is thinking that I wouldn't be good at it. Of course, I'm not going to be good at it. To begin with at least, why would I put that pressure on myself. And in actual fact my aim when I started wasn't to be good at riding. I mean, of course it is, of course I want to improve my riding, but I didn't start this to be an amazing rider. I started this to have some time to switch off. So last night I actually, I went out and I met someone, and I was talking to her about horse riding. And she said the idea of doing it terrifies her.

And within five minutes I had completely sold her on going horse riding. And I did that by telling her that when I go riding it's like a holiday for my brain. So, I have a very active brain. That's not a problem for me in the slightest. From the minute I wake up to falling asleep my brain's just popping off in all sorts of directions with ideas, problem solving things,

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thinking about my clients, how I can help them, what podcast I'm going to create, how I'm going to do this etc, etc.

Refining the things that I want to teach, and I love that. I'm very happy with my brain working that way, it's really enjoyable to me. And at the same time it's flipping amazing to be on a horse and not thinking about any of that at all. So, when you're on a horse or at least my experience of being on a horse is that you can't think about anything other than being on the horse. There's zero space for thinking about coaching or my clients or writing or creating. I'm just on the horse and I love that.

So, when I started I first did a few private lessons just to get my bearings. And then I joined the group lessons and there are so many parallels here to coaching as in getting one-on-one instruction is amazing because it's just you on the horse with the instructor, same as with private coaching. But you also get things from group lessons that you don't get from one-on-one work. So, both are fantastic, but you get different things from them.

So, I have a fair amount of questions about riding because I really love to understand and I really want to learn. And I do ask some questions in the group lessons, but the private ones are more suited to that level of tuition. But a half hour private lesson costs about the same as a one-hour group so there's less time in the saddle. So, it's more dedicated time working with you but there's less time overall. And being in a group is amazing because you learn through seeing what everyone else is doing and then you can relate that to your experience.

So, it meant that I got to see people who were more experienced riders. I got to see them doing things that I wasn't ready to do at that stage like cantering. And they would receive feedback and instruction that I could then use in my riding, the same as coaching. So, we get feedback every single week about our group coaching calls from our clients just saying how amazing it is to watch other people get coached. And often the coaching isn't something that they would ever have thought about getting coached on.

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Or they just didn't realise it was showing up in their own life either in that exact way or in another context. But they're like, "Oh my gosh, that is the thing for me too, I totally do that." And then they get to use that coaching in their life. The other thing that happens in a group setting is that you get pulled a long into the momentum of the group. So, in one of my first group lessons everyone else was taking turns to go out and do a series of transitions between walking, trotting, cantering, trotting, walking and then halting, stopping.

And then going straight from being still into canter, no walking, no trotting, just halt into canter except me because I wasn't doing any cantering at that point. So, I was just working on my transitions in and out of trotting. So, we all take turns going out around the track inside the arena. When it's not your turn to go out, you stand in the middle, you sit on your horse, you watch everyone else. So, we all get individual feedback and everyone else benefits from watching. Now, I'm a strong visual learner and I don't switch off when other people are riding.

I want to soak up as much as I can and learn from others. And I've actually had this experience personally in group coaching experiences where you can see the people who are attending the call. They just switch off unless they're the one getting coached directly on the call. And I just think that's such a missed opportunity because there's so much coaching that is there for you to use. But if you're thinking well, it doesn't apply to me, I have to get coached on my thing then you're going to miss so much.

Anyway, there I am in the lesson just trotting, watching everyone else trot and canter when it's their turn. And the first time goes great then we switch reins, which means we just do the same circuit but going in the other direction. And when it's my turn to go, I do the walk, I trot, I walk, I halt. So next up I'm meant to go straight into trot from being stationary. That's not what happened. I went straight into canter. I've never cantered before, no one's ever told me how to do it but that's what I'm doing. And my instructor is telling me to halt, and I do.

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But even though I wasn't meant to do it at all, I'm just internally elated about doing it because although it gave me a bit of a fright, I wasn't expecting it to happen, it was also exhilarating, it felt amazing. I haven't lived it down since. I'm now known as the troublemaker of the group, or one of the troublemakers. But this is the benefit of being in a group with other people. So, I learnt from observing others and without planning to I was doing what they were doing.

And this is what my clients tell me too, because when you're in *The Flow Collective* you get to see how other people are working through things, whether that's on our calls or in the posts and celebrations in the community. So, although you do have to do some work yourself, but there's also the benefit, a momentum that comes from doing it in a group and learning by osmosis which is how one of my clients recently described it. And when it comes to the lessons, I show up very intentionally. I like to get there a bit early and without rushing so that my energy is collected.

There were a couple of times early on when I did end up rushing to get there and that 100% impacted my ride. What was going on with my nervous system as I got there, impacted my rides and it impacted my horse partly because, just how I was feeling and thinking, where my stress response was at. But also, because horses are very sensitive, they can hear your heartbeat. So, if I show up stressed and in a rush they're going to feel that. So, I give myself time, I take care of my nervous system during, before and after the ride.

And this is actually a standard that I've brought in for myself over the spring. I did an episode not so long ago. I can't remember which one it was about standards. And one that I've brought in for myself in the last few months is that I don't rush. I have a lifelong habit of rushing especially for trains and I decided that I will no longer rush for trains. And I'm not going to rush to a horse-riding lesson even if I'm sat in traffic and late like I was this week. I was half hour late for a lesson because there was just this traffic that isn't usually around and it was just horrendous.

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But I thought, even though I'm late, I'm going to take control of my experience in the car and within myself in my body so that I'm not rushing even when the car is stationary in traffic. I'm going to be responsible for myself and how I arrive at the lesson. If you're new to the podcast, I definitely recommend that you check out the three-part series I did on responsibility. It's a personal favourite of mine, I know it is for many of you too. Self-responsibility is something I talk about a lot. And I bring that into my lessons in a whole bunch of ways.

One, I always show up to my lessons with a plan, always and regardless of what my instructor has in mind, I always go in with something that I want to focus and improve on, whether that's keeping my hands low when I'm holding the reins. That's what I'm working on at the moment or applying pressure at my knees and through the legs so that there's that contact with the horse or improving my seat or looking forwards instead of looking down. There's just so many things to work on and improve.

And I can have that focus before my instructor says anything. So that's something that I do. Another way I take responsibility is I don't blame the horse. Don't get me wrong, they are all different sizes and shapes, and they all have different temperaments and needs. So, there's a lot that I could blame but whenever something happens that I didn't want to happen I try and figure out how I made it happen, what did I do or not do that resulted in the horse taking a shortcut on a corner, which I cannot stand. It's a real pet peeve of mine.

Or if it's just ambling along, how am I making that happen? What do I need to change? So, this is really key. It's rather than blaming the horse or actually blaming myself, I just bring in, how can I be self-responsible? How can I be 100% responsible for this? And then take action from there. And I have really embraced taking massive action with horse riding. We just did a massive action coaching call. It was such a great call. If you remember then go watch the replay or listen to it on the private podcast.

I mean here's the deal, I could say, I can't take massive action because there's only this amount of time or this amount of money that I can dedicate

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to riding. And you probably have some parameters along those lines too in your life and they do matter, they are there. But in my experience they don't matter as much as you think they do. One of my favourite things to do is problem solve for this with clients because it comes up a lot.

So, the first part of this is having a very black and white idea of what doing something involves, like with horse riding I could think that the only way to learn how to ride is to be on the horse. And so, to take massive action I need to ride x number of times a week. And getting that repetition in, it's going to be helpful no doubt, but there are so many other things that I can do. So, I'm going to tell you about how I've taken massive action. I spend hours riding every week, but I don't mean in lessons and on the horse.

I ride a lot in my head. I picture myself doing it. I visualise it but it's not really visualising, it's feeling it and being it. I spend so much time doing this. So, I'm spending time out of the saddle preparing to be in the saddle. Literally the first thing I do when I wake up in the mornings is pull my toes back to my shins because there's a big emphasis on keeping your heels down when you ride.

So, I do that first thing in the morning before I'm fully awake just so I can help build that muscle memory and support the position that I need to be in when I'm on the horse. My ankles also are quite weak, so I've been doing lots of balancing exercises to strengthen them. I'm brushing my teeth and washing the dishes balancing on one foot. These are all things that I can do to support riding, that don't require me to take up a vast amount of time or spend money in order to take that massive action.

I even practise moves at home. So, one day Paul was just like, "What on earth are you doing?" Because he walked out on to our upstairs landing as I was practising going around a corner. So, I was walking around the corner and using my leg to guide the horse deeper into the corner. And of course, I'm not on a horse, I'm just on our landing walking but I find all these ways that I can build that muscle memory as I'm learning how to horse ride. And it looks absolutely hilarious, but I find it incredibly helpful.

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I also watch videos. I'm reading really geeky equestrian books too. So, notice how most of these things either don't cost anything, all the videos are free, the books, I've got some second-hand ones. So, it's low cost. They don't take up a lot of time. I just build them into my day which is what my clients usually realise they can do once they get out of that all or nothing thinking, and I've got previous episodes about massive action and black and white thinking. I think that one was actually called all or nothing thinking.

So, you can be committed to your goals without needing to clear your whole diary to do them and do these grand gestures. That's not what massive action is. It doesn't have to mean doing the biggest thing or taking up a massive amount of time. It's about doing what needs to be done and keeping going. I also replay the lessons in my head so that I can marry up the feedback or instruction that I got with my physical experience of the lesson. So, my instructor will say one thing. And I want to really get it as in take it onboard in my body.

So, I return to that feedback again and again and I really apply it, which is what I do with my coaching too. So rather than getting coached on something and either not applying that coaching at all or only using it once. I often keep using the same bit of coaching over and over. I got coaching on something three years ago that I still use. And I see my most successful clients doing this as well. I also fail forward. Well, it might be more apt to say fall forwards because that literally did happen.

I fell off trying to canter and I was a bit sore afterwards, no serious injuries though. But I took some time to process that and recover. I gave myself the rest of the day off. I was like, I'm just going to have some gentle time with myself. And I also took control over how I thought about that accident. I mean I don't even want to call it an accident, because it wasn't an accident, but falling off. Because I didn't want to build a negative association with riding or with that horse.

So, I was really watching my mind and any time I thought about the horse and felt some fear coming in, I just paid attention to my body, watched my

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thoughts. I just wanted to prevent an unhelpful neural pathway from developing. Instead, I focused on understanding what I did and why I did it. I actually found so many things that contributed to me falling, but I did that without blaming and shaming myself or anyone else, the instructor, the horse or me. Because remember, that's optional, you don't have to blame and shame. And half of those things actually happened before I got anywhere near to asking the horse to canter.

Just remember that failing successfully means loving yourself through it and then using the data that you've acquired through failing to keep going until you get that desired result. So that lesson was a sore one but there have been other lessons that were also a struggle. It feels fantastic to have a lesson where you have that contact and connection with yourself and with the horse and it's all going great. And you just feel like you've really nailed it. Those ones are so cool.

But you know what, most learning doesn't come from feeling great. It's helpful to have that experience for sure. And we want to have those celebrations, but I've learnt so much in the lessons that didn't feel amazing. So, it can feel like crap and be the best lesson. We place great emphasis on feeling great and I'm all for feeling good and experiencing joy and celebrating, all of those things. But our desire for that can mean that we miss out on the most learning.

And I learn a lot from being put on different horses. I go to a group lesson on Friday mornings that I love, and Maddie and Alison are the other ladies that always are in that group. And it's a bit of a running joke for them to say, "Who are you on today, Maisie? Because I get put on all sorts of horses. It's rare for me to be on the same horse twice in a row. I think there's probably a core group of five horses that I usually end up on. And then there's another couple that I sometimes go on.

So that's seven horses to get to know and become accustomed to, the ones that tend to rush versus the ones that need a lot of encouragement, how they all feel, how to work with the horses. And there's huge value in this, in switching things up because it means that I'm building resilience

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and confidence in a variety of situations. And in every lesson I'm adjusting to that horse whilst also bringing in everything I learnt from the last horse. And then that is all contributing to building my self-concept as a rider, knowing that I can rock up and ride whoever they put me on.

Speaking of Maddie and Alison, they are the loveliest. And having a supportive community makes a difference. I only ride with them on Fridays but the chats I have with them are so helpful. There was one lesson I had recently with them a couple of weeks back and they told me my riding was really great. And it kind of took me by surprise because again it didn't feel great to me because I was learning so much, but they helped me to learn by sharing what they were seeing with me.

And when I told them that I'd been cantering, they both gave me just the biggest hug. So, getting to celebrate and particularly celebrating in community is essential. This is why I bang on about celebrating all the time, why we have such a huge culture of celebration within the community in *The Flow Collective*. And I trust my instructors with what they're seeing and what they're saying. They have a perspective that I don't have, and I love just taking their feedback and bringing that in with what I'm feeling and experiencing.

So, there's that trust in myself and what I'm feeling and the trust in what they're telling me. And that means that I can have all of these light bulb moments and it's the same with coaching. There are things that I see in my clients that I share with them. Sometimes I have a hunch about something or a perspective that I want to offer, not 100% right but I've got a pretty good strike rate. And that is really beneficial to have that outside perspective when it's from someone who, they have your back too and they're there to support and interested in your success.

I've also been very clear about my needs in lessons too. I have a hard time with verbal instructions, period, in any situation. Give me written instructions or visual ones and I can put together some flatpack furniture or do whatever is in front of me, but verbal instructions are like another language that I just do not speak. And so, it takes me a while to process

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them. But obviously in a horse-riding lesson they can't give me written instructions, it has to be verbal.

But I've been explicit with them about what works for me and what doesn't work. And my instructors have been amazingly helpful. I actually had this one lesson where I'm probably going to cry here but I had this lesson where I'd felt elated afterward. I was driving home just feeling so happy, really emotional that I was just on the verge of tears of happiness. And in my lesson my riding was good, so I was happy about that. But I was like, there's something else going on here, what is going on?

Where is this happiness coming from? And I realised what it was. It was the first time where a teacher has known that I'm autistic and has asked me if they can do anything differently to help me, if they need to modify what they're teaching in order to assist me. I have never had this ever, it's the first because all my life until very recently, nobody including me, knew that I was autistic. So, to have someone do that, for me to be explicit about being autistic and how that impacts my lessons.

And then in this lesson, Casey just said, "Is there anything I can do differently to help you?" I'd never had that. It's always been me figuring things out, using my brain to build in my own accommodation so that I can learn and take part in a lot of these things. So, it was a really big deal to have that. Now, I don't know if you've ever done horse riding, but in the arena that we ride in, there are these letters around the riding arena. And so, instructors will call out F to H and that tells you where you need to go.

Now, if I'm on the horse, we're walking, I've got enough time to process that. And I like to say it out loud, so I'll be like F to H, F to H as I'm looking and seeing where I need to go and making that turn. But if I'm trotting and therefore moving faster, I've got less time to do that. And so Casey's really great at this, she'll just point and direct with her arms. And it just makes such a difference to have that. And it all gets much more challenging when my period is due because that's where my audio processing really goes out of the window.

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So if my period is due I tell them and that's something that gets considered in the lesson. So all of this comes from knowing myself and being clear first with myself and then with the others about what I need. And it's so cool to do this in a very matter of fact way. It doesn't feel like a big deal to say it to them or to make these requests. There's time when it would have and it would have felt like a big deal to ask or that I'm making a fuss, making their job harder or they're not going to want to do it, all sorts of stuff, all that nonsense.

But it feels so clean and clear to me and I know, I mean I really know that it's better for everyone if I'm upfront about it because when I get confused by multiple verbal instructions it's like my wiring just short circuits and I stop being able to hear. It also brings me into my head, I lose connection with my body and with the horse and that's when accidents happen as in unintended things and also things like falling off the horse.

Learning to canter has involved a fair bit of instruction and one day I just couldn't process what I was being told. So Julia just boiled it down into three steps for me: sit, kick, canter. So now I can use that process every time I need to do it. And she also said, I can just say that to myself, I can do it and then she can give me all the feedback later on. So although I have been explicit and taken responsibility for my experience by sharing it with people, I've also got instructors who are open to making these adjustments.

I've coached a lot of my clients on this, particularly in relation to work. It does come up in personal relationships too but I'm thinking more about examples of coaching clients where it's come up in their professional lives, where there's something that they need, a request that they want to make of some kind. And often we just fear the worst in all sorts of ways. Our imagination can really let loose. Or we can think, well, it's not going to make a difference. They're not going to listen. They're going to see me as the problem.

And we just make decisions for other people rather than giving them a chance. And so I think there's that willingness to be vulnerable in situations where it makes sense to and just get past the stuff that comes up in your

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mind that prevents you from just being like, “Hey, this is something that would help me. How do we make that happen?” And it being no big deal.

So obviously I am completely hooked on horse riding. It's been really fun for me to hyperfocus on something that isn't related to my work. I actually have a hobby now. For years I said my work is my hobby and it really is because it's a personal interest of mine in many ways. And I love having people that I can share this experience with. But now it's great that I have horse riding as well and I'm doing something that just brings me so much joy.

So there we go, that's me and my personal life and how I've been using everything that I teach in my approach to learning how to horse ride. I hope you found this episode helpful, and I will catch you next week.

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