Ep #213: Stop Lying to Yourself

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With Your Host

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This is episode 213, Stop Lying to Yourself.

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*.

Alright folks, today we are getting into a juicy topic, the lies that we tell ourselves. And these lies are so sneaky because they feel so true, but they keep us stuck, they create a lot of stress and overwhelm. And I'm going to share how I recently caught myself in a web of lies and the difference it made when I addressed them one by one.

Before I get into this though, I have to tell you about this podcast that I was a guest on because I had the most amazing conversation with Lucy from the Pet Guardians Podcast. So if you want to hear more about my life with Buttons, I really recommend checking out the episode I did with her. I had a really amazing conversation and I just wanted to send you all to her podcast because she's doing great things over there.

Okay. Now for this podcast. So a week or so ago, I was on a coaching call where I was the one getting coached. I was the client and I'd had a stressful day, a really stressful day, and I was still processing the events of that day and I almost didn't go to the call because I was kind of thinking maybe it's better for me just have some time to myself, to just kind of ground myself after the day's events and take care of myself. But I was like, well, it's not like I'm the one who's doing the coaching. And I also know how supportive it can be to just be amongst other people in a space where I get to be me without any judgment or expectation. And that's what a lot of my clients say. They just love coming to the calls and being in the company of others and being in that environment.

So although this was a business mastermind call that I'm a part of, I knew I could experience that all-important co-regulation with my peers and with my coach, who's also my friend. I ended up being the first one to get coached and I was sharing about how I'd accomplished a lot of deep focused work

over the previous couple of weeks and I was really proud of myself, but that day I was feeling stressed because of non-work related stuff, and that was starting to tip over into overwhelm, which was for sure all about the stress of that day and the stuff going on around me.

So I was sharing this and talking about how I hadn't done this and that in an aspect of my business, but I'd been focusing on this project that I've been working on behind the scenes. It's a really big project. My thoughts about doing more than that, and these things that I was saying that I hadn't done, that was threatening my ability to stay focused and finish off the project that I've been working on. Just that overwhelmed feeling of like, oh, I don't know how much more I can handle here. That's what I was telling myself in that moment. This was all like on a foundation of telling myself that I hadn't been doing these things, right? And I was saying that as if it was the absolute truth.

And you know, if I just shared this with a non-coach friend, they would have probably just agreed with me and sympathized, and it would have been nice, you know, but that would be that. But this was a coaching call, so it's a different energy. As soon as I said it out loud and as soon as I heard myself saying it, that I hadn't been doing these things, I could immediately see that it wasn't true. I immediately found three examples from that week of me doing the exact thing I'd been telling myself I hadn't done. How wild is that? But this happens all the time.

Then through the process of me getting coached, I found like two or three other statements, other thoughts that I had, where again, I realised that I was talking absolute nonsense. They were just stories that my brain was offering up and as soon as I started knocking these lies on the heads, the stress reduced immediately. I am not exaggerating when I say it went down by, I'm going to say like 70-80%, maybe even more, but I feel like that's an accurate estimation. It just felt like clearing out clutter, creating space, which not only meant I had more capacity to process the other sources of stress that had been going on, because remember, I had all these other stuff that I was still processing, big things.

Ep #213: Stop Lying to Yourself

So reducing the sources of stress, like perceived sources of stress, meant that like perceived sources of stress, meant that a more legitimate source of stress. It was based on actual things, not just my brain coming up with narratives. That also meant that then I could focus on the work that I had been so committed to doing and wanting to finish off. So with each thought gone, I had more space to think clearly and creatively and take action and in catching those lies I was telling myself, I reckon I saved myself at least a couple of days of overwhelm and autistic burnout just by catching my thoughts and seeing them for the lies that they were. And I'm able to spot these lies and like laugh about them and notice them really quickly because I've developed a skill and a habit of questioning my thoughts. And it's a skill that you can build too. And it rests upon willing to be wrong.

I'm willing to be wrong. Now Paul might disagree with this one and say that I'm not, but I'm actually very open to being wrong. I love it when someone gives me information or a perspective that I haven't considered before that means that I kind of need to update my ideas. I love that. But most of the time, I've already done quite a thorough analysis of things and feel very confident in my conclusions. Paul's always saying to me that talking to me is like talking to Yoda. But I'm still open to being wrong. If you can top on my viewpoint with better information then I will love you for it. It is delightful to my brain.

And it's important in this that you are willing to be wrong too. I want to offer that it is so much fun to realise that you are incorrect, okay? If you can do so without blaming and shaming yourself and making yourself feel like crap. But you won't be able to do that if you're more invested in believing you're limiting thoughts than in proving them wrong. I'm going to say that again. You won't be able to do that if you are more invested in believing you're limiting thoughts than improving those thoughts wrong. That is a surefire way to stay stuck. And that's when it's important to ask yourself, why are you so attached to your limiting thoughts? Why are you more willing to believe that your plan isn't possible than to explore the idea that it might be, that it could be? Being wrong is actually in your best interest. Every time you prove yourself wrong about a limiting belief, you create

Ep #213: Stop Lying to Yourself

more options for yourself, more opportunities, and you train your brain to see those possibilities and save yourself all that unnecessary stress.

Another aspect of this is that our brains have a built-in negativity bias, which means we're just naturally inclined to see things more negatively and to focus on what we haven't done, or what's not working. This increases when we are already feeling stressed and overwhelmed. Then that just creates more stress and overwhelm. It's really important to develop the skills to interrupt this cycle. This negativity bias can be so strong that you bypass the truth entirely, just like I did on that call. I mean, I caught myself, but I was just in such a place that I was just coming up with all this nonsense.

Another example of that is you might tell yourself, well, I've done nothing productive all week, right? I hear that all the time from people. Even though you've actually done plenty, if you were to get a pen and paper and write down all the things that you have done, you would see that you've done a lot more than you're giving yourself credit for and probably doing a lot of really important things. This isn't just something that I've experienced personally. I do see it all the time in my clients.

I was recently coaching someone on their business and they were feeling stuck and frustrated with some aspects of it. They love what they do, but there were just a few elements that they were a bit fed up with. I started asking the questions about what they really wanted, and they began giving me reasons why they couldn't do what they wanted. Does this sound familiar to you, by any chance? This happens a lot. We start out with a desire, something we want to create or change or do, and instead of exploring the possibilities, we go straight into shutting it down with thoughts that we think are factual, but they are just thoughts and a lot of the time they are incorrect, they are lies.

This is what we refer to as thought errors inside the membership. This client told me what they wanted immediately followed by, but I can't afford to do that. I was like, okay, have you looked at the numbers? Which is kind of a standard question for me to ask a client anytime we're talking about

something financial. Have you looked at your numbers? The answer is almost always no. I'm struggling to think of an example in the last few years where someone has said yes.

Now, I am not saying that once they look, they will magically find a pot of gold, all right? I love that for them if they do, okay? But this is just about knowing the facts, the actual numbers because that opens up possibilities no matter what the number is. Maybe you realize that you need to reallocate funds or deprioritize an expense to save up or figure out a way to create money. I've helped clients come up with all sorts of creative solutions to make things happen and to increase the money that they make. Every time they do, they're building the skill of figuring out how to make things possible.

When you challenge thoughts like, I can't afford it, you move yourself from this space of a hard no to a maybe. And in that space, you are much more likely to create opportunities for yourself. Even if you ultimately decide not to move forward with something, you're still flexing that muscle. You are, rather than defaulting to a limiting belief that makes you feel powerless, you're making a choice from a place of clarity and power.

So I'm going to give you a couple of examples of other lies that I hear a lot. One is, I can't do X without Y. Okay, so X is whatever the thing that they're dreaming up and wanting to do. Y could be a person helping them, thinking they need a particular setup or a situation. It's just basically a thought that assumes that your success is dependent on external factors that are outside of your control. And I love coaching on this. really fun for people to realize that actually they don't and that you could just go ahead. Okay, so is I can't do this without that, whatever that is for you, is that actually true? Could you find another way? What might happen if you took action in some form without waiting for the perfect conditions or making your success contingent upon other people and other things?

Another one, kind of similar, is I can't do X until I do Y, because with how we plan things and come up with them in our heads, sometimes we can get very attached to a certain plan and we're more attached to the plan and the

process that we've come up with because we've decided that's what's important and that's what's going to lead to success and probably more likely we think that's what's going to keep us safe from failure. So we get more attached to the process than we are attached to the results. And when you're thinking, well, I can't do X until I do Y, this is just classic procrastination disguised as logic, because it will seem very logical to you. And probably most people who aren't coaches, if you said that to them, they would just nod their heads and agree.

Of course, there are some situations where one thing genuinely needs to happen before another. But, in most cases, this is just a way of putting off what you really want to do. So, we want to question that. Is it truly necessary that you do things in this sequential order, or is it just a convenient excuse? When you start questioning these kinds of thoughts, you'll begin to see how often they're just stories that you're telling yourself. That's all they are. They're just stories. But when you believe them, you don't even give yourself a chance to figure out how it could be possible. Instead, you just trample over all your seedlings of possibility. In doing so, you're telling them that they're not good enough, and you never let them actually grow into anything. We've all been treated that way. It's not a nice way to be treated. No, we don't want that for our ideas either, or our dreams.

Within this, we're not lying to ourselves by saying things that genuinely matter don't matter. We're also not being delusional. This isn't about ignoring reality. It's about being honest with yourself and not letting limiting beliefs masquerade as facts. A lot of what this comes down to is fear. We think it's safer to stay in our comfort zone with what's most familiar to us, even if that zone is actually really uncomfortable and not actually that safe for us. When we tell ourselves that we can't do something, then we don't have to risk failure. We don't have to risk rejection or disappointment of some kind. It's just a defence mechanism.

Please don't be listening to this thinking, making the fact that you do this mean all sorts of things about you. Every single person I know does this in some form, including all the coaches that I know. We just have the skills to

Ep #213: Stop Lying to Yourself

work our way through it, which is why I love teaching you these skills. It's just a defence mechanism. You don't have to make it mean anything beyond that, but it's one that keeps you stuck and that is costly.

Another reason is that our brains are wired for efficiency. It's easier for us to default to well-worn patterns of thinking and behaving, even if those patterns aren't serving us. Changing how we think, doing things differently does take some effort compared to things that we've done over and over and over again, but the gains are huge. It's really worth it. This is why I talk so much about practicing wanting. Wanting something is a skill, right? And if you're listening to this thinking no, no, it's not amazing. It's very easy to want things. I'm like, really? Is it? When was the last time you really let yourself want something? Okay. It's a skill that time and time and time again, I see people needing to develop because when you allow yourself to want something without immediately shutting it down, that's how you create space for possibility. That's how you figure out the how.

So going back to my client with the business coaching, when they started focusing on what they truly wanted, rather than all the reasons their brain was offering them that they couldn't do that plan, it immediately shifted something in them. They began to see opportunities that they hadn't considered before. And I could just see themselves giving themselves permission to imagine what could be. And from there, they were able to work on how they could make it a reality, which included actually looking at the numbers of things and realizing, oh, it's not what I thought it was going to be. This is actually a lot better. This is a lot more doable. But if they hadn't done this, if we hadn't coached on it, if they hadn't figured these things out, they would have just been thinking, oh no, I can't do that thing. It'll never work out.

So practicing wanting means hanging out in that space of possibility and it can be uncomfortable at first, especially if you're used to shutting yourself down, but it is a skill that can change everything. So to sum up, here are your steps to stop lying to yourself.

Ep #213: Stop Lying to Yourself

Just notice your thoughts. Always a great starting point. Pay attention to the things that you're telling yourself. Write this stuff down. It's really useful for you to have it on paper because this is going to help you separate the facts of the situation out from the stories that you are spinning, from those lies that you're telling yourself.

Step two is just question your beliefs, like spot the lies. Ask yourself, is this really true? Hey, what evidence do I have for and against this thought? Often you'll find that the thought doesn't hold up when it's put under scrutiny.

Step three, practice new thoughts. Replace the lie with a thought that is more true and supportive. Maybe instead of I can't handle this, you could try I'm figuring this out one step at a time. It doesn't have to be wildly positive. Don't be thinking that. It just needs to feel true and helpful. It's going to help you get unstuck.

Step four is allow yourself to want. When you notice yourself shutting down a desire, just hit pause. Catch yourself in it and give yourself permission to just explore the possibility. Were it possible? What if this thing happened? How cool would that be? What would it feel like? What would that situation look like if that happened?

So your task this week, if you choose to accept it, I want you to notice the lies you're telling yourself. Notice when you're shutting down a possibility or you're adding unnecessary stress with your thoughts. Pay particular attention to the thoughts that feel really true. But when you put them under the microscope, they just don't hold up. So write them down, question them and see what shifts. And if you want to share what comes up for you, I'd love to hear what you discover. So comment on this episode's post over on Instagram, tag me, send me a DM on Instagram, let me know how it goes. And I will catch you next week. Bye folks.

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Ep #213: Stop Lying to Yourself

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