

## Ep #217: Why Goal Timelines Don't Define You



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With Your Host

**Maisie Hill**

**The Maisie Hill Experience** with Maisie Hill

## Ep #217: Why Goal Timelines Don't Define You

This is episode 217 and today we're talking about something that messes with almost everyone when it comes to personal growth, professional achievement, and that is how long it takes to reach a goal and your thoughts about that timeline.

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*.

All right, folks, let's dig into this. Goals come quickly and goals take time. Both are true and both are great. And your brain might really resist that idea that both are great. I want you to just hold the possibility that a goal taking a long time is just as valuable as one happening quickly.

So in this, I am going to challenge you to consider that your goals could happen a lot quicker than you think, but also they might take a while. And in that, consider that neither scenario is a problem unless you make it one.

Okay. So let's start with goals that happen quickly. If you think it's going to take ages to achieve something, it will. So I want you to consider that your goals can happen faster than you think. What if that goal that you are convinced will take ages could happen in the space of a few days?

I've shared before my experience during mastercoach training thinking I had three months to do my project and they gave me three days. If you believed that it was 100% true that it could happen in the space of a few days, what would you do differently?

Your brain might immediately slam on the brakes and be like, no, Maisie, you are wrong. That does not apply to my situation because insert very convincing arguments. Right. Or at least it's convincing to most people, but it's not convincing to me. I love poking holes in these kinds of arguments and I hear them all the time.

The thing is, because you know your situation and your profession, etc, you are more likely to be fixed in your thinking about these kinds of things. The

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more convinced you are about how long something has to take, the more likely it is that you will overlook the faster paths that are going to get you there quicker.

The great thing about me not knowing much about a lot of professions is that it's easy for me to offer other options. Options that you might initially dismiss because nobody has modelled this being possible to you, either in your profession or just life generally. You don't have any evidence yet that these things can happen quickly. Or you might have a limited perspective because what you know is just so familiar to you, so you just need a shift in perspective in order to see things for what they actually are.

Also, great thing about being autistic, it means I really need to understand why. When someone tells me something, I need to understand why they're saying what they're saying. If you can't demonstrate sufficient factual evidence to me, I won't believe you. That's something that you want in a coach. But I always believe in you.

Okay, the different things. As I was preparing for this episode, I was thinking about a particular client of mine who, a few years back, was very keen to insist on how a particular career path was not an option to them. I think the main thing that they were saying was because of her age. She thought she was too young, just because there weren't many or any examples of a woman at her age doing this particular thing.

She just slipped this into a conversation that we were having about something completely different. My brain just lit up and I pounced on it. Fair play to her. She entertained the idea, even though she was convinced that it wasn't an option and that it wouldn't happen. She just basically was like, yeah, okay, Maisie. She just went along with me and I knew she didn't believe what I was saying, but she went through the process and it all worked out and she got to prove herself wrong. How fun is that?

So, just for fun, put aside the things that feel factual to you right now and just play with the possibility that your goal could happen quickly. And think of times when things have happened quickly for you. If you can think of

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examples of that, and it can be about anything, it doesn't have to be related to the big thing you want to work on right now.

I just want you to really tap into examples from your past of things happening quickly and to access your memory of what you were doing, who you were as you were doing it. What was the mindset you had? How did you approach it? If you faced any challenges, how did you respond to those challenges? That's all good information for you to have and to use again for it to be at your disposal.

I have some recent examples from my personal life to share with you. I've been saving up for this episode.

So at the end of last year, 2024, I was thinking about my goals for this year, 25, because I always like reflect on things as the year's coming to an end and then I very intentionally take a couple of days, usually like over the Christmas break, to decide what the coming year is going to be like for me. So it's always a mix of professional and personal ones. One of my personal ones was to enjoy achieving a score of 60% or more in a dressage test with my horse. Note my choice of language, right? It wasn't just scoring 60% or more, it was enjoying it. I didn't just want that result, I wanted it to be an enjoyable journey.

And as soon as I landed on that goal, immediately I thought, well, why wait till January? I could just start this now. This is why I love declaring goals. It shifts something in you and that intentionality is important because it's like things just click into place inside of you and you start making decisions and the goal becomes a filter for how you decide things and how you go about doing stuff.

So my plan was to go to an in-person competition, but because we don't think my horse has ever been ridden in an indoor arena and the competition that I had found was at an indoor venue, we wanted to set ourselves up for success and go there first and just have a regular lesson in an indoor space. I'm sure he'd be fine, but that was what setting ourselves up for success looked like. So we booked the venue out, but we

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ended up not being able to go because the wind that day was really strong, and there's no way we're going to take the horses out in a trailer when there's gusts of 45 miles per hour. So we cancelled it, but that meant also not going to that competition.

Now, this is important. Had I been attached to the idea of achieving this goal, I would have forced things a bit. And like I said, in all likelihood, he's probably going to be fine when I ride him indoors. But am I setting him up for success by expecting that or winging it? No. But had I made that goal mean things about me and like being desperate to achieve it in order to feel good about myself and think nice things about myself, then maybe I would have pushed for that and just gone anyway.

But I do not need those things. I love myself as I am, regardless of what I do or don't achieve. So there is a difference between being committed to a goal and being attached to it. When you're attached to something, you get very graspy, it has a very different feel to it. And you want to rush things, and like you need it to happen quickly in order to feel okay about yourself. And because of that, it's likely to actually take longer. Or even if it doesn't take longer, the way you get to the result isn't great and has negative consequences, especially with just perpetuating the idea that you need to achieve these things in order to like yourself.

I didn't feel attached, I was just committed. Instead of doing the in-person competition, I entered an online one where you have someone record you riding the predetermined test, and you're allowed to have someone there calling out what you're meant to be doing, just as you would at an in-person competition. They have a different one each month. I entered December's one and I got my results through on Christmas Eve.

We had a load of people over for our big, kind of traditional Christmas Eve meal and I found out that I got 66.36%. I was so chuffed and I just started crying. I'm so happy. Not only that, but the judges' comments were really positive and also really helpful. So I was just over the moon. And it was really fun to remind myself that goals happen quickly.

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So remember, this was December, but I had set this as a goal for 2025, kind of thinking it would take at least several months, several competitions to get to this point. Okay, but I'd been challenging myself on that and I ended up achieving it before the end of 2024, in the space of a couple of weeks of coming up with that goal.

I'd ordered the tests online, so I'd have a visual of what I was meant to do because I really need that. Found a competition to enter, filmed it, ridden the test and got it judged officially. So that was Christmas Eve. So I was already like, oh yeah, goals can happen quickly. And just like reminding myself of that.

And then a few days later, I saw my friend's Instagram post about this 6K run on New Year's Eve that was organised by that run club here in Margate. I started thinking, what if that's another goal that could come quickly? I was just playing with this idea. Listen, I don't run. I've never been a runner, despite many attempts over several decades. It's just not been my thing. The idea of doing a couch to 6K in one go felt ludicrous, and also the best idea ever. So I just thought, well, what's the worst that can happen? Okay. I started and I ended up walking back, but I can still give myself props for giving it a go. So that's not awful. That's really cool.

And if you'd asked me a couple of months ago if I could just lace up my shoes and bust out a 6K without any training, I would have laughed. Of course I knew I already had some level of baseline fitness from riding, but I've never run more than a K, or maybe two, like as a mixture of jogging and walking, but that's it. But I did it, 6K in one go. Then I kept going to run club and I did another 6K. Since then, I've been mainly doing 3K runs, but I've kept going.

So what made these quick wins possible? It was deciding I could do it, being willing to give it a go and just feeling certain in myself. When I decided, I committed to that decision. I decided to go for the dressage test and the 6K without any waffling. Just like, I'm in. There was no, should I? Well, actually there was for a moment, but I swiftly moved on to, I'm just going to do this. I'm counting myself in. And I was willing to try, even if I

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didn't succeed. Willing to look silly, to fail, to be uncomfortable. You know, not that I could ever actually look silly, but you know what I mean.

But of course there was practicing, right? There was preparation involved, either the kind of formal practice that I do, like riding buttons, regardless of a dressage test or not, but there's also the kind of latent practice.

Although I didn't train to do a 6K, I did have some inbuilt fitness there, and I didn't start the dressage from scratch, I'd been building the skill for months or years. I didn't know I'd succeed, but the certainty in me was just about being committed to giving it a proper go. That certainty that I would just give it a go and I'll figure it out either way is what creates quick wins.

But it all stems from playing with the idea that it is possible in the first place. And do you remember that quick results often come from slow preparation? That moment of achievement feels fast or it seems fast, particularly if you're seeing it in others, but the foundation was quietly being built over time. Overnight success rarely happens overnight.

I wrote the book proposal for *Period Power*, met with publishers, got a book deal and wrote the rest of the book all in the space of six months. I might talk about a goal happening quickly, but I had been teaching and working with everything that ended up being in *Period Power* on an almost daily basis for over 15 years. It didn't come from nowhere.

If you're listening to this and kind of thinking, well, you do these kinds of things Maisie, but I don't. You know, just in case you happen to be thinking that, I asked my clients for some examples of their goals that have happened quickly for them.

So Natasha shared that a recent one was negotiating to work four days a week instead of five. She said, I set the goal to do it and just asked, thinking that I'd have to negotiate my case, explain all my reasons, but the request was agreed straight away without question.

Ellen shared, I wanted to eat to aid my PMS. I ate well for a month and my PMS improved that month and I thought it would take months.

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Clara had the goal of creating a meditation corner. She said she felt it would take a lot of steps to get there and that I felt I needed more mental space and time to think it through. In the end, I mentioned it to my partner and on the same day we moved some furniture, I ordered a cushion and that was that.

Maureen just moved to a new city a couple of months ago and she said, I set a goal to make a new community of women friends.

I started a weekly coffee shop co-working meetup and one of the first women to attend has already become a good friend. We have gone out to dinner together, to a concert, and because our trips to Tokyo overlap for a few days, we are going to meet up in Japan in April. How much fun is that?" She continues, "I joined a weekly run club" oh me too, and made a friend there. I have also met several other women who share my interest in books and films, so I have a group of people to invite any time I want to go to the movies. My social calendar is filling up and I'm delighted.

Such a cool collection of wins. Okay. So goals can happen quickly. Now we got to talk about the other side of the coin, goals that take time. So I was coaching a client recently who shared that an acquaintance of theirs had said that it would take years to create a successful, profitable business. And there were several aspects of that conversation that we coached on, but the part that matters in this conversation is, so what? So what if it takes six years? Why does that actually matter?

If you knew that you would reach your goal, 100% guaranteed, would you care if it took a year instead of six months or three years instead of one or 10 years? Hey, if I told you in 10 years, you will have the thing you really want, the thing that you have determined matters and that will have the impact that you intend it to, would you do it? Would you commit to that three years or 10 years, or would you just sack it off because it's too long?

And if you're not prepared to do that, is this thing that you think is important actually important enough to you? And zero judgment if you realize it's not. It's just good information for you to have. If you realize it's not, think about



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what you've just saved yourself from by just being honest with yourself. But if you do want to recommit, you can do that, right? You can self coach, you can get coached, you can recommit to that journey.

But when it comes to how long goals take, think about a degree. Most of us do not question that it takes three or four years full-time to get a qualification, longer if it's part-time.

We just accept that length of timeline because it's normalized to us. So, think about how you can apply that to some of your goals. But part of this, part of the goals happening quickly side of things is dismantling what's been normalized in terms of goals taking a long time. So we have to question this in all sorts of directions.

The real problem isn't the timeline. It's what you're making the timeline mean about you. Right? If you believe that achieving the goal proves your worth, you'll rush it. You'll pressure yourself, maybe burn out. Needing the result to happen quickly is you trying to feel good about yourself. And that is the fastest way to sabotage the goal itself.

But if you take your ego out of the equation, just park it to one side for a moment. If you don't make the timeline mean anything about your competence, your value, your likelihood of success, then the urgency disappears.

Now, sometimes we do need results for practical reasons. This is what I was getting into with this client. A big part of it is income or resources of some kind, but needing money is separate from achieving a specific goal. There's overlap for sure, but they are separate and I think it's useful to view them that way.

If your goal is to build a business and it's going to take you six years, just as an example, I'm not saying it will, you're still going to need an income during that time, I presume at least. Okay. But it's not your business's job to pay you immediately. You can create income in other ways while you build your sustainable, profitable business that will be able to pay you.

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When I started out as a practitioner and a birth doula in my early twenties, I worked in a bar. Then I got a job in a clinic where I was treating people. I would do one evening in the week and then work all day Saturday and Sunday. And when I took that job, that meant I need to stop working the bar because bar work, you're working weekends and the bar I worked in had a late license. So it closed at 3. We were usually done by 4, home by 5. So that wasn't compatible with starting to treat people at 10 in the morning at the weekend. So I left that job, but I got a cleaning job instead.

The money from the cleaning job covered my rent, and the money from treating and doing births paid other bills and living expenses. At the time, I was charging £150 and then £200 for a full birth package. It's a lot of work and not much money. The clinic I worked in took half of the money of every treatment that I did, which is often the case, like depending on the setup that you work in these places. But having that cleaning job gave me space financially and mentally to focus on setting up my business and all that was involved in that.

That cleaning job didn't mean I was failing at my business. It meant I was funding my goal. If your goal is to transition careers, you can stay in your current role while you build the skills, the connections, whatever else it is that you want to set up that's gonna support you when you make that move. These things do not matter if you don't make the mean things about you. Same goes for moving back in with your parents or whatever else you think means you're a failure if you end up doing it. It doesn't mean that at all. What it means is that you are committed. It means you're being practical and resourceful.

Your worth isn't tied to how fast you achieve something. And what even counts as short or long? Hey, is six months long or short? What about a year or five years? So what actually matters in this? Whether a goal takes you two months or two years, what matters is commitment. Are you committed for as long as it takes without making the timeline mean anything about you?

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A goal only starts to take shape when you decide you're going for it, not some half-hearted, well, give it a go energy. Right. That is undecided. Quick goals often happen because the decision, hear me when I say decision, because the decision was clear and clean. Okay. Like me with the running and me with the dressage test. Okay. Had I gone to that 6K run and stopped at 2K, that still would have been amazing. And all of what I've just said would still be true, right? You can be all in and do 2K instead of six. Though you will have to manage your mind about that potentially, but that's easy when you know how to.

This is different to when your goals just drag on because you're hovering in indecision. You're not fully in, you're not taking committed, courageous action. Quick wins happen when you're willing to put yourself on the line in some way. I mean, some of you might not find that a useful thought, but it requires emotional risk of some kind. Think about that. Think about how, where are you willing to take action without overthinking it?

Goals stall when you're waiting to feel ready. Willingness, desire, wanting things is a way to bypass that and to just get going. And those quick wins often come when you already have latent capabilities, skills that you didn't even realize were ready to be used. This is why I like really loving yourself and like realising what your unique capabilities and skill sets and contributions are.

Just kind of like how I wasn't doing any formal running training of any kind, but all the movement I already do through riding meant my body was capable without me realising it. Because a big part of me going to run club was because I thought I needed to increase my stamina for riding. My continued reason for going to run club is that I want to be a fit rider and be the best I can be for my horse. But I initially went because I didn't think I had enough stamina for riding. Julia, my instructor, was like, if you can just do a 6K, then you have stamina. That's not the issue. But I didn't realise that. I didn't know that.

Long-term goals, we also build the capability for them through repetition. That is not about doing things perfectly. Often we need to give things a go

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and make mistakes in order to figure things out. But all of these things, they all add up to an impressive result.

So are you willing to show up for your goal during the phases where progress happens quickly and where progress is perhaps “small,” but sustainable and increasing and adding up? Confidence often feels like it should come first with this, but it doesn't. What actually speeds things up is certainty. Not certainty that it's going to happen fast, but certainty that it will happen eventually.

If you knew your goal was guaranteed, how would that change your thoughts about the timeline and any anxiety around it? Every long term goal I've achieved happens when I just focused on the inevitability of it.

What goal have you assumed is going to take a long time? Just notice that. What goal are you rushing or feeling some urgency with right now and just good to know why? What would you change or what would be different if you trusted that it was happening and that it was guaranteed?

Whether your goals come quickly or they take time, the path becomes easier when you're not using the timeline as a weapon against yourself. Goals happen quickly. Goals take time. Either way, you win.

Okay, folks. It's so great to share my thoughts with you. I can't wait to hear what you think of this episode. Head over to Instagram. Let me know. We'll pick up the conversation there and I will catch you next time.

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