

Ep #226: Embrace Your Full Self and Build Self-Trust with Florence Scordoulis



Full Episode Transcript

With Your Host

Maisie Hill

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This is Episode 226 of *The Maisie Hill Experience*. Let's get into 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*.

Maisie Hill: Alright, folks. I always get so excited when I have a guest on the podcast. And today is no different because I have a wonderful human with me today, who I'm really excited to hear what Florence is going to be sharing today, because we've just had a little behind-the-scenes chat, and I'm already like, oh, this is going to be a juicy conversation. No pressure, but I just know you're going to find it insightful and beneficial. So we may as well just get started. Welcome, Florence.

Florence Scordoulis: Thank you so much. Thank you. I was just saying to Maisie that I've been following her podcast since it started. I remember going on long walks during one of the lockdowns, listening to your episodes, and just thinking, this is exactly what I needed to hear right now. And it's always kind of been that same feeling when I listen to your episodes. So, yeah, very exciting to be here.

Maisie: Amazing. Well, would you like to introduce yourself? Let us know your pronouns, anything you feel you'd like to share about yourself.

Florence: Yeah, of course. So yeah, my name is Florence and I am a freelance journalist and facilitator. I write about a lot of women's lifestyle topics, specialising in LGBTQ+ and bisexual experiences. And I also do quite a lot of interviews. So it's interesting being on the other side of this. I think this actually is the first time I've been interviewed. A taste of my own medicine.

And yeah, I'm, I live in London and I'm a member of the Flow Collective, and my pronouns are she/her and I'm bisexual, if it wasn't obvious.

Ep #226: Embrace Your Full Self and Build Self-Trust with Florence Scordoulis

Maisie: Love it. Yes, amazing. I'm bisexual, too. I never get to talk about it much.

Florence: Oh my god, Maisie! Oh my god, I can't believe I didn't know that. You should do a proper episode about it.

Maisie: Well, this can be part one. But yes, so I'm excited for this conversation for all sorts of reasons. Amazing. Okay. So, you started listening to the podcast right at the beginning?

Florence: Yeah. So I got into the podcast because I'd read your first book, *Period Power*, which a friend of mine recommended to me. I can't even remember why really. At the time, I honestly had no idea what was going on with my hormones. And I remember reading your book and it just being completely life changing. I cannot actually tell you how many friends I've recommended it to slash also how many men I've educated on dates about the seasons.

Maisie: Amazing.

Florence: Yeah, it completely changed my experience. Yeah, and I track my cycle religiously now, but it's interesting because although that's how I discovered your work, obviously you've then moved much more into kind of life coaching. And it's the hormonal side of it has just become something that's part of my everyday life, and I always know what day I'm on. But yeah, I love all your other work too.

So yeah, read your book, then must have discovered the podcast somehow. And as I was saying, there was always this sort of sense when I listened to an episode that it was exactly what I needed to hear that day. And I was never disappointed. And I just always really look forward to it coming out. And would have been listening to it for a few years.

And then at some point in 2021, I think maybe the latter half of it, I actually joined the membership for 6 months. And I really ummed and ahed about joining from a financial perspective. And something you've spoken about a

Ep #226: Embrace Your Full Self and Build Self-Trust with Florence Scordoulis

lot is that concept of like women investing in themselves and giving yourself permission to invest in yourself that way. But I just had a suspicion that because every way I'd worked with you so far had always been so valuable, that it would be the same, and I was, I was right.

Maisie: Oh, I'm glad to hear it. I'm glad to hear it. But I think it is interesting how that is, you know, you're not the first person to say that and I know that you won't be the last because we do get a lot of people who, you know, really consider joining, which I think is really great to actually consider, because often the people who do consider it and then decide that they are going to sign up are really committed and invested to being there. But it is often kind of a stumbling block to get over, especially if you're not used to investing in yourself, which is, I don't know anyone, trying to think, I don't think I know anyone who's ever said to me, oh yeah, I was raised to invest in myself, me, versus we're usually socialised to invest in the parts of ourselves that benefit others, rather than just for us.

Florence: Yeah. And I think two ways of looking at it that helped me was one, I've had therapy in the past, and actually it's kind of like the cost of one therapy session having a whole month in your membership. So, actually, when you see it like that, it's very good value. Potentially saving a lot of money in that, in that sense. And secondly, I see it having a gym membership, but for my mind, and like working out my mind. And I'll obviously talk more about the membership and why I like it. But I love that kind of drip feeding, like you're having something that's more than a one-off therapy session that makes you feel amazing. It's more like the kind of, it's rewiring your brain regularly, which is why I think it's so effective.

So basically I joined in, I think maybe summer 2021 and I was at a point of wanting to make some big, big changes in my life after the pandemic and basically joining the membership coincided with me quitting my job and going traveling, taking a gap year that I'd always wanted to do, which is why I then left the membership the following year, but it wasn't because I

Ep #226: Embrace Your Full Self and Build Self-Trust with Florence Scordoulis

wasn't enjoying it. It was just, I was off having the time of my life in Latin America. Yeah.

And yeah, I think it must be so interesting for you because you probably have no idea actually the amount of like huge changes that your clients have actually made because people like me, I really engage with your membership in certain ways. Like I listen to loads of the coaching and I love Ask a Coach and stuff like that, but I'm not very involved in the Facebook community side of things. So yeah, it must be interesting, like all these kind of huge life changes that you never hear about.

Maisie: It is. And this is why, like when people come on and I get to have these longer conversations, because you're right, it's like so often I don't really know the full extent of the impact of the membership. So, I trust that it does have that impact, and we certainly get that feedback, but you still never really know. So it's very exciting when I get to have these like nice long conversations to hear all about it.

Florence: Yeah. Okay, great. So yeah, I came, so I came back from travelling, and I mean, that was like a whole other membership in itself because it, I was solo travelling, so again, it really changes your relationship with yourself. And then I think then coming back to London, the membership in the last two years has just been so helpful in kind of maintaining those transformations and supporting me through a process, I think of what has felt like redesigning my life in lots of ways based on this new relationship with myself. Sounds quite cliché, but it has been invaluable for that.

Maisie: Tell us about this new relationship with yourself, because this is something that I think is kind of universal within the work that we do in the membership because it really is about getting to know you and all the parts of you and all those parts of you being in conversation, like a kind conversation and not making yourself the problem. Like that's our philosophy, inside the membership, is a lot to do with that. And so I think one way or another, everything that we're working on individually and

Ep #226: Embrace Your Full Self and Build Self-Trust with Florence Scordoulis

collectively is about your relationship with yourself. So I'd love to hear more about what that journey's been like for you.

Florence: Yeah, because I think the membership really, at its core, kind of teaches you and supports you to rewire that core relationship with yourself in terms of being more loving and compassionate with yourself, building self-trust, really kind of empowering you to get into the driving seat of your life. And it's very kind of inner work that you do. And then what happens is you start to see that having these ripple effects in lots of different areas of your life. And that looks different for everybody, but I think it comes from that place of that fundamental change. And obviously your latest book is called *Powerful*. And well, I remember when that came out, I thought it was really interesting because it put a label on what had happened in my experience of working with you, if that makes sense. And I'd even thought about it in that way. So it was interesting when you put that specific label on it because yeah, it's what happens. Yeah.

Maisie: And we're changing the name of the membership as well, to Powerful, as well. So.

Florence: Great. What I think is really interesting when you work with the membership is that there's that period of having those internal changes, and then it can be a while before you start to see the external results of that. Or sometimes it can be very fast. It kind of really varies, but I think there's that two sides of it. It's like the internal and the external parts of it. Um, yeah, I mean, there's so many, so many impacts it's had in my life. Yes. Should I should I talk about them?

Maisie: Yeah, tell us about them. Yeah, like what are the kind of things that come to mind when you think about coaching you've received either on a call or Ask a Coach? And actually, I don't...

Florence: I know what you're going to say here. Yeah.

Maisie: You actually, I don't know if Robin told you this in advance.

Ep #226: Embrace Your Full Self and Build Self-Trust with Florence Scordoulis

Florence: She did tell me, yeah.

Maisie: But you hold a record in the membership. Which I am like so thrilled about and so excited by, because you are the person who holds the record for using Ask a Coach the most. So, for those of you who don't know, Ask a Coach is our written coaching service where you can get one-on-one coaching as much as you want in the written form. And you can go back and forth on things until they feel complete, get coached on loads of different things. And it's included in the membership, and we don't limit it.

Loads of people use it in different ways. And you've used it the most. And I'm just like so proud of you and so excited by this, and I can't wait for the coaches who work in the membership, Casey and Amy, to hear this, because it was so exciting for me to be able to offer this and add it into the membership when we did. It was like, I thought it was something that was going to take me years to be able to do. And actually I did it in the space of kind of two months of like making the decision. Okay, I'm going to do this. So I love that you're using it.

Florence: It made me laugh so much when Robin told me, honestly. Obviously, I'm a writer, so I think it's very well suited to the way I like to work. And I don't, I don't think I've been live coached that many times, maybe three times in two and a half years of the membership. And every time I do, I'm like, oh, I love that. I should do that more. But I'm so busy that sometimes I just forget to be available at the right time.

So I love with Ask a Coach that you can use it at any time, literally, anytime. It's completely anonymous. It feels like having a personal agony art column in a magazine or a newspaper that you can just write into and someone will magically give you, you know, they're not telling you what to do, but they'll give you questions that prompt you to figure out your own answer to things. And it kind of feels like it's like a conveyor belt that I put something into that feels messy in my life, and then it comes out the other side all kind of shiny and resolved, somewhat, and I can kind of move forward. And so it really

Ep #226: Embrace Your Full Self and Build Self-Trust with Florence Scordoulis

helps with that kind of... Does that make sense? It's, yeah, like a magic machine.

Maisie: Yeah, and I love it. But I love that description because I think even, I mean, there's so many kind of levels to it. But I think even when you're submitting something that you want to get coached on, or whether you're posting in the community, like however people like to do it, that you are in the process of you writing something down, you are starting to get a little bit clearer on something that maybe feels a bit messy or confusing or you're like really undecided or overwhelmed about. And then through that process of writing, you know, things are starting to settle and shift into place a bit. And then it's our job as coaches to look at that and be like, well, this really stands out or, oh, I can see how this person is thinking and what's going on here. So then we can ask questions that help you understand the situation for yourself.

Florence: The coaches are so good. Casey and Amy, like the amount of times there'll be like a particular line in their response that I'm just like, it's like a mic drop moment. I'm like, oh my gosh, feel so seen and like yeah, and I use them as kind of like journaling prompts almost. So then I'll like, it's almost like journaling more based on what they've said. And then I don't know, it's just I find it so helpful, and it's like every now and then I'll just do a huge clear out, and I always feel quite bad because I'll send like maybe 10 questions at once because I'm just like clearing everything out. And then...

Maisie: Never feel bad about that. This is okay, I'm glad we have touched on this. Okay, so for all the members, because this has come up, I didn't realise this was a thing, right? And then suddenly I became aware because a few people kind of mentioned it in a short space of time, and I was like, oh, I didn't even know that this was going on in people's brains. But it turns out that quite a lot of people in the membership were concerned about taking up the coach's time.

Florence: Yeah, yeah, totally. Yeah.

Ep #226: Embrace Your Full Self and Build Self-Trust with Florence Scordoulis

Maisie: And I was like, oh my goodness, do not do that because first of all, you're paying for this. When you signed up, you're paying for this. And second of all, when you fill up, ask a coach with submissions, the coaches get to work more, which means I get to pay them more. Like it...

Florence: Great. Yeah. Okay, great.

Maisie: So I want you to use Ask a Coach. The coaches want you to use it. Like, and you ultimately, I'm sure want to use it as well. So that's why when I was like, okay, Florence is in the number one spot, is because you're using it in the way that it was designed to be used. So never hold back from using it. Like, the whole point is that you can submit 10 requests at once. You can use it however you want to.

Florence: Yeah. And I think that is really the membership for me because you've talked a lot before about it being a buffet of different options that you can choose what works for you. And for me, it's like I'll I'll do quite a few Ask a Coaches every now and then and do my rewiring and kind of batches. And I love listening to other people getting coached, and I'll listen to that while I'm tidying my room or going on walks, or it's like you're how I use your podcast. I'll be on the tube listening to it. And so it fits very well into my busy schedule.

But I'm a bit less engaged with the Facebook community, and like I said, I haven't been coached that many times myself, but I always find it so useful when I am. And I love that there's no wrong way of using it. And I think almost the way you give us permission to use the membership in whatever way is useful is a really good way of modelling a lot of the things you teach us as well about like not being perfectionist, not putting pressure on yourself or, yeah.

Maisie: Yeah. So, what are the kinds of things that you have used the coaching for? Because you mentioned that, you know, you went away and you had this time, amazing travelling situation happening. And then you

Ep #226: Embrace Your Full Self and Build Self-Trust with Florence Scordoulis

came back, and so, how have you used it with the stuff that comes up in your life?

Florence: I mean, it literally has stretched across all areas of my life. But I think one of the really useful parts of it is kind of having it almost like a business coach. Business coaching. Like, I really love the work aspect of it for me. And I think it's coincided, like, since coming back from travelling is like, I guess changing careers and going freelance as a journalist. I was a journalist before, but I mean, going freelance is a whole other set of skills.

And I found it so helpful on so many levels around my relationship with my career. So, even like having the guts to go out on your own and do something that is a quote, "dream," do you know what I mean? And actually make it happen and feel like you can give yourself permission to do that. I think is something really big. And I think the membership really encourages you to be ambitious.

And obviously, we do a lot of goal setting, but it's not in a way that's like putting loads of pressure on ourselves, and that feels really punishing. And you talk a lot about, you know, clean goals versus dirty goals, and I've really enjoyed the kind of seasonal goal-setting side of things. And I think it's been interesting as well how much you've spoken about relationship with success as much as with failure, because I think we hear a lot about fear of failure and things like that. And I definitely have that. But it was quite a revelation, I think, to realize I also had a lot of fear of success, coming from quite a over achieving background, but where I put a lot of pressure on myself and maybe linked external success to my self worth too much in the past, then made me quite scared of being successful. So that's actually been so helpful.

And just my whole relationship with fear, I think has changed a lot with the membership. And even the stuff you've taught around sensory feelings and like feeling fear in your body and befriending your nervous system, I think is so valuable. And this is all stuff I think we really should be taught in school, but we're not. I mean, obviously as a freelancer, you essentially have to put

Ep #226: Embrace Your Full Self and Build Self-Trust with Florence Scordoulis

yourself out there so much over and over again. And especially with writing, it's quite exposing and can feel quite vulnerable. The nature of this line of work is also that rejection is part and parcel of every day because you're pitching ideas to people, you could literally be rejected every day if you wanted to be, if you wanted to pitch ideas every day, which is so challenging. And I think all of the kind of toolbox of different mindset things that I've learned in the membership has been so valuable in handling that.

And I don't think I would have been able to do this actually, kind of at the start of my career, because it's not even really about writing, it's about your ability to handle setbacks and put yourself out there and also to be a cheerleader for yourself. And I think everything you do around celebration as well really helps with that. I think my inner voice has changed, and so I'm more of my own cheerleader rather than putting myself down. Essentially, all of these skills, I think, are so crucial to being able to be a freelancer. Not least the money side of things and asking for what you're worth and things like that, terrifying. So I think the membership has been so helpful in so many ways for the freelancing. Yeah.

Maisie: Yeah. So I love that you've touched on the idea of, you know, putting yourself out there, pitching, the inherent rejection that comes, you know, that is just part and parcel of that and navigating those fears when they come up. So for people listening, because I'm sure everyone listening will be like, oh yeah, I have that in my life too. What advice would you give to someone who's maybe... as someone who's gone through it and who has access to everything that's in the membership, if you were to maybe think back to like you a couple of years ago and you were going to give advice to that version of yourself who was just embarking on this journey, what words of wisdom would you say to them?

Florence: Whoa. I think something I've learned is that to build this trust that I can handle any outcome, you know, and that it's safe to be rejected, it's safe to fail, safe to succeed. I feel like I would tell them to give themselves permission to do what they want and also to act on it before they feel ready

Ep #226: Embrace Your Full Self and Build Self-Trust with Florence Scordoulis

to, because actually, by doing it, you expand your comfort zone massively and your confidence. So you don't need to wait until you feel ready to do this stuff. And you can do it when you feel really, really terrified, but the kind of trust that you will be able to handle it.

And also something around that kindness towards yourself alongside going through a process of quite major expansion, you know, especially when it's outward, is also that kind of taking care of yourself alongside it and checking in with yourself and definitely pausing to celebrate the wins along the way and just tending to yourself in the ways that you need. But yeah, just to go for it. I feel like we wait for so much permission to be given to us. Often in your coaching, it's I almost feel like you're giving us permission to do the like the biggest, most daring things that we, for some reason feel like we have to wait for someone to tell us that we can do. Yeah.

Maisie: Yeah, I think that often we like to refer to that as like a possibility drop of like where we, as your coaches, get to be like, well, you know, you could just do that thing. And someone's like, what? What do you mean? I was even, I was, I was on the phone with a coach friend, and she's an amazing coach, right? But we're all, us coaches, we're also human as well. And I said something to her that I just assumed like as a coach, that she knew. And I know she knew it on some level, but she was like, what do you mean? Like, what? What do you mean, Maisie? Explain that to me. And I was like, I like broke it down for her, and she was like, oh my god, I totally did not see that coming.

And that is the benefit of having conversations with someone who's not in your life, right? And who isn't held back by the limiting thoughts that you have about yourself, because we all have those, me included. So when you've got someone else being like pointing and directing you to the things that are, that are going on. And that includes, you know, opening you up to the things that are possible and the things that you could just do and that you don't need to wait until you're ready.

Ep #226: Embrace Your Full Self and Build Self-Trust with Florence Scordoulis

Florence: And the things you're probably already doing, because the amount of times it's like that "woah" moment is basically you're seeing that you've already done something, or you're already ready. And often when I've been coached, I'll think I'm not doing something, and then it turns out I'm already just doing it. And it's there's that 360 degree perspective switch.

Maisie: Yeah. It's so, that's what often happens like on our, the calls that we do where we're evaluating things. And, you know, someone will be talking through like something that, in their opinion that hadn't gone well, right? And that was kind of negative thing. And as they're telling me, I'm like, this sounds great to me. Like, and often I'm like, I'm so confused. You're gonna have to tell me why this isn't...

Florence: Yes.

Maisie: Why this is a negative thing, and it didn't work. And they're like, what do you mean? I'm like, well, you've told me this, so blah, blah, blah. And they're like, oh my god. But, you know, when you're just, when you're seeing your life from your perspective, you know, if you've got like glasses on that are kind of have a certain tint to them and then that's how you're perceiving your life, then I think sometimes what we do as coaches is we're like giving you fresh lenses that don't have a tint and allow you to just see things in a more factual way or that are in a more kind way because you can be creating amazing results in your life. But, you know, if you have a loud inner critic, then you can't even see those things. And you, even with great results, you're still going to be like, it's not good enough. No, actually that wasn't any good. I could have done that so much better. And that just steals so much from us.

Florence: Yeah, that resonates a lot with me. Yeah. And what's, I think what's amazing actually, is having worked with you for a few years, you do start to then your default does actually change. So even if you have had quite deeply rooted self-criticism or whatever, what's amazing I think is that a lot of these tools and thoughts become just part of your daily life. And I think there's a lot of things that I maybe forget now that I would never have

Ep #226: Embrace Your Full Self and Build Self-Trust with Florence Scordoulis

thought about things that way, but they just become drilled into you and so it's, I think really great to know that it's possible to change how you think about things, you know?

Maisie: Yeah. It is. It is. Especially, I think when we're... And often even the way we talk about it, sometimes we're like, oh, you know, I've got this limiting belief and like we can be so dramatic with our descriptions of it, right? It's like, oh, it's so entrenched. You know, and even like sometimes, I know we like to have a laugh about it on our calls when you know, someone's like, oh, I've got this entrenched belief. Like, okay, how about we start with how you're describing that belief, and then we can work our way through it.

But it is a good reminder that, you know, often these things we are unearthing them and exposing them and, you know, they're really like kind of root systems, you know, like weed root systems in the garden, and you know, they do just pop up everywhere. But, you know, once you know what they look like and you can identify them, then you know how to deal with them. And then gradually your kind of mental landscape, your garden, if you like, is evolving and changing, you're like, oh my gosh, I've got this new plant growing over here that I've created with my mindset and my relationship with myself. And then like suddenly, you look around, you're like, oh, my whole landscape has changed.

Florence: Yeah, completely. And I wanted to add in there that a lot of this stuff probably can sound quite intense and serious. But what I like about the membership is that it doesn't feel that way, and it's actually really fun. And the way you teach and coach is fun. And there's a lot of kind of laughing about silly things. And I think that's really important. And that is something that I loved about your books as well, because you make these things really relatable and really bring them to life in very down-to-earth ways. Like, you know, oestrogen, the Beyonce of hormones, I never forget. Forget that, you know?

Ep #226: Embrace Your Full Self and Build Self-Trust with Florence Scordoulis

Maisie: Yeah. But it is, it's so important. I mean, first of all, this is my job, and I want to have fun at work. So, you know, it has to be fun. But I think there is even when we're coaching on topics that are traditionally maybe quite heavy and things. Like there's a way to bring some lightness into that, where appropriate, places where, you know, we can have a laugh and enjoy laughing at ourselves and all the things that our minds get up to.

Florence: Yeah, because definitely when you, sometimes even just talking about it, you realise how ridiculous you're being when you... I've had this where you've asked me to say what the specific things I'm thinking are when I say them out loud, I'm like, wow, that sounds just so dramatic. It's obviously crazy. Yeah.

Maisie: But you see, when it's like rattling around inside us, we don't see it. That's like when we actually say it out loud or even if we just like write it down, you know, we get that shift in perspective.

Florence: Yeah, totally. And I did want to say as well, obviously, like the work side of things has been invaluable for me with the membership, but also so many parts of my personal life, I think, have been supported by it too. Obviously. And a big theme of that for me has been around sexuality. As a bi woman, the society we grow up in is very invalidating, and we are bombarded with so many messages around, you know, this concept that you have to pick aside, you have to choose this idea that your sexuality isn't valid as it is. As well as all the kind of negative stereotypes about you're greedy, or you're cheating, like all of these things.

And a big theme around bisexuality that I've noticed not just with me, but with friends of mine as well, is that lack of trust in your identity and who you are. And I think this has been a place where that kind of changing core relationship that I mentioned and the way that kind of building of self trust has been so, so helpful because yeah, I think this is one of the big, big ways that there's been a kind of external effect in a part of my life and just accepting who I am around my sexuality. Yeah.

Ep #226: Embrace Your Full Self and Build Self-Trust with Florence Scordoulis

Maisie: What has helped you to do that? When you look back at that, that process.

Florence: Yeah.

Maisie: Anytime we create results that we're happy with.

Florence: God, yeah.

Maisie: You know, it's so good to unpack, well, how did I create that result? Because then you're really, you're really acknowledging your own power when you do that.

Florence: Yeah. I think your Thought Work Model is really powerful with this, when you, in terms of being able to break it down into the thoughts you think about something, how you feel about it, the actions you take. And it's not been something that's just happened as a one-off, obviously, it's like chipping away and like, probably like how I've thought about lots of different experiences, then adds up to a kind of wider sense of just accepting myself.

And I think something that I really like about the coaching style in the membership is this sort of acceptance of messiness. Not in a way that we have to accept things that are bad for us, but, you know, accepting the full spectrum of emotions and being able to experience them and being compassionate with yourself and being in the messiness and then choosing how you want to feel with it, but without kind of... Does that make sense? Like accepting when some things have been hard and accepting when some things have been painful, as well as choosing to see things differently as well and seeing the amazing parts of other things. I think that messiness has helped a lot. Because there's a lot of stereotypes around bi people being very chaotic. I feel less chaotic now, but I've had my moments.

Maisie: But I think this speaks to what you were mentioning earlier in terms of doing that inner work that then has ripple effects and then starts to be like more visible in your life. So, how has that transpired in terms of your

Ep #226: Embrace Your Full Self and Build Self-Trust with Florence Scordoulis

journey with yourself, being a bisexual woman, the work that you do in the world, and I imagine just how you carry yourself through your own life.

Earlier you mentioned that there's been this phase of where you're doing this inner work. And then eventually that has a ripple effect on like the things you were doing in the world, your actions and stuff.

Florence: Yeah. In so many different ways. So there's obviously like dating, you know, I've dated so many people in the last few years. It's been a lot of fun and I think really valuable. But I think embracing your sexuality is about so much more than dating. So it's also about being involved in the community and like I started a WhatsApp group for queer women in London a few years ago, which has been amazing and I've met a lot of bi friends through that. I've also then felt more empowered to write about my experiences and share that in my work. And I write a newsletter about bisexuality.

I've also started running events for bi people because it is actually crazy because we make up half of the LGBTQ+ community, but there is really very few bi-specific spaces out there. And I think that is something that can make such a big difference is meeting other people who have experienced what you're going through and just get it. And that can give you that sense of validity in a really powerful way as well. And I think even just there's this kind of stereotype of bi panic. I don't know if you're familiar with that, Maisie.

Maisie: Oh, I'm not. Tell me, what is bi panic?

Florence: People sort of joke about it online, but it's like the panic feeling you can get when you experience attraction type multiple genders. But it's actually really rooted in a big issue, which is that I think it's like 70 something percent of bi women experience anxiety, and it is that is higher than lesbians, gay men, or bi men. We also have the lowest life expectancy out of lesbians and straight women. It's like a full 37% lower than straight women, and lesbians, it's 20% lower. Yeah. So...

Ep #226: Embrace Your Full Self and Build Self-Trust with Florence Scordoulis

Maisie: I mean, you can't see my face through the microphone, but I'm like floored over here.

Florence: It is shocking. And we also have the, we've been found to have the worst long-term mental and physical health outcomes, bi women specifically of any sexuality. And I think the whole issue of this stuff is that people don't think it's a big deal to be bi, especially for women, because we have a lot of mainstream currency through the fact that we are kind of fetishised by the male gaze. And obviously for bi men, it's so challenging and there's a lot of really overt biphobia.

But I think sometimes people think that it's not that bad for women, but actually the stats are insane and even, you know, we have like the highest rates of eating disorders, domestic violence rates, self harm, like it's when you start looking into it, you realize, oh my gosh, there is this invisible mental physical health crisis affecting bi women. And I think part of the problem is this theme of validity and, first of all, our identity being invalidated, but so is our experience of this discrimination. That is also being invalidated because people don't see it as kind of a big deal or that it's like a real form of discrimination, biphobia.

And part of the problem is you're going a lot of people are going through this on their own because there are less of these bi spaces. Yes. So I think the coaching has really played a big role for me in my own ability to validate myself, but then I've been able to kind of go out into the world and share that with other people and connect with other people and find and create spaces where we can give that to each other.

Maisie: Well, thank you. I mean, from one bi woman to another. Thank you, because I didn't know about any of that. Literally, you know, no clue. So I appreciate you sharing that information here as well. But also I think this is the important thing when you do this work on yourself, you're then able to take it out into the various communities that you are part of or indeed to create communities and to create spaces. So that's just absolutely incredible. Well done.

Ep #226: Embrace Your Full Self and Build Self-Trust with Florence Scordoulis

Florence: Thank you. And I actually feel bad because you know there's this whole concept of bi-erasure, right? Where bi people in relationships with someone of a gender, you just get assumed that they are a certain way. And I've never paused to wonder whether you were bi, Maisie. I just assumed you were straight. And like bi people, we internalise biphobia too.

Maisie: Okay, so I'm I'll share a few things here. I know it's definitely come up on calls like occasionally, or it's come up in the membership some but like infrequently and not kind of in any kind of substantial way. And I know it's definitely something that I've like mentioned on social media a long time ago. But I have this huge issue. It's like part of my kind of like demand avoidance and things of like, you know, when there's a particular day or month to celebrate and acknowledge and kind of highlight autism, being bi, you know, anything like that. I find it really challenging to do anything when it's like the day that you're meant to do it on.

And like sometimes, so I'm like, oh, I could put it out, but it's I think also, to be very honest with you, when I spoke about it before, I didn't have the social media following that I do now. And part of that, when you do get bigger and more people are following you, statistically, you are going to get more people picking you up and taking issue with whatever you post about, it literally doesn't matter. And so now that I'm thinking about it, I reckon part of that has been a kind of self-protective thing about this just isn't a conversation I'm wanting to get into with certain types of people.

Florence: Yeah. It can be so energy-demanding. And there's so much, I think, especially if you are in a relationship with a man, I think there's this sense of like people wanting you to prove your identity in some way. And, you know, the kind of biphobic questions you can get asked, it is so energy-demanding. So I completely understand that.

It's like people feel this right to demand your sexual CV, like, well, how many women have you dated and all these things and yeah, but I love having conversations with people who are at different life stages and in relationships with different genders, especially when, you know, you've got

Ep #226: Embrace Your Full Self and Build Self-Trust with Florence Scordoulis

families and like different ways that being bi can look like. Because I think so much discussion is about the initial coming out stage, but actually it's great to see kind of examples of bi stability and what do you know, what I mean? Like a bi life is, and just happy bi people.

Maisie: Yeah, it is. And it is, I think, for me, you know, I had a really positive coming out story. Like my mom and dad were like really positive into the point where like it just wasn't a big deal. They were like, oh okay, like it's just it's just like me saying I wanted macaroni cheese for dinner. Like, oh okay, cool. And you know, anytime I told my mom that I was seeing someone, she'd just want to know man or woman, kind of thing. And, you know, and it was just like that was it.

And, you know, Paul and I have been together for 11 years, something like that, you know, and, you know, we have a great relationship and, you know, we have our son as well. So it is very stable, but I do find it's important for me to engage with being bi and acknowledge that.

And I love listening to Chappell Roan, like just like love her music. And Paul's like, I mean, first of all, it's just not the kind of music that he's into at all. So, you know, and he's not, I don't think the intended audience either. But he's often like, like, what is it about this that you like? Like, and he's like, that is a genuine question. Like he's like, you know, what is it about it you like? I'm like, well, I think a big part of it is obviously, you know, she's lesbian. A lot of her lyrics are about being in relationship with women and coming out and, you know, and her journey, and what have you. And so listening to that music for me is a route into me being bi and still acknowledging that, whilst in a relationship with a man.

Florence: Yeah, absolutely. And celebrating it. Like I love how this kind of new sense of, I think queer women in popular culture where being queer is something that is being celebrated and it feels like this VIP club that is actually really cool to be a part of, you know? Compared to a lot of the quite negative representation that a lot of us had growing up.

Ep #226: Embrace Your Full Self and Build Self-Trust with Florence Scordoulis

Maisie: Yeah, because I think for me, because I was born in 1980, so you know, I was like 90s lad mag era of as you said, then bi women are there for the male gaze. And it was always about that rather than my own experience.

Florence: So much I think about sexuality is actually not about who you're dating. It's about feeling like you're part of a community, and like you said, music, other stuff you consume, and just feeling really seen and valid in that. And just unfortunately, I feel like bi people have to work a bit harder to access that stuff because we're just so invisible. And I think especially if you're in a long-term relationship with somebody and it's monogamous and it's one gender, and if that's straight passing, you do have to, I think, actively like intentionally almost, find ways to engage with that part of yourself and express it and give that space. Yeah. Oh my gosh. I could I could talk. There's please, please, can you do a full episode about this, Maisie?

Maisie: Yes. Okay. I'll add it to the list.

Florence: Yeah, because I actually I remember years ago thinking I would love you to do an episode. I almost sent an email requesting an episode about being LGBT actually. So I was, yeah...

Maisie: All right. I'm adding, I'm making a note now. The pen's getting clicks.

Florence: Yeah. And also, I don't know when this will come out, but just so you know, this month is Bisexual Health Awareness Month, March. So you've done something in this month celebrating that.

Maisie: Oh my gosh. Finally done it. That is great news. Okay. So you're really used the coaching and stuff in all sorts of ways. So, is there anything you haven't mentioned that you want to celebrate with us, or like a fun memory? Just anything that stands out to you, either from your own experience or even something you've witnessed in others?

Ep #226: Embrace Your Full Self and Build Self-Trust with Florence Scordoulis

Florence: It's really hard to distil this into one thing. I even feel like obviously we've talked about a lot today, but there's so much that I haven't talked about and it's just because the effect is to so many parts of life, but in a recent coaching call we were talking about this concept of being stuck and I thought I was stuck when I went into this call and then came out of it being like I've never been less stuck in my life. And I feel like that really summed up a lot of how I use this membership and that kind of radical perspective change. Yeah, I really enjoyed that.

Maisie: Yeah, I love those calls. They're really fun ones to do. Well, I mean, you've spoken about lots of things that have, you know, been really transformative for you and positive effects. But I'm sure it hasn't all been easy. So, has there been anything that has felt like challenging or uncomfortable for you? Because I think it's important to touch on like that is part of the journey that it's not all...

Florence: Highly uncomfortable. Yes. I think this work requires you, as you say a lot, to take responsibility for yourself. And that is not easy. But it can require you to take a hard look at yourself and ask yourself where you're not doing certain things. Not in a way where you're, you know, beating yourself up about it, which I think is really important and I really like that. It isn't easy. And you know, in some ways it would be so much easier to just give your power away to other people, you know? But obviously that's also, that's really not great. And like it's so worth taking the driving seat in your life. But it yeah, it's not easy and growth isn't easy and also it isn't like everything's just then better, right? It is this continuous process, and a lot of things do get easier, but it's not like magically the problems go away.

Maisie: No, and I'll be really honest, I think actually sometimes can actually suck more sometimes. But that's because, like when you are taking an honest look, not just at yourself, but taking an honest look at your life, you're actually like, oh yeah, actually this relationship that I'm in doesn't actually meet the standard that I have for a loving relationship with

Ep #226: Embrace Your Full Self and Build Self-Trust with Florence Scordoulis

someone. And actually that dynamic that I have going on at work, I'm not happy about that.

And so there is, I think that moment of like, oh fuck, does my life... Oh my god, my life, what am I going to do? And there's like that despairing kind of moment, but I think it's really important that we get that assessment of things, that honest look at things because then, as you know, some of those things we're going to look at and you're actually going to go, yeah, actually that isn't as bad as I'm making it out to be. Now that I understand why I'm thinking that way and I'm actually kind of taking a more balanced look at things, and I'm not just going in that kind of binary thinking approach to stuff.

But then equally, there's the stuff that you are like, you know what? This isn't what I want for my life. Something here does need to change, and you raise the standard for yourself and, you know, you invite other people into that standard. And most often, I think people respond to that really positively. But also then the stuff that does feel frustrating and you're fed up with, it's really important to feel that. So I think, you know, when it does suck, be committed to feeling that it sucks because that is going to provide the seed of change, as long as you're being self responsible with it, to turn into motivation to make the changes that you want to make. I think the issue just comes in when someone's like, oh, this sucks and they just kind of downward spiral with it. And it results in being more stuck.

Florence: Yeah. You're not able to really hide from yourself with this work, you know? Those things that you could just sort of leave to one side, you actually start facing them, and that can be really hard. And also like the concept of going up, like facing your fears and doing the things that scare you, then unleashes a whole other load of things you've got to deal with because, you know, you start doing one thing and then even like with my writing, you know, going freelance, starting to write, and then it brings up all these things that you didn't even see coming that then you've got to work with.

Ep #226: Embrace Your Full Self and Build Self-Trust with Florence Scordoulis

But for me, it's so much better that I'm living my life going after the things I want rather than just staying still because I'm too scared to deal with all of that stuff. I do think you do just sort of realise, oh, actually, no, I can handle whatever's going to come up here. It's kind of riding the waves. Yeah.

Maisie: This is why I love goal setting so much because it just flushes out all those crappy thoughts and the things that they're all within you anyway. But when you're just kind of drifting through your life without much intention or existing in what's familiar to you without any challenges or goals to work on, then all that stuff just gets to stay kind of under the surface and it's having an effect on you for sure. But it's you just kind of get to ignore that it's there.

And then, but when you set a goal or start to raise your standards for things, then suddenly it's like, oh, you know, is it okay for me to do this? Am I deserving of this? Like all the self-worth stuff comes up, all the fears of success and failure come up. And I'm just like, yeah, let's just bring all that up to the surface, work through it in a manageable way, not to the point where it's like overwhelming and ends up kind of having a destabilising effect on you. But like, let's just see what's going on. Let's take a peek under the surface and work our way through it.

Florence: Yeah. And when you also because it's a group coaching membership, you see this stuff coming up in everyone else. It is really helpful because you realise you're not alone in it. And actually, if you're all going through it, you may as well just give it a go, you know?

Maisie: Yeah. It is. And you know, even I remember a coaching call recently where I was coaching someone on what had been going on in their life recently. And then it was like the end of the call, and I was like, I just want to tell you something before we hang up. I was like, you've basically described what the last year was like for me. And they were like, what? Yeah. Like, you're kidding? No way. And I was like, yeah, this is, you know, but the only reason I was able to coach them through that was because I had coached myself and got coached through that experience.

Ep #226: Embrace Your Full Self and Build Self-Trust with Florence Scordoulis

So, but I think that goes back to what you mentioned earlier about, you know, what it's like when you're in bi spaces where you're really seeing what someone's bi life is like across their lifetime. That's what I also love about the membership is that when people who are new join and they're like, what's going on? How do, you know, how does this whole coaching thing work? Then you're getting to see people who are further along in the journey, and that it's not like there's a specific timeline with this because, you know, someone will be like, well, I really want to work on this for the next few months, and that's my priority. And then you get to see them going through that journey and then they're modelling that to other people who are like, oh actually, yeah, that's the thing in my life too.

Florence: Totally. It's like you said with bi spaces, it's just that concept of the power of community, isn't it? And actually being able to share experiences with people and yeah, know that you're not alone in whatever it is you're going through, whether it's your bisexuality or whatever it is in your life.

Yeah, because it's really interesting concept of watching someone be coached. And I remember feeling quite nervous before I tried it, you know, being coached in front of people, but it's weirdly okay. I don't know, because everyone's so supportive and yeah, it's such a, such a supportive community. And very inspiring hearing what everyone's been doing.

And same with your podcast, when I listen to group coaching calls, I always there's always something useful to take away from it. I love the kind of, yeah, like the work stuff. I really love that. Because I think, you know, everything should have goal setting and kind of like embracing ambition for women. I think, I don't know if that was like a weird thing to say, because obviously, like women are ambitious, but I feel like with there's a lot of messaging around repressing that in us, you know, or it being

Maisie: Yeah, either repressing it or it being presented in a very, there's no way around it. I'll just go, like the tech bros of California.

Florence: Yeah, yeah, yeah, completely. Yeah.

Ep #226: Embrace Your Full Self and Build Self-Trust with Florence Scordoulis

Maisie: You know, there's a certain way and it's about being up at 5:00 in the morning and journaling and then doing your thing and then doing your cold plunge, and I know lots of people, including lots of women, who, elements of that or all of that work for them. In which case, I'm like fantastic, brilliant. You know, so often that being ambitious and coming up with, like, what I like to call like unrealistic goals. I'm like, yeah, let's make those unrealistic goals realistic.

Often it does look different, particularly, I think for so many people who have other things going on in their lives, you know, they've got their regular job, maybe they've got a chronic illness or caring for a parent or, you know, got kids or whatever, like the whole goal setting, goal getting thing, like there's such a rich conversation there. I think making it look a particular way and kind of forcing ourselves into, like strong strong-arming ourselves into that.

Florence: Yeah, yeah. And that word strong strong-arming. To me, the way you do goal setting is like with all the ambition and going for it, but without the self-punishment, which a lot of that early start, you know, like those like you were saying, those kind of tech bro stereotypes around it. It's like the compassionate goal setting where you're still pushing yourself, but in, from an exciting place rather than a, yeah, punishing, punishing and pressurised place. It makes it more fun, and it's like, what's possible here is all to play for, but for fun rather than like your entire self-worth is at stake to do something and get some kind of success and something. Yeah.

Maisie: Amazing. Is there anything else you want to add before we wrap up?

Florence: I just want to say I love the like beginning of the year goal-setting workshops you do. The visualisation. I love last year we did like mood boards. I loved that. And I had that up on my desk all year.

Maisie: Have you done one for this year?

Ep #226: Embrace Your Full Self and Build Self-Trust with Florence Scordoulis

Florence: I did your visualisation this year and there was something from it that I've have printed out and stuck on my wall. Yeah.

Maisie: Oh yeah, we did that visualisation.

Florence: Yeah, that was incredible actually. I've thought about that quite a lot in the last few months. Yeah. Yeah. So I really like the way that the membership is framed around seasons and years and you know, everything you've touched on around giving yourself the space to evaluate things and really like, own how far you've come. Yeah, I think it really works well and I just feel, feel like I see a lot more of the things I'm proud of in my life that have always been there, but I just think I'd never really gave myself permission to really own or celebrate. So, yeah.

Maisie: Amazing. Well, thank you so much for coming on and sharing that all with us. Really, I think I'm going to need to listen back to all the, all the stuff that you've mentioned, particularly about bisexuality and the work you're doing. So before we wrap up, I know people are going to want to come and find you on Instagram and read your writing and sign up. You have a Substack now, don't you?

Florence: Yes. So I have a Substack newsletter called Bi Bitch where I share more about bisexuality.

Maisie: Love it.

Florence: And also some of the more of the topics I write about in my journalism, so around lifestyle and travel, and yeah, I also going to be having more interviews of bi people in the Substack. So if anyone's interested in that, please do reach out to me. But yeah, you can follow my writing. I write for various newspapers and magazines as well, and I always share it on my Instagram. So it's Florence_Scordoulis, which I think will be on the show notes.

Ep #226: Embrace Your Full Self and Build Self-Trust with Florence Scordoulis

Maisie: Yeah, we'll put the we'll put all of the relevant links on there so you can all go and follow Florence and see what she's up to and sign up for her Substack.

Florence: Yeah. And if anyone needs to hear this today, and they're bisexual, you are valid. Yeah, including you, Maisie.

Maisie: I receive that. I'm receiving it. Amazing.

Florence: Thank you for everything you've done, Maisie, because it's what's crazy is there's so many other people like me who've had all these major changes and...

Maisie: We're going to get them on, too. We're going to have more, more of these conversations.

Florence: Yeah.

Maisie: Amazing. All right, thank you so much, Florence. Thank you, everyone, for tuning in today, and we'll be back next week.

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