

Ep #227: Uplevelling: A Five-Step Process to Close Your Identity Gap



Full Episode Transcript

With Your Host

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This is Episode 227, and today's episode is a big one. If you are feeling like you're doing all the right things in your life, you're upgrading your habits, or trying to, upgrading your environment, your goals, you're doing all the things, but somehow it's not sticking, this is your episode.

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*.

Hey folks, today's episode is actually something that I taught very recently inside the membership. We have a theme in May for uplevelling, where all the members have selected something that they want to uplevel in their lives. Some people have picked their relationships, how they see themselves professionally, upgrading their actual jobs, how they do things, changes they want to make to physical things in their lives, like their home. And this episode is what I taught them on our first uplevelling call, because after I taught it, my immediate thought was, this has to be out there for all of you to access as well.

This is one of those episodes where I really recommend that you have a pen and paper for, that you pause and answer the questions. You don't need to take an afternoon off work to do it. Okay, sometimes longer exploration is useful, but often the first thing that comes to mind is plenty for you to get going with. So those quick, immediate answers are perfect. And just a reminder that every episode of the podcast has its own page on my website, including the transcript to it. So you can easily go back and find those questions as well.

I'm actually recording this episode from an Airstream RV in Arizona because I'm here continuing to uplevel myself and the work that I do with my clients. And soon there's going to be an additional way to work with me in the form of a small group that is based on everything I have been training in over the last couple of years. So I'm getting very excited about that. There's all sorts of uplevelling going on this month.

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But here's what I want you to know. Uplevelling doesn't work without identity work. Doing the identity level work, the identity level coaching isn't some kind of personal development bonus, it is the foundation. And if you skip past this part of it, you'll keep building things, but in the wrong way. So you'll be trying to build the right things, but it just won't be happening. Because if you try to upgrade your habits, your environment, your relationships, your goals, without first upgrading your self-concept, here's what happens: You sabotage the upgrade.

Okay, you start showing up in new ways. Fantastic. But your inner identity hasn't caught up. So you subconsciously pull yourself back down to the level that you recognise yourself at.

So I see this a lot when I'm coaching people who are setting their business up and they're determining their rates, their price, or for people who are more established in business who are considering raising their price. So let's say that you quote someone your new rate, but your voice wobbles, you overexplain, or you instantly offer a discount, like it's very apologetic. Because deep down, you still see yourself as someone who shouldn't charge that or who can't charge that, or it means certain things about you if you do, and not good things.

Or another common example I see is when someone starts speaking up in meetings, which is amazing. That's great to be doing. But then they obsess about how it came across, right, how they came across. So you're trying to be a bolder version of yourself, but hours later you're replaying things, wondering if you sounded stupid, if you took up too much space, if you upset someone, just this obsessing about how others perceive you. Because you still see yourself as someone who needs permission and approval from others.

And so as soon as something gets hard or someone else has a reaction, you just kind of shrink and collapse back down to an old version of you. And when that happens, that doesn't have to mean anything about you. It

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just means that there's identity work to be done. That is it. Okay. Let's just keep it simple.

But what also happens without the identity work taking place is that you stay stuck in perfectionism and indecision. So you're trying to design your life while still identifying as someone who doesn't trust themselves, who doesn't finish things, who isn't ready yet. Okay, and you just stay stuck at that planning stage because you don't believe you're someone who follows through, for example.

And in doing that, you can end up outsourcing your decisions because when you haven't fully claimed who you are and who you're becoming, you look for someone else to validate your choices, which leads to watered down outcomes because they're never going to be seeing things with the vision that you have. And there's potentially going to be resentment and things like that too, because when you're handing over responsibility to other people, that's always going to show up at some point.

But the thing that I think has affected me the most when I haven't done enough identity work before tackling a project is that I end up outpacing myself. So I do something, I'll create something, then I'll go through an identity shift. And that thing that I created is suddenly old and needs an upgrade. Now there is nuance to this. Okay, it's not as binary as it might sound. Sometimes identity work happens through taking those actions.

Okay, so we could say that me doing those projects that way that resulted in an identity upgrade, it's still happening. So sometimes identity work does happen through the action. You don't always have to feel ready first, but it helps to understand why things might feel misaligned afterwards. And I just want to give you some shortcuts so that you don't have to do the stuff that I've done.

But for now, just think about how you might be outpacing your own upgrades. I gave the example on the call with the members of, if you were going to decorate a room so that it felt more like you, more functional or

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organised, or just visually pleasing in some way. That means you're going to spend money on doing that. You're going to spend time and other resources. So you redecorate, and then you go through a shift in how you see yourself. Maybe through coaching, maybe life just cracked something open, and suddenly the space feels off, like it belongs to an older version of you, because at this point it already is.

But this happens in non-physical spaces as well. So let's say that you were to apply for a job, but you're applying for a job actually based on who you were a couple of promotions ago, a couple of jobs ago. But then your identity, your self-concept, finally catches up, and you feel trapped in the job that you ended up getting. I've coached a lot of people on this. This is why it's so important to use coaching for this kind of belief work anytime that you're looking for a job or a promotion or a significant change in your life in some way.

But it doesn't just happen with jobs and with redecorating, it also happens with conversations that you have and your relationships. So if you're going to have what is a challenging conversation for you in some way, maybe challenging for the other person, but you enter that conversation with the identity of seeing yourself as someone who's conflict avoidant and who struggles with these things, then you're going to show up in a way that's very wishy-washy and your boundaries will be wishy-washy, too. And then further on down the line, you might just be like, well, what the hell happened there? And you need to go back and tend to that issue again.

Now, this is where the nuance comes in because often it's through this process that the identity work happens. So it's not one way or the other, but I like to offer that this identity work will happen either way. That's a good thing, right? I'm just trying to give you a way to do it to save yourself a lot of bother and be more efficient and effective with these shifts. This is what happens when you're building from the wrong foundation.

Okay, but as I shared on the call, it doesn't mean that you're doomed to like endlessly redecorate your living room or your bedroom. This isn't about

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constant upgrades. You don't have to paint your bedroom every year or change something every season. Okay, at a certain point, your self-concept stabilises at a level that feels both strong and spacious. There's still something for you to be expanding into. But what happens is that your self-concept, your identity will be strong and stable, and you'll just be living in it.

So there will still be ways that you grow and evolve and shift. Of course, that's not going to stop. But instead of everything needing to be rethought or rebuilt or redone, you'll be expanding from a solid core inside of you. And that's the paradox with this work is that the more you update your identity intentionally, the less often you need to overhaul everything around you. Because your self-concept is just so solid at that point. And the upgrades are more subtle, more precise. And sometimes they're not even necessary. You just upgrade your thinking and that is sufficient. That is plenty. That makes a big enough difference.

But doing this identity work means that you do the big work once, so you don't have to redo all the small stuff constantly. So I want to make this practical for you and tell you what you can do instead. So I'm going to share the five-step process that I gave the members. So the way to go about this instead is to build from the future by closing your identity gap. So these are the five steps for you to do that.

Step one, you have to actually name what you're uplevelling. Okay, there is tremendous power in declaring the thing that you are uplevelling. This is a power thought in and of itself. Like when you say, I'm uplevelling, blah, blah, blah, whatever it is. That is a power thought that you can use and think it on purpose.

By the way, whatever your statement is about what you're uplevelling, notice if some part of you, maybe a big part of you, wants to explain it and justify it somehow. You don't have to do that, but it's interesting if that's what comes up for you. So just state what you're upgrading. Otherwise, you won't have a direction in mind, and without that clarity, you can end up

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judging yourself for not making progress and feeling like nothing's changed. When really, you just didn't name the metric to begin with, and you didn't have a direction in mind. So then suddenly, you're judging yourself for not going down certain paths, but you weren't clear on what the path was to begin with. So start with that clarity.

Step two is to spot the identity gap. This is the big one. So think of the identity gap as the space between who you've been by default and who you're ready to be by design. That gap shows up in how you think, the decisions you make, how you relate to yourself and to others and to your goals, and also in how you take action or perhaps avoid taking action. So your job is to notice this gap and start closing it.

Here are the questions that I gave the members to help them spot their identity gap. The first one is, what version of you created your current results? So, what identity, how have you been thinking about yourself, that got you to where you are now? Okay, we're not going to throw any shade on that. That's fantastic. But we're just assessing what got you here.

Second question, what version of you are you still subconsciously loyal to? This was a really juicy one for me to reflect on and just think like, ooh, what are the thoughts, the beliefs, like the identity level beliefs I have about myself that I am trying to stay loyal to, and it's actually holding me back and even unkind in some ways.

And then the third question is, what version of you does this next level require? So good. So this will highlight the identity mismatch, so you can stop designing your life from old software. Because you cannot create next-level results without first-level thinking. Right, and you can't become a new version of yourself whilst clinging to the thoughts that keep you in your past. It's really important to address this. Like, do not go further with any of the other steps I'm giving you until you do this. It's that important.

Here's what that mismatch might actually sound like, just to give you some examples. So you might say that you want to become a confident leader,

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but if your dominant thought is, I don't want to upset anyone, then you're still operating from the identity of a people pleaser. Or if you want to uplevel your business, but you're always thinking, I'm behind, or it's too late, or I should have done this, then you're still practising the identity of someone who doubts yourself and who criticises yourself.

Often people will say to me that they really want to show up more authentically in their relationships and that they want deeper, more meaningful connection with others. But if your most practised thought is, well, it's just easier not to say that, that I just won't bring that up, then you're still practising the identity of someone who avoids conflict or even potential conflict in order to feel safe.

And if you want to create more money, but your most practiced thought is, I don't want people to think I've changed, then you're still practicing the identity of someone who believes success is going to make them unrelatable or unlikable, or that the amount of money you make means something about your worthiness as a human, which it doesn't.

This one is going to land with quite a few of you, I think. If you're working on a creative project and your thought is, well, it has to be perfect before I share it, then you're still practising the identity of someone who protects themselves through procrastination and perfectionism. Such good examples, aren't they? I was like really thinking back on all the coaching that I do in the membership, the common issues that come up. Because sometimes I really need examples to help me spot what a concept means.

So when I talk about the identity gap, I really wanted to give you some tangible examples of what that looks and sounds like. But don't just listen to the examples, even if you like really resonated with them. I want you to come up with your own. Okay, so feel free to pause this recording and go away and think about it, or just have it as something like buzzing away in the back of your mind and thinking about it as you're driving around or showering, or just getting on with your life.

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Okay, so that's step two. And step three is to close that identity gap with higher quality thinking. So this is where the shift happens, not from doing more necessarily, but with intentional thoughts that come from the identity that you are stepping into. For instance, the way I think has dramatically shifted from when I went from thinking of myself as self-employed to being a business owner. And then again, from when I thought about myself as a business owner to making the shift of stepping into the identity of being the CVO, chief visionary officer.

So some great questions that you can use here are, what identity am I stepping into with this thought? Or what thought is going to make this upgrade easier? What thought would the person I'm becoming think? So these questions are really important because they're going to allow you to find the ways in which the person you're becoming thinks ahead of time. Okay, you're just going to zoom into the future, get that information and start employing that way of thinking now. This is future self mindset work.

If your tendency is to think things like, I'm not ready to lead this project, and that comes from waiting to feel fully prepared before taking action, then the type of higher quality thinking that we're going for could be something along the lines of, the version I'm becoming is someone who leads with vision, not certainty. I decide what's needed and I make a move. And then instead of circling around readiness, which is such a waste of time, you choose a thought like, I'm already the person for this. My job is to just act like it. Waiting to feel ready is a luxury I no longer indulge. Or I lead by deciding, not by overthinking. You see how it's just thinking differently. That's all this is.

Step four is to act from the future self, not the past self. So if the next version of you were in charge today, what would they decide? What would they stop tolerating? What would they invest in, clean up, move on from, say yes to, and say no to? And the juiciest question of all, what's one decision I've been avoiding that this version of me wouldn't hesitate on? That one is going to show you a lot.

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And if you're in the membership, we can coach you on all these answers. Bring them to the community, bring them to the calls, bring them to Ask a Coach. Let us coach you on it. We want you to help like make the most of these shifts.

Step five, the final one. Really important. Don't dramatise the dip. Because in doing these shifts, in moving into the version of you that you are becoming, even with all this work that I've outlined for you, and if you do all this diligently, you will revert to old patterns. That is just going to happen. It doesn't mean you're failing. It happens to everyone, including me. So it just means you're human. And you can expect a dip to happen without it becoming a self-fulfilling prophecy. So just be aware that it's going to happen, notice it, and move on.

So you can just think like when you notice that you're reverting to old patterns and like reverting to your past self, you just be like, well, oh yeah, there's that old version of me trying to steer the ship again. Or I'm practising something new. Of course, it's a bit messy sometimes. Because the only real problem is when you make the dip mean something dramatic about you. Like, oh, I knew I wasn't ready. I'm still the same. This isn't working. All the dramatic stuff that we come up with. So don't dramatise the dip. Just notice it, redirect, and keep building from who you are becoming, your future self.

This is the deep work. And when you do it, you just stop feeling like you're chasing your life and you start feeling like you're actually living in it.

So in summary, what are you uplevelling? What identity have you been operating from? The one that you're going to upgrade? What thought is keeping that version of you in place? What thought belongs to the version you're becoming? And what's one clear action your future self would already have taken?

Listen to this episode again, write down the questions, write down your answers. Feel free to share them in the membership if you remember,

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share them on social media if you fancy, just tag me, let me know. I can't wait to hear your reflections.

That is it for today. I'm starting to sweat. I had the air conditioning off whilst I recorded this because I didn't want the background noise and it was like 33 degrees in an RV. Got sweat running down me. But it was worth it. It was worth it. All right folks, I'll catch you next week.

Hey, if you love listening to this podcast then come and check out my membership, Powerful, where you get my best resources and all the coaching you need to transform your inner and outer life. Sign up to the waitlist at maisiehill.com/powerful, and I'll see you in the community.