

Ep #230: Sneaky Ways That We Count Ourselves Out



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With Your Host

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This is episode 230, and today I'm breaking down all the sneaky ways that we count ourselves out before anyone or anything gets a chance to. 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*.

Welcome back to the podcast, today I want to talk about a pattern that I see all the time in my clients, in my community, and yes, in myself at times as well. It's the way that we count ourselves out. Sometimes in obvious ways, but often in really sneaky, subtle ways that can just quietly sabotage your biggest desires, even before you've fully realised what those desires are and they've had a chance to fully form. And this isn't just about mindset. This is about the systems that we live in.

If you've been socialized as female, if you're Black or a Person of Color, if you're neurodivergent, if you're queer, trans, disabled, living with chronic illness, there are so many systems in place that have already counted you out. I'm sure this isn't news to you. There are systems at play that have decided what's realistic for you, what's available to you, how much is too much for you to want or need. And addressing and dismantling those systems is, of course, important and necessary, but it's also important to stop helping them out. Okay?

If the system's already limiting you, the last thing you need to do is do its work for it. And that's what happens when you count yourself out, because if you've been conditioned to believe you're too much, too emotional, too complicated, too old, too young, not clever enough, or it's always some version of too much or not enough. Or a really interesting blend. Interesting in an un-useful way.

So yes, it's awful and shit that those ideas have been planted in your mind and that you have grown up with them. And they are there, okay? But it's our job to stop reinforcing those beliefs in our own minds. Okay? If the

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system's already doing the job of limiting you, we don't need to be helping it out. So today I want to walk you through how I see this pattern show up, especially in the sneaky ways that are easy to miss or label as something else. And how to start catching these patterns so that you can make different choices and just have that awareness.

So let's start with the obvious ways that you count yourself out. Not applying for opportunities, things like jobs, grants, promotions, higher education opportunities, because you might get rejected. Or because you just have a really limited view of yourself. We often talk about how women only apply for jobs when they are able to meet all of the criteria that's listed. Whereas men don't do that, they just apply. So there's that, but what I talk to lots of amazing women about who are highly skilled at what they do, right? They are exceptional in my eyes, but their self-concept hasn't caught up with reality. It's not even about their future self and stepping into that. They haven't caught up with reality.

So this is a big obvious way. Well, it's obvious to me. It might not be so obvious to you when you're in it. But I think it's a substantial way that you could be counting yourself out. But I'll also add to that telling yourself that you're not ready.

And when you stay in a job that is meeting the small version of you, or it's a safe job, or a safe relationship, or you're just staying in the safe story about yourself. These are the moments that some part of us knows that we're playing small. But I want to be really clear here. Don't use what I'm saying against yourself, okay? This is not about shaming yourself for choosing stability or a calm life setup that's secure in some way. Because sometimes you are making a strategic choice to stay where you are. And that's valid, that matters, that's important. Okay?

The difference is why you are doing that. Are you choosing it with intention because it supports your life in this precise season? Or are you hiding in it because you're scared? Those are different things. I've coached a few clients on this recently, and they've come to me saying that they're playing it safe and being small and judging themselves and thinking that they ought

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to be taking risks and taking bold action of some kind. And I've pointed out to both of these people, I think, that I thought that was the whole point. That they were going with the quote-unquote "easy" option.

Okay, no option's easy. Right? There's always something that happens, but they were going with the easy option because the other stuff they're doing in their lives... And come to think of it, both the clients I'm thinking of are doing PhDs, so they have plenty going on. That's the priority. They're picking the quote-unquote "easy" or stable option in support of the other stuff that's going on in their lives.

But can you see the difference between choosing that and loving your reasons for it versus hiding in a job when you know you could be doing something else, and you want to do that thing? Very different.

Another way you count yourself out is by not speaking up. Because you don't want to upset anyone or get in trouble or rock the boat in some way or be seen a certain way if you do. If I could eradicate this fear from your brain, which is a big part of my mission by the way, and so much of the membership is about overcoming this very thing. Just imagine how different your world would be and how different the world would be.

So, those are some of the more obvious ways that we count ourselves out, but there are plenty of sneaky ways as well, and they can be trickier to spot. So these are the ones I really want you to listen for and pay attention to where and how they show up in your life. Because these are the ways you count yourself out that sound reasonable. Okay? They sound practical. You can tell yourself that you're just being smart or careful or realistic or grateful, even. But really, you're pre-rejecting yourself before anyone else has the chance to.

So here's what that can look like. You assume that you'd be a bother by asking someone for help or support of some kind. This is a juicy one. It's interesting how this comes up. It's a great one to coach on. It can be in the form of asking a friend for a favour, your partner to take something off your plate. Maybe tell yourself that you're just being considerate or polite or low

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maintenance. Oh, I could do a whole episode on low maintenance. I should add that to my list. You don't want to burden anyone, so you just carry that load of whatever it is alone. Feeling increasingly overwhelmed, probably quietly resenting others for not offering help and not reading your mind, but you've made it impossible for them to know you even need it. Ask me how I know.

But what you're actually confirming to yourself is I'm not allowed to have needs. I don't get to ask for what I want. And that's not politeness or any of those other things. That's counting yourself out of support, out of connection, out of being fully seen, out of just being a human who has some needs and would like some help.

Another topic that comes up on our coaching calls in the membership is assuming that you can't attend an event or have a certain type of work schedule. So I'm going to give you a couple of specific examples that have come up on calls at some point fairly regularly. So this often comes up when partners and childcare are involved. There's other things as well. But I'll give you an example here. So wanting to go away but thinking that it's not possible because of your partner's work schedule or commitments, and how you fit parenting into that.

I can't tell you the number of women I have coached over the years whose partners go off as standard every Saturday morning for 4 or 5 hours to go on a bike ride or do a round of golf. No questions asked, it's just the done thing. And whilst I don't think replicating that is useful. We can borrow some of that energy to have a conversation about what you want and how, as a team, you're going to make that happen. Right?

I don't like to think of it as asking for help with childcare because that just assumes that it's your role and responsibility rather than a joint effort. Dads don't babysit, they are parents. But I don't ask Paul for permission to do things. I pitch them to him as, 'This is what I want to do. Tell me what you think.' And then we talk it over and figure it out as a team.

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But it's not just to do with parenting and getting to do stuff. It can also be about taking time off or negotiating your work schedule, or a pay rise, when you just assume that it's not possible and deny yourself the opportunity.

And by the way, it's not just the opportunity to create the result of whatever it is that you want, say that's a 4-day week or working from home or a pay rise or whatever it is. There's the opportunity of that result, but there's also the opportunity to have the conversation and build the skill of doing those things, of negotiating. So it's a double whammy that you're denying yourself there.

And this actually came up on one of the calls this week. I was coaching someone on how much they earn and wanting to make more. And they shared a story about how even the most successful people in their industry only make a certain amount. And if you don't see anyone like you doing that thing, whatever it is, because maybe there's a certain range of income in your industry or because of your age, your background, your neurodivergence, your chronic illness. If you don't see people like you doing those things, please be careful that you don't make that mean that you can't either.

And I get that it can feel really true. I have been there. I fully believed that it wasn't possible myself, but it was. So just because you don't see the example of what you want to be or how you want to be doing things, doesn't mean that it's not possible. You just have to decide if you're willing to be the example or if you'd rather wait around for someone else to be. It's that simple.

You can also count yourself out with binary thinking, thinking that there's only one way to do something and that if you can't do the 100% version of that, then there's no point doing it at all. And that's not you being practical or realistic. That is you keeping yourself small. And being in that fixed mindset of, well, if I can't do it exactly how I want, then I can't do it at all. If it can't be perfect, then it's not worth doing. And if you can't do the full version or have the ideal version, then why bother?

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Or you blame time, money, or your location for why you can't do something without really exploring the options and being willing to explore the options. And I do understand that sometimes there are legit constraints. But most of the time, there is a way to do something. It might not be the full version, it might not be the one that you really want to do. But a lot of the time, these are just excuses that we reach for so that we don't have to sit with the discomfort of wanting something and not being sure how to make it happen or just being plain nervous about taking the step to actually do something.

So, "I'm just being realistic" is often code for "I'm scared." And we can just call it for what it is, and then we know what we're actually dealing with, and we can move on.

It can also be things like, well, I'll do it when I have more time, when I feel more confident, when the kids are older. When I've figured it all out somehow and life is just perfect and it's convenient for you to do something. But have you ever noticed that there is always something else? Okay?

So these patterns, these sneaky ways that you count yourself out, they don't sound like self-sabotage, but they are. They might sound like you're being sensible, like you're being practical and reasonable, but they are self-sabotage. And I think it's really useful if you just start seeing them for what they actually are. Okay? Because you might just be used to thinking about it where you're just making measured decisions and you're being careful and bla bla bla. Start just exploring. Am I actually sabotaging myself here? Because my hunch is that you are. When any of these things are going on, you are counting yourself out. And that's the part I just want you to see.

Because we live in systems that thrive on our self-doubt. We have been socialised to doubt ourselves. And we live in systems that thrive on our self-doubt and that continue to grow when we think that we're not ready or not good enough or not qualified. And you've been conditioned to believe that your self-doubt is true, but it's not. It's a narrative that you have inherited and been socialised with. And you get to rewire it, which is the amazing thing. It doesn't have to be this way.

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So here's the question I want you to sit with today. Where are you counting yourself out without even realising that's what you've been doing? Where are you saying no to yourself before anyone else has a chance to? And what would it look like to stop doing that? So this is just about noticing where and how you count yourself out.

What if you assumed all of these things that you want, all of these places you would like to be, how you would like to be. What if you just assumed that all of that is for you? And you just acted like the door was wide open. And you just go for it. That's the shift I'm inviting you to make with this.

And if you want support with this, if you want to see the ways you're counting yourself out and have a coach in your corner to call you on it, lovingly but firmly, this is exactly the work that we do inside my membership, Powerful. We see the patterns, we spot them, we interrupt and break them. We build new self-concepts that can actually hold the lives that we want.

So if you're ready to stop pre-rejecting yourself and start stepping into who you actually are and who you want to be, how you want to be in the world. Without counting yourself out and holding yourself back, come and join us. Don't count yourself out of that either. Okay? You've got enough working against you without adding yourself to the list.

So this week, practice noticing when you are doing this without any judgment. Remember, I always say this, you can skip the judgment. Just have awareness. And then make a different choice of some kind. That's where the shift starts. Okay folks. I will catch you next time.

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