

Ep #250: Recognise and Shift Thought Errors



Full Episode Transcript

With Your Host

Maisie Hill

The Maisie Hill Experience with Maisie Hill

Ep #250: Recognise and Shift Thought Errors

This is episode 250 and today we are getting into a topic that I know resonates with so many of you. It's about making changes to your life when life is already feeling full and busy. Can't wait to get into this one. It's going to be a juicy one.

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*.

So today we are talking about a topic that I just know is one of those topics that you all have to contend with at some point in time. And maybe you're in this place right now where there's things that you want for your life and you really want to make them happen, but because of existing commitments, responsibilities, busyness, if we want to call it that. Then maybe you find it challenging to even consider that you could make these changes, or you feel confused about how to do that.

So I see this scenario often with my clients and you have a dream, a goal, something that's important to you, it's that spark that lights you up, the thing that you daydream about when you're stuck in traffic or waiting in line. It's the thing that you think about and long for when you're not enjoying something else in your life. But here is the catch, you're busy. Your days are packed. Your to-do list is endless. You're tired. You don't have any time or energy to spare and there's always something vying for your attention. These are the things.

These are the thoughts that your brain is going to offer you. And some of these things might genuinely be important. But if you pause and actually ask yourself, how many of these things vying for your attention are urgent versus important, then what's the answer? Because often we are kind of mislabelling things and thinking, oh, no, I really have to do this. And so they're kind of flagged as urgent and they take our attention away from the things that are actually important.

Ep #250: Recognise and Shift Thought Errors

So I really want you to get in the habit of asking yourself this. Is this urgent? Is it important? Is it both of those things? And then that will just help your brain to start differentiating between the things that are urgent but not important and the things that actually really are important. So there will always be something. That's never going to change. There will always be a list of things to do, projects to complete, deadlines happening or looming over you.

And while that might sound awful and daunting, I think it's actually incredibly liberating to just accept that reality. That there's always going to be something and that's never going to change because arguing with reality is such a waste of your energy and mental real estate. So I think it's helpful to just accept that and then decide how you want to interact with that reality. Why waste time arguing with the reality of the situation when you could focus on doing something about it?

So in today's episode, we're going to explore how to navigate this busy, bustling life while still making room for the changes that you want. So how do you prioritise your dreams and your goals amidst the everyday life, perhaps chaos? How do you shift from reacting to what's presented to you to actively deciding and creating the life that you want? So if you're feeling stuck in the whirlwind of life's demands, but you're yearning to make meaningful changes, you are in the right place. This episode is for you, so let's dig in.

What's crucial for making meaningful changes in your life when all this is going on is to address the thought errors that your brain offers you because it's going to offer you some absolute whoppers. And thought errors are, they're just patterns of thinking that we all have that are typically inaccurate and negatively biased. So they are those sneaky, limiting beliefs that just creep into your mind and they feel really true, but they aren't. They're just interpretations that hold you back from actually taking action and making those really important changes.

So these thought errors are just the unintentional thoughts that are a product of societal messages and your internalised beliefs. They are the

Ep #250: Recognise and Shift Thought Errors

thoughts that lead to feelings of inadequacy, anxiety and self-doubt that then become automatic thought patterns. They are just ingrained, reflexive mental habits. So I'm going to give you some examples of how these show up in a moment, but here's how I want you to think about thought errors.

They are a lot like the uninvited guests at a party. They show up unannounced, but if we're not careful, they can take over the entire event. So you have to have awareness, see them showing up and label them as thought errors and then respond appropriately, because that's the good news. Once you recognise these thought errors for what they are, you can understand them. You can challenge them. You can shift your perspective to something that's more empowering and productive. And that will actually get you unstuck and lead you to the outcome that you want.

So I'm going to give you some common thought errors and then we're going to counter them with powerful questions that will help you to move forward in your thinking and in your decision-making and in the actions that you take.

So the first thought error is, I don't have the time. When you notice this thought error, the counteracting question to ask yourself is how much time will I save by doing this? Because that question just flips the script on the classic time excuse. So instead of seeing how making a change will consume your time, you'll start to see that making changes is actually a time saver. And in that you're recognising the efficiency and the long-term benefits that come with making certain changes.

Now, similar to that is the thought error, I can't start now, it's not the right time. Now, I do think there are times when a thought similar to this can be useful, but most of the time it's bullshit. And the way you'll know is by how you feel when you tell yourself that you can't do it because it's not the right time. When you tell yourself that, what do you notice? Does it feel good? Does it feel congruent? Or is it a way for you to evade or avoid something that's uncomfortable? So it feels like a relief that you've got away from it.

Ep #250: Recognise and Shift Thought Errors

So this is really about, do you love your reasons for not starting now and it feels good, and it feels congruent in you? So you just always want to ask yourself why and be honest with yourself. This is amazing stuff to get coached on, but a counteracting question that you can ask yourself is, what is it costing me to delay doing this thing? So this question is a bit of a wakeup call because it gets you to see what's actually happening, whilst reminding you that in the vast majority of situations waiting for the so-called perfect time is an illusion.

And it also brings to light the negative impact of delaying. So you can actually see the reality of what delaying is going to result in. So what is it costing you to not do this thing, to not make this change? This is a game changer of a question. I love to ask it when I'm coaching people, because it shifts your focus from the perceived lack in your current situation to the potential loss or cost of inaction. It really gets you to evaluate what's truly important to you and understand the value of the changes that you want to make.

Another common thought error that often comes up is, this is going to require a lot. This is going to take a lot. It's a thought that can make us feel overwhelmed before we even start, but here's a counteracting question to challenge this thought. So instead of when your brain offers you, this is going to require a lot, the question you ask is, what will doing this eliminate? This question helps you to focus on the potential for reducing complexities and problems and the stress in your life as well.

So it gets you to see the value and the relief that comes with taking action and making those changes. Instead of seeing the effort as a barrier, you start to recognise it as a way to simplify and streamline your life. And actually save resources, whether that's time, energy, money, attention or mental real estate. You can take this a step further by asking not just what will doing this eliminate, but what will doing this give me or create? This is so important because it shifts your focus from the level of effort involved, which we can be very dramatic about to the reward from doing so.

Ep #250: Recognise and Shift Thought Errors

Now, if you do find yourself caught up in the thought error of, this is going to require a lot, I want you to consider what you are willing to do. And to just let that be enough for now, because often we think we need to go all in and do the 100% version of something, but what if you just started with the 10% version or the 5% or the 2% version? So this approach is about breaking down the overwhelming, which is still just a thought, but into something that's more manageable, more doable actions and just giving yourself a way to start and build from there.

This isn't about doing everything at once. It's just about starting somewhere, literally anywhere. It doesn't matter. The smallest step is progress as long as you see it that way, as long as you think of it as being progress. That is how you build momentum, one action at a time. So just ask yourself, what's the smallest step I can take right now towards this change? And then you take that step. It's these small consistent actions that lead to huge changes over time.

So instead of doing the 100% version of something, you find the 10% version of it or the 2%. I have coached a few members on this recently and shared this approach with them. One was when a client wanted to make a career change. So their brain was telling them that they needed to figure out what they were going to do, go through all the training, pay for the training, get work experience and do this and do that. And maybe they'd need to move in order to do this and take their kids out of school.

I can't remember the exact details, but it was just a whole long list, and everything that that entails. And so they were getting overwhelmed because of their thoughts about all of that. So as well as addressing her thoughts, I asked her, "Well, what's the 5% version of that or the 2%?" And she was like, "Well, I could send an email and ask about that thing. I could take a library book out, and kind of read about the area of work that I'm interested in." And I was like, "Well, how does that feel?" And she's like, "Oh, yeah, that feels totally doable."

Which is the thought that you can use in all sorts of situations, yeah, that's totally doable. So "how could this be totally doable" is a really fun question

Ep #250: Recognise and Shift Thought Errors

to ask. And it's going to get your brain to focus on the most straightforward solution to something rather than the complicated hard version, which a lot of us that's where our brains like to go. So when you challenge these thoughts, you're not just changing your mind, you're changing your whole narrative. You're rewriting the story of what's possible for you.

This is why coaching is so transformative. It's not just about tackling a specific problem or decision. I mean, yes, it is that, but it's also just reshaping the way that you see yourself and your potential. And making that switch from I can't because blah, blah, blah, to, well, how can I make this work? And just in that, seeing yourself as capable, resourceful and ready, regardless of any particular circumstances involved in your situation.

Another classic thought error that comes up is various forms of, I'm not enough of this, I'm too much of that. I'm too young, too old, too inexperienced or over-experienced. So thoughts like this are going to feel true to you because you've probably thought them over and over again. You may not even recognise that they are thoughts, which is why they are so much fun to blast through in coaching.

It came up with one of my long-term private clients a couple of years ago, when in our conversation about something completely separate, she just casually mentioned being too young for something. And I was like, "Wait, hold up, forget everything else we're talking about. What do you mean you're too young to do this thing?" And she went on to present what I'm sure seemed a very reasonable explanation of why she was too young to do this particular thing, but I challenged her.

And this is when it's really useful to not know anything about someone's industry and to be able to like, "No, I don't believe that at all." And even though she didn't agree with me at all, and really didn't believe that doing this thing at her age was possible, she was willing to entertain the idea. So fair play to her, going to give her a shout out. She knows who she is. And she was willing to entertain the idea. And it meant that we got to coach on all the things that were related to it, everything that it brought up.

Ep #250: Recognise and Shift Thought Errors

And it wasn't long before she was taking steps towards it and going for it. And of course she wasn't too young, but by doing this thing, she's made a huge impact in her industry by going for it at her age and with her level of experience.

So here's a powerful question to counteract limiting beliefs like this is you can ask yourself what unique advantages do I have at my current age? What would doing this now mean to me and to others? What do I want to model to myself and to others? You can think, how am I perfect for this?

How is this way that I am, this person that I am, how does that make me the perfect person to do this thing? It's so fun to play around with these and just really question these thought errors.

Before we wrap up our discussion of thought errors, I want to highlight something really important. These thought errors are just excuses. They're cleverly disguised barriers that we put up in order to avoid confronting our deeper fears, the fear of failure, the fear of success, because just think about it. The thought errors like, I don't have enough time, I'm too young or old or this is going to be hard work, it's going to require a lot. Aren't they just ways that we sidestep facing what really scares us, the possibility of failing, the implications of actually succeeding?

So how about instead we just address these fears head on. Instead of hiding behind the thought errors, we face those fears, we look them in the eye and yeah, I see you, but you're not going to stop me, the same with fear of success. Because sometimes we're scared of what success might bring, more responsibility, more visibility, more criticism, might change our relationships, but success is an opportunity to expand and to have a more profound impact. Let's not let thought errors hold us back from the life that we want to create.

Alright, that is it for today. You are capable of more than you know and it's time to start proving that to yourself. So notice your thought errors when they come up and challenge them. Blast your way through them.

Ep #250: Recognise and Shift Thought Errors

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.