

Ep #273: Getting Started with Momentum and Balance



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With Your Host

Maisie Hill

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This is episode 273 and today I've got a bit of a story and a lesson from my son, Nelson, so I hope you enjoy 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*.

I am recovering from a cold flu thing, so if you can hear that in my voice, that's what's going on. But this is the first day that I've left the house in quite a while so I'm glad to be able to do this. And today I have a story for you about a recent adventure that I had with Nelson. So about a month ago, we taught him how to ride a bike. We have tried previously on a few occasions, and it just didn't feel like the best time to do it. He was getting quite frustrated by it, and there were multiple reasons why we were just like, "Maybe we'll just skip this for now and come back to it when he's a bit older."

But with summer rolling around, I've been thinking about, it would be a really great thing to do. And then I saw this really great hack on TikTok. Then I was like, "I want to give that a go. I think that would make a difference in teaching him." So once we got back from Scotland, and as soon as the sun started to come out, there was just one weekend where I just said to Nelson, "Shall we go and see if we can find a bike for you and then we can spend the weekend figuring it out and seeing if we can get you riding?"

And he was very surprised and excited, so off we went. We found him a bike and immediately just went to the park. He just wanted to get started straight away. And the TikTok tip is basically you get a large towel, and then you wrap it around their torso so that the ends of the towel are behind them. And then you just hold the ends of the towel with one hand, but kind of up against their back. So that you're holding them and giving them that stability and balance until they can find their own balance. And then you can loosen your grip as they figure it out.

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I will make sure that we add the link in the show notes. You don't need to message me. We will add the link to the video. I will find it so that you can see it if my verbal description is inadequate, which I understand if it is, I'm a visual person too. So you're basically holding onto the towel, supporting them and then you loosen their grip as they figure it out. So you're giving them the security that they need whilst also giving them the freedom to find their balance. And it literally happened so quickly. I did it twice with him. And then the third try, he was off just peddling on his own.

And the look on his face was unforgettable. It was so fun to see. And then once he got it, he was just off but he needed our help taking off, just kind of those first few pedal strokes. But once he got going, he was fine. So then that week we were cycling to school and back a bunch and he was gaining more confidence, still needing a little help starting off.

But then a week after he learnt how to ride, we rode to the Sun Deck, which is this part of Margate where it's a sun deck. There's places to eat and drink out in the sun when the sun is shining at least but it's about a mile away from where we live. So we cycled there and back without a hitch and at the end of that Nelson was like, "Can we go on an even bigger ride? I want to go really far." So I was just like, "Yeah, sure. Let's go for it. How about we just ride along the coast until you're ready to stop, and then we can just get the train home from wherever we have ended up?"

Because you know there's a bunch of seaside towns. They're not that far away in terms of cycling. And there's lots of options for places where we could call it a day and get the train home. So at this point I should say, Paul is already rolling his eyes in the background and shaking his head because he knows what I'm like and he knows what Nelson is like and we don't do things by halves. Once we want to do something, we are all in. So he was just like, "Oh no, I can see where this is going."

So it just cracks me up because he knows what we're like. There's no talking us out of something once we've locked in on it. We're very determined like that. So he was like, "Okay, let's go." So on the Sunday we set off around midday. We stopped off at a cafe in Westgate and we had

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lunch. Then we continued to Minnis Bay, which is already pretty far for a kid that learnt to ride eight days beforehand. But at this point, Paul had to leave because he was DJing that evening, so he had to get back to Margate to do that.

And I just said to Nelson, “Look, there’s no train stations for a while now. After this the next train station is Herne Bay.” And so I pointed to this castle, [inaudible] castle that was in the distance. And I was saying to him, “Look, we’re going to have to cycle to that castle and then do the same distance again in order to get to a train station, so we either go big or go home.” And of course, of course, being my son, he wants to go big.

And in Herne Bay, by the way, if you ever go to Herne Bay, you can get these really great doughnuts there, you know the classic ring doughnuts with sugar on them and they’re all warm and delicious? Yeah, those ones. So I was clearly very motivated for us to reach Herne Bay, but although it was sunny it was also really windy.

And if you’ve been around here listening to the podcast for a while, you know that being autistic, particularly my type of autism, my autism, I can be really affected by the wind. And I’ve done a lot of work around that, and I am able to be out in the wind more than I used to. But this was a lot of being out in the wind. So I was a bit unsure about how it was all going to go because I could end up struggling and heading into meltdown territory. He might run out of steam. We might have to hitchhike home with our bikes, but also, fuck it, these are the experiences of childhood.

So we just went for it, and it was amazing. We had the best chats, talking about the scenery and nature and the light and the Roman walls. And it was just one of the best days I have had with Nelson ever. It was amazing. So we got to Herne Bay, we had doughnuts. And then I was just like, “It’s not that much further to get to Whitstable. What do you think? Shall we go home now, or do you want to crack on and just see if we can get there?” And of course he’s like, “Yeah, let’s go.” So that’s what we did.

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We cycled from Margate to Whitstable, which is 20 miles. Now, if you had asked me before that day when we took off, how far I thought an eight-year-old who had just learnt how to ride a bike could cycle. I don't think I'd have guessed 20 miles, especially in windy conditions, and having the wind against you. And so the lessons I've taken from that are, one, the importance of just getting started. We underestimate this all the time. We just need to get started.

And two, just seeing how far you can go. It's such a great reminder for all of us, me included, and whatever our goals might be, that sometimes we just need to take the first step and then keep going and just see how far you can get. You might go way beyond the limits that you had, or maybe what other people expected was possible.

There's also a third lesson, and I think this is perhaps even more interesting for us to consider. And that's the relationship between balance and momentum. When we think about starting something new, whether it's a personal project, a lifestyle change, learning a new skill, we often focus too much on achieving perfect balance right from the start, the perfect execution. And understandably, we just want to feel steady and secure before we even begin to move, and just have that security of I'm not going to fall over, very understandable.

But think about setting off on a bike, that balance, that steadiness comes from the momentum that you create and just getting going with it. And you could hesitate to take that first step towards your goals. Because if you fear that initial wobble, that sense of instability, when you're not yet up to speed, it's uncomfortable. It's uncomfortable feeling like you might fall at any moment and that you might get hurt by falling. I get that.

But that wobbling is not only normal, it is necessary, because it's in the wobbling, in those shaky starts that you get a sense of yourself in relationship to what's going on around you. You begin to learn and adjust and find your rhythm. And that's what we've seen with Nelson, on that first day that he learnt to ride, we taught him.

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And then we went to this gallery opening, this exhibition opening for Studio Lenca. Jose, by the way, is this amazing artist based in Margate. We're big fans of his. So we went off to that. And then when Nelson and I got home, it was dark by this point. He wanted to go out and ride his bike. He was just like, "Let's keep going." He was so happy and eager to do it, and I was just like, "Yeah, why not? What's the harm? Let's go around the block." So off we went and it's a good circuit for us to do because there's no roads to cross.

But there was one point where he came off and he was trying to get going again, but he was struggling. And I was kind of holding back and thinking, am I going to jump in and offer to help? I'm just going to let you try and figure this out a bit. And then this crowd of people who were outside a bar just started cheering him on and telling him he could do it. And then he did, and they gave him a huge cheer when he got going. It was very cool. He absolutely loved it.

So we just need to get going and be willing for it to not go right in order to get to the part where it does. And there is a huge misconception that successful people are the ones who find their balance immediately, that they just start off smoothly without any hiccups whatsoever and it all goes fantastically. But the thing is, first of all, everyone has a party trick. My old yoga teacher used to say that, and it's always stayed with me because there's always one posture that suits someone's body type or flexibility or strength or whatever, it just happens to work for them.

So we always have to account for that, everyone has a party trick. But also successful people are just more willing to experience the clumsiness in order to achieve balance. And I use the word balance here cautiously because it's really not one of my favourite words. I think we can use it in really screwed up ways. But that stability that we crave comes from movement. Trying to balance on a bike without moving at all is virtually impossible. The balance comes from moving, from those first few uncertain pedal strokes.

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The same goes for yoga postures, when you get rigid, you hold your breath, that's when you wobble and fall. But when you breathe and you move, when you actually let yourself wobble, that's when you find your balance. The same thing goes for skyscrapers. They're only stable because they move.

The same goes for mountains. Mountains, vibrate, they're moving all the time as a result of seismic activity and oceanic currents etc, etc. They've done these studies on the Matterhorn showing how it is always vibrating and oscillating and moving in different directions. So I say that because when we often think about being stable and being solid, we often think about being as solid as a mountain, but mountains are also moving and the same is true in your life.

So when you hesitate to take action because of fear of that initial instability, missing out on creating that necessary momentum that's going to result in stabilisation. And that's when we can get stuck and get really trapped by all the what-ifs and oh no, not yet and all the stuff that our minds love to come up with. And most of these things when we actually examine them, which is the purpose of thought work, most of these things aren't even true. And the ones that are, may not be as big of a deal as you think that they are, but that's what we get to explore in that kind of work.

So are you willing to sacrifice balance in the short term in order to get the momentum that will result in the so-called balance? Because this isn't about a flawless start, that is not the goal. Do not set yourself up for, oh my gosh, all sorts of things, do not set yourself up for feeling like shit essentially by thinking that it needs to be flawless from the get go. This is about being willing to get it 'wrong' in order to get those failures under your belt and then get to the success.

And the longer you delay the so-called failures, I personally prefer to call them heroic attempts, the longer you delay your success. Because that momentum starts with taking action, and before that, the decision that you will, the decision to move. And it's less about what the decision actually is and more about the decision to do something and then you just get going.

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Each action you take, you're building speed, you're getting some momentum. With that speed, things get smoother, and you build your confidence.

And then you don't need to do so much in terms of effort because you have that momentum there, but you can't get to that unless you're willing to just wobble in the first place. So this doesn't mean that you're not going to wobble or even fall or that it won't require effort, especially when the wind is against you. Those times still happen even when you're in the 'successful phase'. But it means that each motion is going to contribute to greater awareness in yourself, greater confidence. So that's the key to making progress.

So when you feel like you're wobbling, you don't have to label that as a disaster. It's just a sign that you're moving; movement is progress. But if you have a story about how wobbling means that you're failing and that it's not going to work, and it never will because of who you are. Then you won't be able to see wobbling as just part of the process, because that's all it is. And when you embrace the wobble, then you get to continue to the next step, the next phase and move on from there.

So I have some questions for you to reflect on as we finish up today's episode. Where are you holding yourself back because you're afraid of the initial imbalance, that wobble, that fear that you could fall? What first steps are you avoiding taking because you fear they won't be perfect? And why do you think they need to be perfect? That's a good one, too. What journey could you be on if you just decided to get going? And where could you end up if you decided to keep going? Think about Nelson learning to ride his bike, how can you apply all these lessons to your own life?

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