

# Ep #279: Why You Delay Your Goals and How to Start Anyway



## Full Episode Transcript

With Your Host

**Maisie Hill**

## Ep #279: Why You Delay Your Goals and How to Start Anyway

This is episode 279 and I am talking about what happens between when you decide that you're going to do something and then when you actually go to do that thing, and you run into issues because your brain will generate a reason for you to wait. And it will be true, or it will feel like self-care or wisdom, but today I want to give you the coaching to get you through those moments.

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*.

Okay, folks, welcome back to the podcast. I am so excited to record this episode because I have been watching this thing happen over and over and over again in all my years of coaching, specifically goal coaching. And even outside of that actually, because whether or not you have a goal, I guarantee everything that I'm going to talk about today shows up just any time you go to do something.

So I need to talk to you about it this week because the 30-day goal challenge inside Powerful starts this Sunday. This episode comes out on Wednesday. It starts on Sunday. Usually, we work with seasonal goals in the membership, but I am upping the ante, and for the first time ever, we are doing a 30-day goal challenge where you pick a goal using my goal-setting formula. We have a goal-setting intensive to start the whole challenge this Sunday, followed by four weeks of goal coaching.

So you get to pick your goal, whatever it is. So your challenge could be 30 days of speaking honestly instead of people-pleasing. It could be 30 days of stewarding your finances where you address your money mindset, and you get your finances in order. You could sign a certain number of clients, you could write something, create something. Your focus could be on dating or an existing relationship of some kind. It could be on getting a job, expressing yourself, being visible. You get to pick what would make a difference to you.

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I recommend that it be something that excites and terrifies you a bit, because it does need to be something that brings your fears and your insecurities and doubts to the surface. Because as much as I want you to achieve your goal, it is equally important that your goal acts as a vehicle for flushing your stuff to the surface, so that we can use coaching to deal with it once and for all. This is why a shorter timeline is so helpful, because there are less places to hide with it, and that's perfect. That is what we want.

So the entire membership is going to be doing this together. But I know what is about to happen for a lot of you, because I've experienced it myself. I've seen it unfold so many times. And it's what happens between you deciding you're going to do something, and then you're going to do that thing. And your brain will generate a reason why now isn't quite the right time. Maybe in a few hours time would be better, because then you'll have done this or that, or had your lunch or whatever it will be. Or tomorrow, because then you'll have had a good night's sleep, or there's so many things that your brain can come up with.

And those of you already in the membership, your brain might even be already doing this in advance of the challenge starting. And it could be to do with the challenge or just something else that you have going on in your life that you want or need to do. But it's a little or a lot out of your comfort range, involves some degree of emotional risk. So your brain starts suggesting that, you know, you'd better wait for a better time to come around.

Folks, this is just what brains do. If your brain is telling you this, you aren't in a unique situation. Mine does this, yours does this, everyone's brain does this. So somewhere between now and the challenge starting, your brain is going to generate a reason why now is not quite the right time. Probably it will come up with multiple reasons. As I said, it may already be happening. You might be listening to this with a bit of a thought that sounds quite reasonable or understandable. You could even convince yourself that delaying is you practising good judgment.

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So let me give you some of these reasons because I want you to be able to recognise them when they show up. And I'm going to give you some coaching for each of them along the way.

So one of the most common ones is time. I just need to get through this week, then I'll be in a better position to focus. Things are just really full right now. Or once this project is done, once this deadline passes, once the kids finish term, or once they're back in school, I'll be able to give it the attention it deserves. And this one is very convincing because it's framed as respect for the goal. Like you care enough about it to wait until you can do it justice and do it properly. But what's actually happening is that your brain has just found, it's imagined that there is some future version of your life where somehow things are just calmer and there's less going on, and it's using that as a reason to not start now.

But unless you actively do something to create that reality for yourself, that calmer, less busy version of your life is not coming. So that's the time side of things.

And then we've got the readiness one, where your brain will offer you thoughts like, I'm not quite ready. I need to do a bit more preparation first. Or I should probably get clearer on what I actually want before I commit to anything. There's a version of me that would just be more equipped to do this than the current me, and I need to go on this convoluted route of doing all these other things before I do the actual thing.

So this one can come across as like self-awareness, and it gives the illusion that you're still going to be taking action before you then work on your goal. And I'm telling you now, it is bullshit. It is utter bullshit. And you have to be honest with yourself when you spot this going on. And look, I do it too. I tell myself all the time, oh, I can't do this until I do this other thing first.

Or, you know, I really want to do that, but I'd be better prepared if I did this other thing first. Right? Of course, my brain is going to chime in with these

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thoughts, but I can spot them for what they are. I'm used to that narrative and that response to a degree of discomfort. And my favourite response to this is just, well, is that true? Is it really true that you need to do that thing first? What if it's not true? What if it's possible to do the actual goal without those other steps?

So this is all about trying to avoid the emotional risk that comes from getting out of your comfort zone. So what if we just rip the band-aid off? What would need to be true in order for you to do that? How would you need to be thinking about yourself, seeing yourself in order to skip all these steps that you're telling yourself you need to do before you get to the real thing? You're never going to be ready unless you just decide that you are. So you can just decide that you are. What have you got to lose? You've got more to lose if you don't do that.

Then we have the energy one, which is where your brain will be telling you things like, well, I'm really depleted right now. My nervous system is already stretched. This isn't a good time to be adding something demanding. I need to be in a better place in order to do this properly. And with these ones, there's a bunch of beliefs that these thoughts are growing from. And that's that goals are demanding, that working on a goal is going to dysregulate you, and that it's going to take your energy away.

Now, I can see how that could be true if your approach to achieving goals is crap. But it's not going to be because I'm going to guide you through it and give you my process to follow. So yes, goals require something of you. They give you something to rise to. But they also help you to access things inside you that you didn't know that you have. And pressure isn't bad. It is if you're using your goal as a way to pressurise and criticise yourself, but again, you're not going to be doing that. That is not how I do things, that's not what I teach, that's not how I coach you. So we can just get rid of that idea. Good pressure helps to transform you and to forge a version of yourself that is waiting to be uncovered.

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And why would a goal dysregulate you? Why would working on a goal dysregulate you? Only, again, if your approach is crap. My thought is that having a goal regulates me. And I have proved that to be true again and again for myself, and I've seen it in my clients as well. And especially with everything going on in the world right now, having a goal, having that focus is incredibly useful.

I also find that goals give me energy. I'd never had the thought that goals take away my energy. They provide a way for me to tap into my creative energy, to stimulate my brain, to raise my energy levels. And for sure, there are times when I am tired at the end of that, but that's not a bad thing. Not all tiredness needs to be pathologised. I can be tired from putting effort into something and at exactly the same time feel energised by the focus and the intrinsic motivation that I am creating in myself. Intrinsic motivation is when we act without being compelled by external rewards, where the activity itself is its own reward.

That is how I approach goals. That's very energising to me. It doesn't take away my energy. A goal will take away your energy when you have thoughts about it doing that, and where you give your power over to the goal itself.

All right, what else have I got on my list of things to rant about? The other people one, where there's a family situation that you need to be present for, or my partner needs a lot right now. I need to support them. The kids are going through something. This isn't a good time for me to prioritise myself. That's a big socialisation one. I can't focus on myself, I can't do this for myself right now because this person and that person and this person. So this is the one that will really rub up against your values and everything that you have been socialised into.

The thought of deprioritising the people you respect or love in order to pursue something for yourself may not sit well with you. But I would ask you to look at that pattern and think about has there been a time in the last week or year where the people around you weren't needing something?

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Because if your goal has to wait until nobody needs anything, the goal is going to wait around forever. And remember that if this is a big thing for you, to prioritise yourself, to take care of yourself, then working through these tendencies can be your actual goal for the 30 days. That could be your goal.

Now, this next one is the one that I see quite a bit in my clients who are new to the membership and unfamiliar with goal work in the way that I teach it. And it's about doubt. So, doubting your goal, which is really you doubting yourself.

So that can sound like, what if this isn't actually the right goal? What if I start this and then realise I chose the wrong thing? Maybe I should think about it a bit more before I actually make my mind up. And this one doesn't show up once you have learned to make decisions and follow through because you trust yourself and because you have a positive relationship with failure and a respectful relationship with yourself. But before you build those skills, there can be some worry or anxiety about getting it right.

And you might tell yourself that you're being discerning, like you're being responsible and considerate. That's it. Like you're being considerate if you give this time to really reflect and think on it. I'm going to be teaching some stuff to do with this in the goal-setting intensive kickoff call. But just know for now that you have to be onto yourself about whether you're being discerning or if it's something else. So when you're being discerning, you're using your judgment to make a decision and the process is very clean, and there's a sense of forward movement because you are deciding.

But with this one, when that doubt shows up and you start questioning your decisions and what your goal is and how you're going to do it and all of those things, what you're doing is just going around in circles and tying yourself up in knots and just like creating knot on knot on knot. It's not you making a decision and moving forward. It feels very different. As I said, I'm going to be teaching and coaching you on this particular pattern on the

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goal-setting intensive on Sunday. That is one of the ways that I am going to set you up for success with this challenge.

And then the final one on my list is the one that can sound most like self-coaching. And that's when it shows up as, I've been noticing that I'm resistant to this, and I think that means that I should sit with this more and self-coach on this before I commit or take any action. Or it could be that, well, I'm noticing that my nervous system is being activated, and I want to be respectful of that. I don't want to push through. I want to work with myself. And so this one is quite a sophisticated one because you're actually using everything I teach, but in an unhelpful way.

So yes, noticing resistance is important. Working with your nervous system matters as well, but noticing resistance and then using that noticing as a reason to not start is not self-coaching. That's you keeping yourself stuck in the I need to know more phase. And you are going to build the skills that we are talking about here by doing things, not by just endlessly analysing your resistance until it disappears.

With everything that I've been speaking about on this episode, I know that a lot of the things that come up will be very real. Your work schedule, your period being due, and like having no hormonal resilience to help you through. You could get sick. There could be things that happen in your personal life, your work life. All of those things are real and true. I have to contend with them, too.

But how are you going to respond to them? Are you going to let them derail you? I'm not talking about pushing through and punishing yourself to get there. It might be about, can you trust that if you give yourself several days to be ill and to recover, that you can come back from that and make your goal happen?

Being ill in this challenge could be the best thing that happens to you. Not that I want you to be sick, I really don't. But imagine you get sick and you can't do any work, or at least you think you can't do any work on your goal

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for a week or even two. Imagine if you then discover that you didn't even need all the time you thought you needed to do it. That could be a fabulous result. That could be an amazing thing for you to learn. And I know that when you're thinking that you do need loads of time, it's very hard to ever conceive that you could do it in less time or less effort and still do a good job of it. But I am telling you that it's possible. I have seen it time and time again.

Also, it's really not true that you can't work on your goal when you're ill, because there is always belief work that needs to be done, belief in yourself, belief in your goal. So you can for sure be learning how to manage your mind around those things and doing that belief work, or just respecting the fact that your body needs to be taken care of and just doing that. Like that is a fundamental part of you achieving your goals. It's always taking care of your body. Why would we leave that out?

But among all these examples I've given you, and there may be more as well, I'm sure there is. These are just the ones that when I've gone over all the coaching I've done that really stick out to me. But we all have our own tendencies, our go-to reasons for why we can't do something. So the type of reason that you tend to use to avoid taking action

I have a couple. Mine probably is mostly dysregulation, because it is true that I get dysregulated. I'm autistic. I have autistic meltdowns and shutdowns. And I do need to take care of myself in all sorts of ways. But there is a place where I can also use that as a delaying tactic.

It doesn't happen much these days. I could tell myself, oh, I'll just wait till I'm more regulated, or whatever it is. I often also tell myself that there's an order that I need to follow. I want to do this thing, but I can only do it after this other thing. And I'm not talking about the times when I've made a strategic choice not to do something. There's times when I do that. I'm talking about when I'm avoiding an uncomfortable thing by saying I have to do this other thing first. So I have to be onto myself about when I'm doing that and interrupt that way of thinking. And I do that without making any of it

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a big deal because again, this is just what brains do. It's just your brain doing its job.

Your brain's job is to keep you safe. And safe to the brain means stick with what's familiar because we know that. We know what happens with familiar things. It's predictable within reason. I mean, I could argue with all of these things because it's just not true. Familiarity isn't necessarily safer. But familiar means that the version of you that exists right now with the life that you have right now, just keeping on doing what you've already been doing, doing the things that you're used to doing, doing what you're already accomplished in that don't require much from you. And a goal is a threat to that.

Because a goal requires you to become someone different than you currently are. If you had already created that goal, you would be that version of you. It's asking you to become someone different. And your brain, which is very good at its job, will generate reasons for you to stick with what you know and to stay where you are. And the reason it generates can be true. It can be completely true. And it will sound like common sense and like, yes, this is just something I should deal with first. And there are places where like, yeah, okay, that makes sense.

But you have to know when you are just avoiding something. And you will know the difference. I've seen this show up in so many ways. I've seen someone set a goal, be completely committed, and two days later have a completely reasonable explanation for why they need to take a step back. Work escalated, something happened in their relationship, they started to feel run down, their inner critic just got very loud, and then they're like, well, is that really the goal that I want anyway? Does it actually matter to me? I'm like, well, you tell me. Does it matter?

And of course, we want to be building in self-care along the way, but it's the difference between using it as a reason to stop and just something that you take care of along the way, and still keep going. When something comes up that really is an emergency that requires all of your attention, you're not

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going to have a long deliberation about whether to pause your goal. You're just going to handle it.

What I'm describing here is different. This is where a circumstance in your life shows up, and then your brain uses that to build a case around why you shouldn't do that thing that you know you need to do. It will say like, oh, you should wait. It will tell you that if you do it now, then really you're not setting yourself up for success, you're setting yourself up to fail, and it's the responsible thing to do, the kind thing to do to hold off until whatever is meant to happen in order for you to finally do it.

So it's that way of talking, that internal monologue, that deliberation that is the sign that this is what's going on. So when you find yourself building a case for why now isn't the right time, that's your brain in the middle of a very successful pattern because it's done it countless times before. And it's worked. And it's just doing it again right now. So, of course, it's going to try doing it because it's worked so many times before.

Now, in case it isn't already clear, I'm not telling you that the circumstances of your life don't matter. I'm not telling you that you have to bulldoze through it all and just override illness and whatever else. That's not self-leadership. That is just you pushing yourself, white-knuckling it, and we don't do that around here. But what I am telling you is that there is a difference between a circumstance that requires you to really stop and take care of something and a circumstance that your brain has recruited in order to justify stopping, right, where you get to avoid or you get to delay. And you know exactly when it's one or the other. And by the way, this is a bit meta, but do not use figuring out if it's an excuse or a real thing as a way to delay taking action. I can totally see that happening.

I trust you know when you're using a circumstance to avoid having to face what your goal is requiring of you. So I trust that you know, you can trust that you know. Because here's what goals do. I've talked about this a lot on the podcast. Goals don't just produce the result, the actual outcome, the achieved goal. They also flush things out. They bring up everything that

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has been going on underneath the surface, the beliefs you have about whether you're the kind of person who finishes these things or can do these things.

The fear of what it will mean if you try and it doesn't happen, how are you going to talk to yourself when that happens? The discomfort of prioritising yourself for 30 days, when maybe you're just very practised at not doing that. That stuff is uncomfortable to face, but it's so important that you do face it. And a really good justified reason, a circumstance happening in your life can be an excellent reason not to face it.

And that lovely brain of yours, which is brilliant and creative and wants to protect you, will find something that can be used as a reason not to do it every time. So you've got to know that it's highly likely that this will happen. That way you, a, notice it when it happens, and b, you don't make it a problem that it's happening. And then you build the internal skills and resources for you to keep going and do the thing that you're trying to get out of. And that is what the whole community is going to be doing inside Powerful during this 30-day challenge. It's what we do anyway, but this shorter timeline is going to really assist the process.

We are going to be moving through everything I've spoken about and more together. Because all that's happened is your brain is just registering that this goal is now real, that it's no longer just an idea or a plan. It is a real thing. As soon as you commit to that, your brain, which has been fine with the idea and the plan because those don't actually require change, just had a little hissy fit and tried to look for an exit route as soon as it became real. This is just how brains work. And I want you to see it clearly when it happens instead of being pulled along by it and just telling yourself that you don't know what happened or these things are just out of your control, life happens.

So this episode airs on Wednesday. Friday 15th is the last day you can sign up, and the challenge starts on Sunday 17th. You do not need to know what your goal will be in order to take part. The materials and the

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goal-setting intensive kickoff call will take care of that. You do not need to know how you're going to make this happen. You do not need a clear schedule. You don't need anything right now other than to make the decision that you are in. That is it. And I really hope you join us because it's going to be fantastic.

So head to [maisiehill.com/powerful](https://maisiehill.com/powerful) or find the link in the show notes, sign up, and I will see you on Sunday at the goal-setting intensive.

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