

Ep #286: Self-Leadership and the Inner Boardroom



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With Your Host

Maisie Hill

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This is episode 286, and today I'm excited to introduce a concept of mine, the inner boardroom. This is an episode that's going to really help you to understand yourself in a fun way and help you recognise what's at play when you're making decisions. And also see what's happened as you reflect on particular situations, and really help you to step into self-leadership, so 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*.

Today, I'm going to invite you to join me in an imaginative exercise that is going to change how you view your internal dynamics. This is about thinking about the different aspects of your personality as members of a boardroom. And each member, whether it's the visionary, the strategist, the nurturer, the executor, they all have their unique strengths, their perspectives and roles to play.

They've been appointed as executive board members of your life, and they each have a voice. They each have a vote in all the decisions, all the things that go on in your life, the little and the large. So, picture this, obviously don't close your eyes if you're driving or anything like that, but just picture stepping into a sleek, well-appointed boardroom. So just take a moment to notice the enormous windows that are probably there. The expansive view, the luxurious decor that is just done to perfection.

And there's a large table that is surrounded by a dozen or so chairs. One of the chairs is for you because you are the CEO in this scenario. Whether or not you hold this title in the real world, just have some fun embracing this role, really fully step into it. You are the CEO. Picture it. Feel your way into it. Adjust your body posture. Feel the authority of your position. You're not just capable of leading a company. You're also really adept at leading the most important enterprise of all, which is yourself, self-leadership.

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Now, as the CEO, you're going to take a seat at the head of the table. So sit down, settle in and just take a look around the table at the board members who are gathered. Each chair is occupied by an aspect of your personality, an aspect of you. And each of them has a name of some kind as all board members do. And you know yourself best, so I encourage you to think of the different aspects of yourself and some names for them. I'm going to give you some examples in a moment, but just this is an ongoing project.

You might be like, "Oh, yeah, there's this part of me, this part of me and that one's like this and that one's like that." But it might be just you find yourself in certain scenarios reflecting on situations, and you think, yeah, there was a part of me that was really concerned. What was that part of me that was speaking then or what was the part of me that was really leading? And just come up with some fun names for them.

So, some examples I can give you. We've got the visionary who is brimming with ideas, always looking ahead, has a really strong vision of the future. You might have the strategist who's planned every step in meticulous detail. The nurturer could be there, supporting, encouraging ideas, people, the different aspects of you. You have the executor who's just like, "Alright, let's take action. Let's see some results." You could have a researcher who really just wants to be left alone, reading, understanding, diving deep into the details before resurfacing with insights and understanding.

And then you might have a head of resources who's very responsible and very mindful of resources that are available. And all of them, whoever your board are, they're all excellent at what they do. But what will happen is, you will have some members who are more prudent and cautious, mindful of resources. You'll have others who push boundaries and embrace risks, and they just figure out the details along the way.

Some of them are really excellent at communicating and nurturing projects and people. And others just like to bury themselves in the data and research and not talk to anyone. You might have one who loves to delve

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into long-term projects and another one who just thrives on quick, impactful decisions, responsive in the moment. So they are all valuable. They all bring their own strengths and experiences to the table.

Now, this might seem a bit left field for a boardroom, but the reality is that there will probably also be a child of some kind in there. And this child might be a toddler version of you, that's very demanding and ruled by what it needs and feels in the moment. And it might be terrified of something that's actually unlikely to cause actual harm, but it's just a toddler so it's going to be terrified of things that are actually quite reasonable. Or it might just be very committed to getting what it wants and very determined, like a lot of toddlers are.

Or you might have a teenager in there who's got their feet up on the table, rolling their eyes, especially when the more prudent, cautious members of the board have something to say. They might be rolling their eyes and blowing bubble gum. So you can see how you can really bring these aspects of you to life by creating characters and mini-personalities.

And your role as a CEO isn't just to manage these voices, but to lead them and to use the collective wisdom and insight that you have so that you're listening to each board member, understanding their concerns, taking their suggestions. But ultimately, it's your responsibility to integrate their range of perspectives into a coherent voice, a coherent strategy that moves your whole self forward, because just like in any boardroom, conflicts do arise. And you might find parts of you being pulled in different directions and kind of getting locked into arguments about what's best.

And you might have one part of you that's driven by fear and maybe wanting to play it safe, while another part of you is driven by desire and urging you to take a risk and to chase your dreams. And I just want to say that is so normal and it's so common. I've had a lot of my clients describe their experience of this. And they'll often say that part of them wants to do such and such, but the other part of them doesn't want to and maybe there's this other plan instead and because of these competing internal voices, they feel stuck.

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And meanwhile, the voices are just competing for airtime inside and they're clashing and stuck in a rut of back and forth, that's just not getting you anywhere. And it really is like being in a meeting all day long, listening to the same two or three people repeat themselves, trying to argue their point and their perspective in order to convince the others who are just not going to be convinced when you're getting into it like this. And my clients often actually describe it as conflict. That there's these parts of themselves that are in conflict.

And I actually had a client the other day saying, "There's parts of myself that are at war with each other." So I know it feels that way, but they're only in conflict if you think they are and if you describe them as being in conflict, and if you let them be in conflict. And they'll only be in conflict if you aren't being a leader. So the key to this is you being in self-leadership, that is it. If you are in self-leadership, if you are really being the CEO of your own life then you will be able to lead all the board members that are the various aspects of you.

If you're being a leader, you're going to be able to hear what they have to say, to take their information and viewpoints on board without letting them take over. And that means that those voices will be able to collaborate, but that will be objectively harder when you see them as being in conflict. Really think about, you stepped into that boardroom and there was an argument going on. And if you are just stepping in with that mindset of, oh, yeah, those two, they're always in conflict. Then you're not really going to create any opportunities for them to be anything other than in conflict.

So what if instead of being in conflict, they're in conversation, they're collaborating, they're attempting to negotiate the best path forward? So when fear raises its voice and whatever member of the board is speaking with fear, then it's only trying to protect you. So what if instead of dismissing it, let's say it's the toddler that has the fear and it's like, no, what if that happens, or the responsible person in the mix, the one who cares about resources and staying safe, that kind of thing?

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What if instead of dismissing them or trying to ignore them and pay attention to the more exciting voices that have something to say, you're like, "Oh, I know you just really want to protect me. That's what you're concerned about, and I totally get it. I really appreciate that you are raising this. But here's why that's not actually an issue." Or "Actually you're so right that is an issue. Here's how we can work with that." Can you see the difference?

So when a board member raises its voice, you actually acknowledge it. You don't ignore it. You don't dismiss it. You don't get stuck in an argument. You actually listen to it. You hear what it has to say because of course, that protective voice coming from inside of you, that cares about your safety and protecting you. That's going to help you assess risks more clearly. But just because that fearful voice shows up, it doesn't mean it's right. It doesn't mean it has to be the voice that makes the decision. That's for you to discern.

And really, this is all about understanding where you are making decisions from. Who is driving the bus? That's the question I like to ask a lot when I'm coaching people. Okay, with that decision, who's driving the bus? What's the voice? Who's the member of the boardroom? Who is in charge? And whomever is in the driving seat, do you want them to be driving it or are they actually best as a passenger and you're in the driving seat? So this is about recognising which voice or voices are the loudest, what have they got to say, which ones have got the most sway in a situation?

And I do think that whatever they have to say is valuable, but again, that doesn't mean that they're right or that you have to agree with them, but hearing what they have to say is important. It's a lot like talking to kids, when they're worried and they've got something to say and you listen and you hear them, then they know, I've told a responsible adult. But if we don't listen, then they get louder and what they're thinking and feeling comes out in other ways.

Or they go the other way, and they go silent, and they suppress things and that has consequences. That comes out in other ways. So we want to be in

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the habit of listening and understanding and being very grateful to these voices that speak up inside of us. Because all of these parts of you are active and they are invested, they're engaged, but that doesn't mean they get to run the show or drive the bus. They've each got their agendas and their fears. And your role as CEO is to guide these discussions, ensuring that they don't devolve into unproductive arguments.

So I like to think of the table in my boardroom as being a round table, a lot like Arthur and the Knights of the Round Table. So that's how I like to picture it. And if you're not into the boardroom, my dear, thank you for playing along anyway, but you can also imagine that these internal aspects of you are like instruments in an orchestra. And all the instruments or voices within you, can create harmony or they can create dissonance, depending on how well these parts are conducted. So you are the conductor.

Each part plays its part, each family of instruments, but only under the guidance of a skilled conductor, you. Because without that direction, one family within the orchestra might become too dominant or suddenly it's all woodwind, drowning out the strings. Or you lose the rhythm of the piece that's being played and everyone's playing at different speeds. But with it, all those amazing different energies in the orchestra, the different sounds, they can all be directed to create the most incredible symphony.

And when you listen to these internal voices as a leader, with you in self-leadership, you can validate their concerns. You can validate their contributions. And then they, in turn, are more likely to work in harmony, knowing that they are valued and heard. And then you get to decide how much influence they should wield in your life. And part of that is giving each of these aspects of you a name of some kind, giving them opportunities to be heard without judgment.

And then when they speak up, you listen, and you understand, and you appreciate them whilst also reminding each part of your larger goals and how each of them can contribute to that. It's very much your job to be the leader and to discern what's important in what they are saying. It's also

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your job to make sure they don't descend into conflict and get stuck arguing over things. But you're also not here to mummy them, because you are modelling self-responsibility to them and asking them to be self-responsible too.

So I would love for you today to just have some fun considering which board member or instrument is taking the lead in the decisions that you're making today. Which board members are speaking the loudest? Who's being drowned out? And how might you lead them to not compromise, but to collaborate together? So this is just about observing your thoughts, labelling them according to the board member speaking. And this just really helps in recognising which voices are at play whilst also involving the quieter voices that maybe would like an opportunity to be heard.

So you can journal about this. If you're in the membership, you can come and get coached on this, just post in, Ask A Coach or in the community, bring it up on our calls. This has been ongoing work we've been doing in the membership anyway, but it's nice to have a specific focus to bring to coaching. You can also just get some coloured pencils and crayons out and see what happens when you allow the different parts of you to communicate in non-verbal ways.

Alright, folks, that's it for this week. I will catch you next time.

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