

YOUR EGO WILL CHANGE YOUR LIFE

EP #32

“Do I need a life coach?” You’re listening to Episode 32, with Rhiannon Bush

Welcome to the Do I need a life coach? Podcast. We’re here to discuss the ins-and outs- of the life coaching industry and give you tools to use, to see for yourself. I’m your host, Rhiannon Bush. Mother, management consultant and a passionate, certified life coach.

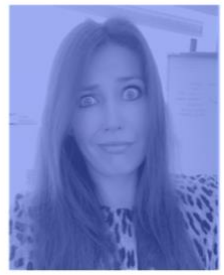
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I love my home so much. I can’t even begin to explain the emotions I have every single day when I’m walking through my house. And before you think that my house is some mansion or fancy house, it’s not. It’s very normal and very suburban and I love it so, so much. I’ve worked hard for this house. My love for it is a combination of various things. I grew up in a beautiful home. A big, beautiful home right on a lake and it was paradise. It was the most tranquil and beautiful spot and when I get back there I feel very nostalgic and reflective. But there was this part of me growing up that wanted to go and experience the city life. Big city life. I wanted to go and experience the skylines, and the underground bars and the rooftop bars, and the nightlife... all the night life really 😊 and all of those little colloquialisms that a city offers. What that symbolized to me was the chance to get lost and reinvent myself whenever I wanted to. To really discover who I was, and who I wanted to be, without prying eyes. Even to have enough people in one space to really explore who I wanted to be and to find my people.

Growing up in Tassie was incredible, which is why Damien and I decided to move back and raise our kids here, but I always feel very stifled by the 2° of separation. I felt like it’s easy to be pigeonholed and typecast as being a certain way, and once you are, that’s it. And I want to grow and evolve and change throughout my life. To do that requires a lot of testing and playing with boundaries and environment. It can involve a lot of emotions and different behaviours, sometimes offending people and making mistakes, and you learn and you build resilience and you move onto the next level. In Tassie, I find that less available because your chances of knowing people or having to liaise with them in the future is high. In a big city, you can pick up and move on. Whether that’s at work, in social circles or other. Maybe this is my desire to save face and avoid being spoken about on the rumour mill, but it’s an interesting way to think about it all.

To progress, grow, learn, develop and change we can do that really fast and we can do that slowly. In our early years – childhood, primary school, high school we’re going through this cycle repeatedly and very often. So who we become labelled as in high school, often ends up the same label that you have as you enter into adulthood, and beyond. And I knew by moving back to





Tasmania, that would be one of my biggest hurdles. I feel like I behave in a more conservative way, because I'm worried about fallout, reputational risk of me being my authentic self, and who I want to be in the world, because I just don't know if you can come back from mistakes. And that sounds a bit silly, but I've heard stories about people from 30 years ago and it surprises me that people a) remember and b) aren't focused on their own lives enough and c) feel it's ok to pass that information along. It doesn't stay buried in the past.

Being too protective and reserved is something that I've recognise within myself and want to change. Because I do want to grow and develop from where I currently am. And that's what I aim to do throughout my entire life, not just in specific seasons of it. It's really interesting to me when I walk to my house I think about how much I love my house, it's symbolic of where I've been throughout my life. When I move to big cities, I lived in small apartments. And then I moved to London, and it was even smaller. Where I lived at that time, didn't matter to me. All I needed was somewhere I could sleep while I got to experience the city and travelling around Europe and surrounding countries. That was my priority. Now I'm back, putting myself in situations that create growth and expansion of my comfort zone is more difficult because I feel vulnerable. My ego wants to protect me and look after me and so it's more important to fly under the radar and stay safe, than to be bold and make waves.

We all have an ego. Every one of us. Our ego is our conscious mind, the part of our brain that links with identity and who we are. Our ego is our persona, our character, and how we present to the world. It's what we link to our identity which triggers emotions and behaviours like pride, resilience, self-worth, patience, tolerance, etc.

Our ego has a need to feel special. For us to stand out from the crowd and feel like we are unique and different. Our ego serves us in the way of self-confidence, self-satisfaction and pride. It also dis-serves us with self-confidence, pride and self-satisfaction when that behaviour presents as exuberant, smugness or boastful. Our egos are funny things. I love watching children and interacting with them. They are so pure and unfiltered and I wouldn't say they're egotistical. They just have this naivety and as they grow and develop, they become aware, perhaps too much of the world around them, how they're perceived in that world and who they are and then they will adjust their behaviour as they feel necessary to conform to social norms and unwritten societal contracts. While we talk about Tall Poppy Syndrome in Australia, Tony Robbins says that it's only because we've given it a name, and actually it exists in every culture. Stepping out above the crowd is not favored upon. It is not deemed a likeable quality and those who are overly confident or boastful will often be quickly put back in their place.

For instance, in an article by Ryan Holiday, he writes 'At 18, a rather triumphant Benjamin Franklin returned to visit Boston, the city he'd run away from. Full of pride, he had a new suit, a watch and a pocketful of coins





that he showed to everyone he ran into. All posturing by a boy who was not much more than an employee in a print shop in Philadelphia.

In a meeting with Cotton Mather, one of the town's most respected figures, Franklin quickly illustrated just how ridiculously inflated his young ego had become. As they walked down a hallway, Mather suddenly admonished him, "Stoop! Stoop!" Too caught up in his performance, Franklin walked right into a low ceiling beam.

Mather's response was perfect: "Let this be a caution to you not always to hold your head so high," he said wryly. "Stoop, young man, stoop -- as you go through this world -- and you'll miss many hard thumps."

The problem with pride is that it blunts the instrument we need to succeed -- our mind. Our ability to learn, to adapt, to be flexible, to build relationships, all of this is dulled by pride."

While I love that story and I think it has validity, I feel I came from the opposite spectrum whereby I didn't have enough self-confidence, I didn't have enough self-pride. So when it comes to ego, I think there are a few important points to consider.

- 1. Is your pride something you need to outwardly share? If you want to by all means do but do it for a purpose. Whatever purpose you deem worthy.**
- 2. When you're sharing confidently, are you disregarding or disrespecting those around you? I've had many foot-in-mouth moments because I've given an opinion and not considered my audience well enough before opening my big mouth. It's been embarrassing at times, and I've had to pop my metaphorical tail between my legs and apologise. Even though I've apologised, that doesn't remove the impact it had on my audience. Despite being unintentionally done, it still hurts.**
- 3. Most importantly, does your ego serve you or hinder you? Do you have the evidence of the work you put in and are you open to learning and perhaps being wrong? Or are you right and that's the way it is? Are you flexible and open or expert and closed? And out of these two, how is it working out for you? If it's working, fabulous continue. If not, maybe open yourself up to questioning what you could be doing differently?**

I was recently coaching a few clients on behalf of a business, and it was really amazing, as always is, to see somebody who really struggled to come to the party. One of the problems with coaching on behalf of a business is that you don't necessarily have the buy-in or willingness from the participants which can create resistance if they are unsure or insecure in themselves, to commit to the process. This client never would've said that, he was way too full of bravado and this presented as discounting and discrediting the work I was doing, he was lovely, and it wasn't personal for me, but it was very fascinating to see how defensive he was and how he was doing anything he





could to justify why this wouldn't work and wouldn't add any value to him. And very soon after his session, I was coaching another client who was just senior and I had the same fear that he'd feel a similar way. He was all in. He came with an open mind, really wanted to know how this was going to benefit him and how he could use the work we were doing together. He loved it.

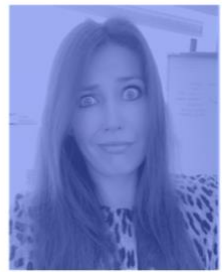
He was open, he was willing and curious, and the way he approached the coaching session with an open mind, meant that by the end he had gotten so much out of it. He'd found it incredibly insightful, and he really loved the work and the things we'd spoken about. I was reflecting on the other client and how he got nothing out of it, it literally felt like a waste of time, an hour he'll never get back, all because he wouldn't let himself. He had actively researched how to discredit the process, which I had a little (silent) giggle at, to be honest, because you can find any information you want to. I'm sure if I looked hard enough, I could find a chocolate diet to help people lose weight, right?! So... credibility is the word that comes to mind. But at every turn, with every interaction I had with him, it was difficult because while he wasn't negatively defensive, and he didn't act like a brick wall, it was this constant rebuttal, and for me as a coach it was a very valuable exercise because it is a challenge for me to overcome. And I'm not one to turn away from a challenge.

But my ego was struggling with it. When my ego is being unresourceful, I want to tell someone to 'f' off and shut it down. Two of my biggest challenges when I first started coaching was to trust the process and to get super curious about what was going on with the client instead of making it all about me. Big ego right?!

Our beautiful ego is there to protect us. It loves us and is designed to keep us safe. When we learn that we are enough and that we accept ourselves – all the parts of us we love AND all the parts of us we don't love, we get to step into a place where we don't make everything about us. And it's a beautiful place to be. Because all of a sudden you can see people's behaviour for what it is, which is a direct reflection of them, their feelings, their beliefs, their experiences and how they see the world. It has very little to do with you... provided you haven't been awful or are blaming them for actions that may have provoked them. But I'm going to park that for a minute.

Don't get me wrong. Sometimes people do things and it hurts. Even knowing it has everything to do with them, and nothing to do with you, it hurts. There are times it's very difficult not to take it personally, welcome to being human. When we can calm our emotion down enough, we can start to look at facts. And when we deal in fact, we can step back and see the situation differently. That emotional detachment helps us recognise ourselves in the situation, in the drama and the role we're playing. For example a client was telling me a story about a huge fight she'd had with her sister. They lived together and were very close, but they were also very dysfunctional. There was a lot of very historic emotion from childhood and their teenage years





that just kept being dredged up and up. After discussing my client's role in the fight and doing some NLP perceptual positions work, she could see how her behaviour had actually provoked her sister, and how she was picking for a fight because that's what she'd always done as the elder sister.

When we accept ourselves for the most part, as we are, and we are proud of ourselves and how we behave, and we come from a place of integrity and authenticity, we can see that when other people behave certain ways, it's not about us, and we can put ourselves out of the picture and view it from a completely different perspective. That's when we can serve others.

So it's really interesting to me, as somebody who has studied life coaching and knows a lot about it, I live it, I breathe it, and it's something that I study or listen to something or up skill in most days and I have evidence from clients that I'm very good at, and it is a diverse range of skills, values, beliefs, behaviours that make me very good at it. So... It's really interesting that when I get emotionally triggered by something, which happens – yes, even as a coach. It does happen a lot less than it used to for me in my life, the work I've done and the knowledge I have but there is the odd time I can't quite detach emotionally to simply make an informed decision from fact.

And anyway, it's a little bit frustrating. Because if I've studied all of this stuff and I know all of this stuff and I teach other people of all of this stuff, shouldn't I know how to do this myself? And this exact thing is what stops so many people who have life coach training, having their own business. It's this very thought and reason that causes impostor syndrome, and a feeling of not being good enough, or not worthy enough, or not practised enough or disciplined enough or put whatever wording here that you like, enough.

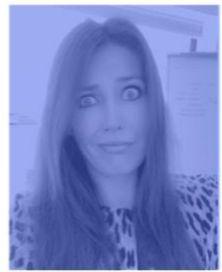
And this is the part of being human being that is inescapable. We feel things. We feel things more intensely and closely when we care more deeply, and sometimes it's about us at the centre of that care, or sometimes it's about somebody else.

So... what do we do? How do we tame our ego? How do we even recognise our ego?

I've always considered our ego to be very linked with our self-talk. That voice in our head. I also consider it linked to emotions like pride, selfishness, resentment and on the positive side pride, satisfaction, accomplishment... our ego is linked with them all.

So step 1 is to start paying attention in areas where we're not getting what we want, habits we wish we could change, When we fall into routine behaviours, after a certain amount of repetition they become habits. When they become habits, our conscious awareness has automated them and delegated them to our sub-conscious. This is the incredible way our brain conserves energy, creates behavioural efficiency and keeps us focusing on new and interesting information.





The downside with this, however, is that our brain will lose conscious awareness of what it no longer deems it needs to improve or change. Therefore, we can't recognize, consciously, a lot of the self-talk going on, especially in the very moment we're doing the thing we don't want to do. The bigger downside is that our sub-conscious and unconscious work significantly faster than our conscious brain, because the information our conscious brain processes is new or challenging, past or future. So when we want to have conscious awareness of things we can't consciously recognize, our brain is on autopilot and it's happy that way. All this requires you do to is stop. Dead in your tracks, stop. Stop moving, shut your eyes, in that very moment, and ask yourself what's going on? What are the thoughts you're thinking? What are the feelings you're feeling? And what is your self-talk saying?

Secondly, to really change your self-talk, treat it like a toddler. A sweet, kind, angelic toddler sits on one end of this spectrum, and a little rip-snorting mayhem of a toddler sits on the other. Your response can sit anywhere on that spectrum but your response to this toddler (your self-talk) needs to be firm, it needs to set boundaries, and it needs to be crystal clear about what you want instead.

You pull it out, visualize it in front of you and speak to it like a toddler. I'm serious. This sounds a little loopy but give it a go, it'll change your life. You tell it to stop, you thank it for its contribution and then you say you want it instead. Give it a name if you'd like. "Rhiannon, I've said no. Thank you for popping up, it's wonderful to see you, but I'm not interested and instead, I'm going to drink this glass of cool refreshing, life giving water, and sit down for a while. Great." and walk away.

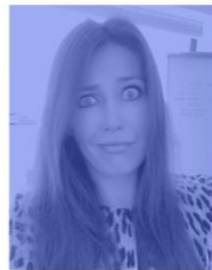
Now I don't swear at my kids. But you have my absolutely permission to swear at your self-talk if that gives you the release and gusto you need to make a change. You can yell, scream, mock, mimic, swear, stomp your foot – you can throw a real tantrum at it, just like it's doing to you. Because just like a toddler, if you ask it to go away nicely do you think it'll listen? Probably not. So you need to outsmart it and keep persisting until this voice is no longer present. At all.

That's how you change a habit my friend. It's all the thoughts in your head. Have some fun with this. Give it a try, I dare you, have a laugh at yourself, throw a tantrum – when was the last time you did that? Enjoy really getting to know your self-talk and learning to tame it. It'll change your life.

See you next week!

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Hey! Before you go, I always find reviews really helpful when looking for new information or insights...





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