

Ep #41 : Your Hidden Habits



Full Episode Transcript

With Your Host

Kristi Angevine

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Welcome to Episode #41. This is your host, Kristi Angevine. Today, I'm talking about habits that you don't think of as habits. Listen in and see what hidden habits you have, that you might not even realize qualify as habits.

Welcome to *Habits On Purpose*, a podcast for high-achieving women who want to create lifelong habits that give more than they take. You'll get practical strategies for mindset shifts that will help you finally understand the root causes of why you think, feel, and act as you do. And now, here's your host physician and Master Certified Life Coach Kristi Angevine.

Hello, hello, everyone. I'm so excited to be recording this today. I'm going to start off with just sharing a couple of recent reviews the podcast has received.

One, is from somebody named NYDweller, and it says, "I've started listening to your podcast and I am already getting a lot out of it because of your philosophy of the need to understand the internal world and the thoughts that drive behavior. I don't listen to a lot of Podcasts, but I am making yours my new Habit!" Thank you so much for telling me about this. That's so sweet.

The next one is, "There are so many life coaching podcasts out there now, but Dr. Angevine's really stands out. As a working physician mom, I find a lot of the things she talks about applicable in my personal and professional life. I highly recommend this!" The person this came from I can't quite pronounce what it says. But it looks like, BeRefinnej. So, for those of you who wrote those reviews, thank you so much. They mean a lot to me.

The reviews really help the podcasts be discoverable, so other people can find out about it, listen to it. So, if you haven't left review, and you feel so compelled to do it, it would mean a lot to me, if you did.

So, now I want to transition to the here and now, and give you a little glimpse into my world. So, my husband and I, we pretty equally share the

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preparation that goes into getting our kids out the door, and doing a lot of the aspects of getting them ready for school. And one of the things that I've started really enjoying lately, is having lunches done the night before.

Yesterday, at the end of the day, I was mentally and emotionally really drained. I decided to skip making lunches, and put it off to doing it this morning. This morning comes and my husband was going to be in charge of getting the kids out the door, so that I could start work early. Because some unanticipated things came up yesterday in the afternoon, and certain work tasks got delayed.

My plan B was to start work a little early today. Because I've learned that, for me, it's always better to get adequate sleep, as opposed to staying up late to finish something, if ever possible. So, this morning comes and before I started going to work, I started making the lunches. And my sweet husband, when he comes to the kitchen, asked me what I'm doing and says that he would love to take over doing the lunches so that I can get to work.

Now ordinarily, I would kind of engage in a banter and argue my case, and say that, "Well, I already started the lunches. And since I wanted to do them last night, I think I should just finish them now." I would get into this really long explanation of why I think that I should follow through with it.

But I was actually really proud of myself this morning. This morning, what I did was a radical departure of my norm. And I said, "Okay, I can do that. I can walk away from the half-made lunches and let you do them." I thanked him, and I walked away. Which let me start work earlier than if I just stayed.

Which brings me to the topic of today, hidden habits. I'm going to elaborate on what hidden habits are. And then, I'm going to circle back to point out hidden habits in my situation. So, when I was thinking about this topic, I was initially thinking that the title of this podcast could be, *The 10 Habits That We Don't Think of as Habits*.

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But when I started cataloging all the hidden habits that I see in myself and I see in my clients, I realized there's so many more than ten. And I really find it useful to sometimes offer a really comprehensive list, so that you can hear all the subtle, maybe less obvious habits that you might have. And so, that you can start being more aware of them in your life.

Now, the reason I was focusing on this, for this episode, is that I was a speaker at this really incredible retreat for women physicians, a couple of weeks ago. The topic of my talk was, no surprise, about habits. So, the founder and organizer of the retreat is a friend of mine, Dr. Ali Novitsky. Her business is Life Coaching for Women Physicians, and her retreat was just for the women who work with her.

At the beginning of the conference, she started off talking all about soul crushing beliefs. And her talk laid a beautiful groundwork for my talk, that followed her, so that I could talk about how these beliefs feed into soul crushing habits. Now, after I did the talk, it hit me that when many people think of habits, they think of things like regular exercise, or healthy eating, or unhealthy eating and overeating, or phone use, or getting their charts done on time.

And yes, these things are indeed habits, but habits are so much more than just these commonly thought of things. So today, I'm going to share a really comprehensive list of habits that you might not actually think of as habits. If you're a longtime listener, you've heard me discuss my definition of habits. But I'm going to repeat it here for new listeners, and for those of you who've been following me for a while.

My view on habits is that they are the nearly automatic default ways that we think, feel, and act. Default habits are what happen when we aren't being deliberate, and when we're not curating. And they're much, much more than just behavioral things; like the habit of stress shopping, emotional eating, scrolling on your phone while you walk down the hall.

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So, really broadly, a habit can be a repetitive thought, or belief. It can be a recurrent emotional response. And of course, it can be an automatic behavior, or an automatic lack of a behavior. Now, before I elaborate on this list of habits that you might not consider to be habits, keep in mind, one of the most fundamental ideas that I teach, is that habits are resourceful, learned solutions. They are adaptive in some way, or they were adaptive in some way in the past.

Our habits make sense, even if they don't seem to make sense on the surface. And even if we don't love the habit, or the consequence of the habit. We have our habits because they solve for something. At some point in time, they had a benefit, or they currently have a benefit. And that's why they continue with so much automaticity.

So, as you listen, I want you to think about if any of the habits that I give you here, any of these tendencies that you have, and where you see them showing up in your life. Now, some of the habits are much more subtle than others. And I'm actually including more obvious behaviors, that for some of you, you already think of these as common habits. But for others, you might not consider them to be habits.

So, they are included here just to expand your awareness. And at the end, I'm going to give you a little exercise that you can use to start investigating the root cause behind your hidden habit. So, here we go. Here's my list of, more than 10 things that are habits you might not consider to be habits.

Second guessing yourself. Comparing yourself to others. Catastrophizing. Beating yourself up. Judging yourself, but not noticing how harsh you're being. Not giving yourself grace. Not extending the same compassion to yourself that you so easily extend to others. Saying yes when you really want to say no. Over extending at your own expense. Putting yourself last.

Do any of these sound familiar? Okay, there's more. Not setting boundaries. Not holding to the boundaries that you did set. Not asking for

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help. Over eating. Mindless snacking when you're not hungry. Numbing or distracting yourself with using your phone. Compulsively checking your email when you've just checked it 30 minutes ago, or three minutes ago, or 30 seconds ago. Ignoring your feelings. Trying to escape your feelings. Trying to change your feelings. Judging your feelings. Trying to distract yourself from your feelings. Ruminating.

Now, here's another one that's really common, fortune telling. Fortune telling is where you predict a negative outcome without actually considering the odds of it happening. All-or-none thinking. Now, if you're not sure, if you have all-or-none thinking, check out Episode 16, so you can see if it applies to you.

Deferring to others as experts. Habitually putting mentors, colleagues, friends, on a pedestal. Dismissing or minimizing successes. Saying things like, "It's just a fluke. It wasn't a really big deal. Anybody could do it." Dismissing or not noticing how much work you actually do.

Or similarly, minimizing your stress; "It's no big deal. It's really not that bad. I mean, it's just what we do. We do hard things." These minimizing or diluting tendencies can sound as innocent as repetitively saying things like, "It's fine. It's totally fine."

Okay, so we're down to the last third of this list. I'm hoping, as you're listening to this, you're nodding your head going, ah, yeah, that's a habit I didn't think of as a habit. And if you are, please know, these are extremely, extremely common.

All right, here are a few more. Over intellectualizing. Overthinking. This can be a tendency to be in your head all the time, to have analysis paralysis, and analyze things, and research things, go down rabbit holes. Instead of doing something that you want to be doing, like making a decision, taking action towards a goal. Feeling however you're feeling. Letting your intuition be more clear.

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Another one, is busying. This looks like overfilling your to-do list. Having discomfort with slowing down, stopping, discomfort with doing nothing, or allowing whitespace or unscheduled time. Exaggerating the negatives. This looks like over emphasizing shortcomings or problems. And in psychology, it's known as the habit of magnification; believing that you should or must do something. This sounds like a pattern of thinking that starts with; I should, I must, I have to.

Worrying what others think of you. Imagining what others are thinking of you. And if you're familiar with cognitive psychology, you know this as the "habit of mind reading". Freaking out if there's no reply to your text message. You know how you send a text message or an email to somebody, and they don't write back in the time period that you think they should? And the swirl of thoughts that happen afterwards? "Why didn't they write back? Are they upset with me? What is this mean?"

Another hidden habit is taking things personally. Assuming fault when there is none. Or conversely, abdicating responsibility, when there's actually an opportunity to take ownership. And the last hidden habit that I'm going to offer you, is that some of us have a habit of believing the thoughts in our mind, just because they're there. And, that might be a little bit meta and can stretch your brain a little bit. But I think it's a really useful one to keep in mind.

So now, if you listen to this list and you can relate, here is an investigation tool for you. If you listen to this list, and you couldn't relate to any of those things, that's also totally fine. This tool is applicable to the habits that we ordinarily think of as habits, as well.

So, there are two parts to this investigation tool. When it comes to your habit, instead of thinking to yourself; that's just the kind of person I am. Ask yourself; I wonder why that's my go-to? Part two, instead of thinking to yourself; it's just what I do, I can't help myself. Ask yourself; if I didn't do this

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habit, what's my underlying worry? Or, the other way to put that; if I did the opposite of this habit, what would be uncomfortable?

What you find may surprise you, shock you, or totally delight you? So, let's get back to my situation with making lunches. What's the hidden habit? Well, it's my tendency to shoehorn tasks into tiny pockets of time. To take on a task as mine, that another very willing person could handle, when my time would be, perhaps, better spent on something else.

It's the hidden habit of not asking for help to create the optimal time that I need for me. Now, when I look at this, I could say I'm just a great multitasker. I'm the kind of person who likes to be really helpful to my spouse. I don't want to dump on him. It's just what I do.

But when I do that, that doesn't help me understand why I have this habit, and it just perpetuates more of the same. So, here's what it looks like to use the investigation tool for my situation. Instead of; that's just the kind of person I am. I can say to myself; I wonder why my go to is to shoehorn, to take on tasks, and to not ask for help? I wonder.

Instead of; it's just what I do, I can't help myself. I can ask; if I didn't do this, what am I worried about? What would be uncomfortable if I did the opposite? So, for me, for starters, efficiently using every pocket of time got me through medical school and residency, and a busy private practice. Being busy was kind of like a badge of honor. And when I'm honest, being busy also distracted me from slowing down long enough to notice my stress.

Next, if I didn't shoehorn tasks, and if I did ask for help, well, a part of me would feel like I'm dumping on my spouse. I would think about that in a way that would create guilt. Can you see how these simple observations can serve as prompts and jumping off points, for me to start investigating the deeper aspects that drive my hidden habits?

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So, think about your hidden habits. And this month, I hope you'll try this exercise, and then go to the Facebook® group *Habits On Purpose* and share what you noticed. If you liked what you heard today, please consider leaving me a review and a rating on iTunes. And if you really liked what you heard today, and you feel like sharing this podcast with a friend, it would mean so much to me if you did.

So, until the next episode. I will see you soon.

If you want to learn more about how to better understand your habits, stop feeling reactionary, and get back into the proverbial driver's seat with your habits, you'll want to join my email list. Which you can find linked in the show notes. Or, if you go to habitsonpurpose.com, you'll find it right there.

Thanks for listening to *Habits On Purpose*. If you want more information on Kristi Angevine or the resources from the podcast, visit www.habitsonpurpose.com. Tune in next week for another episode.