

Ep #141: Habits Reimagined: An Unconventional Approach to Reworking Your Most Draining Habits



Full Episode Transcript

With Your Host

Kristi Angevine

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Welcome to Episode 141. I'm your host, Kristi Angevine, and I'm here to help you understand why you think, feel, and act as you do so that you can be more deliberate with your thoughts, deliberate with your feelings, and deliberate with your behaviors.

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, everybody. If you are new to the podcast, welcome to the podcast. I'm so glad that you took a minute to be with me and learn about your habits. If you're a long-time listener, you know I'm so happy that you're here.

What we're going to talk about today is what's possible when you change some of the most deeply entrenched, deeply ingrained patterns, especially when you can take the ones, you know those habits that take more than they give, and turn them into habits and patterns that are much more nourishing.

So the way that we're going to do this episode is I'm first going to go through some of the most energy draining habits. These are some of the most common habits that my clients experience, and habits that I, myself, have varying times in my life have been an expert in, and we're going to think about what could be possible when these habits change.

Now I find this type of exercise really fun to do because sometimes we get really focused on how to fix problems, how to change the things that are difficult. And I personally find that sometimes I don't look at what's possible on the other side of making that change.

And so I think it's really fun to remind ourselves that focusing on what's possible after we've done some of the work to make some changes is a really vital part of making change.

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So after we discuss what's possible and what things might look like when we change some of the most soul sucking habits, I'm going to end with a concrete step that you can take to start inching in the direction that you want to go.

Now I want to frame this entire episode with a few important points.

Number one, if you find habit change difficult, you are not alone. It is not a process that we are explicitly taught. They didn't just sit us down in second grade and say, "Hey, these are some things to be aware of. Let's work on them in some simple ways through elementary school, middle school, high school, so that we graduate high school knowing exactly how to change our habits."

But just because it wasn't taught to us 10 or 20 or 30 years ago, it doesn't mean that we can't learn how to do it. Basically, it's not too late. The most fundamental pillars of habit change are simultaneously simple enough for children to understand and nuanced enough that there's always room for growth. But it is never, ever, ever, ever too late to start.

Now my next point is you can do habit change work all on your own by applying tools and concepts and doing your own self-reflection and exploration. And that's kind of the beauty of self-coaching and solo exploration endeavors.

Also, sometimes it is just so much easier to do when you have an outside resource who's got your best interest at heart, has the benefit of perspective, is someone who's willing to say the hard things, and ask you the questions that you might not think to ask yourself. And this can come in the form of a really expert friend, in the form of a coach, a therapist, or a mentor.

I'm a big fan of DIY, and yet I've learned over and over and over again that sometimes my awareness and my capacity to shift is so much quicker when I have help. So in this vein, if as you listen to this episode, you think, "I wouldn't mind having the kind of expert outside resource that Kristi is talking about," I'm here for you, for women physicians specifically.

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Right now the Habits on Purpose for Physicians Small Group Coaching Program is about to start with another round that begins in November of 2024. So if you're listening to this in real time here, in a couple weeks enrollment will open.

And there's really no program out there like this one that combines habit change work with Internal Family Systems, with coaching for high achievers, and is designed specifically for the challenges that high achieving women physicians grapple with. So if you want more information, go to HabitsOnPurpose.com/HOPP and you can get on the interest list. And then watch your inbox for enrollment information.

And bottom line, wherever you get help and support, just make sure that you invite it into your life, because it really does facilitate and fast track some of the habit change topics that we're talking about here.

So back to the topic at hand. What could be possible for you if you changed your most soul draining, energy sucking patterns? What would your life look like? Now I'm not just talking about some fake highlights, reel version of regular life. I'm talking about, what would your ordinary, regular life, with its regular, predictable inconveniences, what would that life look like?

When there wasn't that internal angst, without the internal turmoil or limiting beliefs or painful narratives, and all the conflict that we bring to ordinary, everyday messy reality, what would be possible?

As you listen, just know I'm not trying to paint an unrealistic pipe dream or some escapist fantasy. All I'm trying to do is to plant a seed of hope so that when you think about your habit change, you can really think about the differences that could be made.

And think about what that would be like for you. I'm going to paint a picture for you of what real life could feel like and how you could experience things differently with different habits. So life is still life. Kids still have meltdowns. In-laws still say crazy-ass things. People forget things they said they would do. Arguments and disagreements still happen. You still have PMS. Your

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partner still loads the dishwasher in their very special way. Your kids chew their carrots louder than you think might be possible.

Or your O.R. schedule gets messed with, and the equipment that you've asked for, for the last five years, isn't there. We still have racism and sexism and discrimination and gender pay gaps, war and climate change and disease and political corruption and all the things. Life is still life.

But in this episode, we're going to talk about what could be different when there's something different inside you. Because when you have a different internal experience, you'll relate to yourself differently and therefore you'll respond to the world differently. And that's really powerful, because this means you don't actually have to wait for the world to change, or for other people to stop being how they're being, or for different circumstances in order for you to experience things very differently.

So let's get to the meat of things. What are some of the most draining habits and patterns that you can think of? I want you to think about this for yourself right now. When you think about your day-to-day life, what are some of your patterns, some of the things that you do or that you think or that you experience that really take more than they give?

Now I'm going to go through a variety of the ones that I see, ones that I've experienced, ones that I still grapple with, so that you can kind of take an internal inventory. So here they are:

Negative self-talk and beating yourself up. Second guessing, overthinking, over-complicating, struggling to make decisions, analysis paralysis, hyper-vigilance to imperfections; real or perceived. Worrying about what others might think of you. Worrying that people will find you out, find out that you're not as good as they thought you were. Compare and despair.

Rumination after interactions, after procedures, after events.

Catastrophizing and going to worst-case scenarios without solutions.

Fixating on minutia and trying to control each and every little thing. Making mistakes means personal indictments that negate all your successes.

Judging yourself harshly, but not seeing it as harsh.

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Holding yourself to unrealistic standards, all-or-none thinking, black-and-white thinking, not enjoying the journey, not savoring success before moving on to the next, compartmentalizing or resisting or suppressing emotions.

Who can relate to that? Downplaying accomplishments, deflecting compliments, self-deprecation, struggling with boundaries, overextending, believing that you should be better or different or no more than you do, believing you should be further along than you are. And one of my favorites, procrastination.

All of these habits are the soil from which precarious self-esteem grows. And they all basically have this thing in common, they take more than they give. They keep you small. And if you do want to be helpful to your fellow humans, they do the opposite of that because they are energy and time drainers.

I may have missed some of the peskiest habits that you have, so just think about what are the habits for you that take more than they give. That if you could press that magic button and make them shift, what are they?

And the next thing I want you to think about is, what would they shift to? What would life be like when they did? So let's just imagine, what would be different for you if instead of scathing self-rebuke, you talked kindly to yourself? Now, quick caveat, I don't mean that you are like Stuart Smalley from the Saturday Night Live skit of a few decades ago, or that you sugarcoat or whitewash over problems.

I mean, imagine genuinely meeting yourself just as you are with a kind, caring warmth. Imagine that instead of second guessing, you thoughtfully considered things, you made your best decision, you executed, and you knew that even if things didn't go as planned, you would learn something and you'd have your own back in the aftermath.

Instead of beating yourself up when things don't go as you like, you say, "Well, that wasn't how I wanted it to go. I wonder what there is to learn here?" Or you meet yourself with compassion and you say things like, "You

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know, gosh, it is so hard when things go sideways. I need some support.” Imagine instead of overthinking or ruminating, you do the best with what you have and then you move on.

Say you have a socially awkward moment, no biggie, that's human. We all do it. Is there anything to learn? Yes? No? On to the next, without rushing. But also without overstaying in a hell of rumination.

Instead of compare and despair, you get inspired by others. You think, “If they can do it, so can I.” You feel a sturdy self-confidence, and you no longer feel compelled to dismiss or downplay what you do well.

Instead of getting stuck in worst-case scenarios that have no solutions, you use strategic pessimism to your advantage, and you use it to inform yourself of potential risks. And then you make plans for them.

You're conscientious of others, but you also hold a kind, firm boundaries. Sounds like, “I really wish I could work that person into today's schedule, but it's going to have to wait until next week.”

Imagine that you trust yourself, you like yourself. You know you have limitations and that there's always more to learn, but you also have a really accurate assessment of your strengths. You know what you like to do. You know what you enjoy doing. You know what you don't like to do and what you don't enjoy doing.

When things are difficult, you don't make it mean there's something wrong or bad about you as a person. Maybe there's a lesson to learn, but that's it.

You have more curiosity at baseline. So instead of feeling consumed with hypervigilance for potential rejection, you're just at ease and curious, and you wonder.

And yeah, you still have uncomfortable experiences, uncomfortable emotions, but when it comes to uncomfortable emotions, you see them as messengers. They are important cues that grab your attention and say, “Hey, look inside to see why this came up.”

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You see your emotions as teachers, and therefore none of them need to be boxed up or fixed or resisted. Rather, you could just patiently feel them, meet them where they are, and learn from them. Imagine what it's like when you actually know how to do this.

You've stopped people pleasing, so you don't overextend. You say no when you need to say no, and you have more energy. And taking care of yourself is just a given when life is life and there's a curveball.

And say you're running late and you get snippy with the people you love. You recognize that emotional state faster. You recognize you're snippy more quickly than you ordinarily would, and you take time to get centered. And then, later on, when the time is right, you make whatever interpersonal repair is needed.

Imagine having access to the qualities of self with a capital "S", from Internal Family Systems: patience, calm, playfulness, compassion, confidence, connectedness, open heartedness, presence, belonging, clarity, creativity. Then, when life does what life does, you can navigate it with so much less angst.

Imagine this in your life right now. I want you to bring to mind a recent difficulty that you can see how it was partially difficult because of how you approached it, or because of how you interpreted things, or because of some habit that you brought to the scenario.

Now, imagine if this default habit shifted, and how that experience might've been radically different. The next step to this work is I want to invite you to get really concrete with imagining what would be possible if your most pesky habits and your most deeply ingrained patterns that you don't like, they were different.

And this is what leads us to the "how". We always want to know how to do this, right? And it's understandable, because we can have all the good ideas in the world, but if we don't know precisely how to make these good ideas real, what good is it?

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So your first step is to get really concrete with imagining what would be possible and what would be different in your life if some of these habits changed.

And here's the next step. There are many aspects to how you can get from where you are to where you want to be, but here's one that is quite counterintuitive.

First step, imagine what could be possible. And I want you to get really granular, really specific. Don't just be vague and say, "I would feel liberated and elated because I would end my second guessing."

Instead say something like, "When I end second guessing, I'm no longer going to spend 45 minutes trying on and evaluating seven outfits and trying to get out the door. I'll just get dressed. I'll trust myself. I'll do B- charting. I'm going to have a very clear system for answering complicated questions, which means I'm going to get home earlier. And I'm going to have more time and more energy."

So once you've gotten really specific, the next step is to imagine how you will feel when this is your new reality. We feel calm, open, settled, and sturdy. We just feel capable. We feel at ease. We feel a sense of clarity. Whatever the label is for the emotion that you believe you'll feel, I want you to notice what the embodied experience of the feeling is.

Meaning, what's the felt sense that you have when you imagine this really concrete reality? What's it feel like in your body? Does it feel heavy? Does it feel open? Does it feel solid? What's it like? And the reason for this is, regardless of what you label the state, it's the *felt* sense that you need to cultivate and invoke.

Because as crazy as it may sound, when you can feel the feeling that you think you'll have, and you have a different set of habits, and feel it in advance, you will then be able to better figure out, and sometimes know, exactly what you need to do to make the change you want to make.

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Now if this brings up some skeptical parts, that's totally normal. I get it, but this is one of those situations where 'don't knock it until you try it.' So let me recap.

The first step towards making a change is to take some time to identify your most painful and energy draining habits and patterns.

Then take some time to imagine what would be different if these habits shifted. What would life be like? What would stop? What would change?

And then get really specific with what precisely would change in just an ordinary day? What would be different?

Then, from this very specific vision, ask yourself, how would I feel? And transport yourself there, to the specific image, and check in to see emotionally in your body, in your mind, what's it like? What's the felt sense? See if you can just be with that emotion or that felt sense.

Because from there you will have a hunch of exactly what needs to be done in order to start making some changes. This is such a fun way to make a habit change, even if it seems to fly in the face of conventional habit change advice.

So my invitation to you is to try this, see how it works, and then let me know how it went. What was it like? In order to let me know, just go get on the Habits On Purpose email list. Just go to HabitsOnPurpose.com, sign up for the email newsletter, and press "Reply" to any email you get.

I hope you enjoyed this and found it useful. I will talk to you next week. Take care. Bye-bye.

Like what you're hearing on the podcast? Want help taking these concepts and ideas and actually applying them in your everyday life? That's what coaching with me can help you do.

In my coaching practice, I help high achievers change their habits from ones that take more than they give to ones that are much more empowering. If you're interested in connecting, you can go to

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HabitsOnPurpose.com and join the email list. I will send out emails that will give you information about private coaching, about upcoming small group coaching opportunities, about webinars and workshops and all the things. And all of this helps you get to know me a little bit better.

Now, if you already know that you are ready to work together so that you can understand yourself better and be more intentional, we can hop on a call to see if private coaching is a fit for your goals. Go to HabitsOnPurpose.com/private to learn more.

And if you're a woman physician, and you want the community piece of getting to the heart of your struggles alongside other women who really get it, get on the Habits on Purpose for Physicians Small Group Coaching waitlist at HabitsOnPurpose.com/HOPP. The next group will start in October, 2024.

Take care and have a great week.

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