

EPISODE 53

# Where Does Your Sense of Self-Worth Come From? Reframing Mistakes, Collaboration, and Criticism



YOUR PERMISSION PRESCRIPTION

with Nancy Levin

**Nancy:** Welcome back to another episode of Your Permission Prescription. So, I want to talk to you today about something, some of us feel a little icky about, and to set the scene. I want to take you back to my very first day as the event director at Hay House and with my very first team member, Molly, who has since gone on to take the position after I left it. On that very first day, I said to Molly, there is no room for error.

Can you imagine there is no room for error? I said to her, and here's the thing. I was so consumed with presenting this image of perfection to the world that I believed that any mistake made was a reflection on me. I was unable to tolerate that. The other thing. I must laugh at, in reflecting on this story is that over the years, my team grew and they all had a nickname for me, which was Brujita, which means "little witch" in Spanish.

And I thought it was a term of endearment. They called me Brew. And to this day, some of them will still call me by that nickname. Now, I will acknowledge that I had witchy tendencies back then before I really understood the self love and compassion it takes to be able to make a mistake, to be able to tolerate other people making mistakes.

And before I really understood what a mistake does or does not mean. Because really what's happening when we're so afraid of mistakes being made is what we think it means about us. So ultimately it all roots down to our shadow beliefs. I remember when I went out on my own and my very first virtual assistant I hired sent out an email with a broken link.

And I thought the world was going to end. Literally was beside myself over a broken link because I made it mean everyone out there receiving this email will think I'm an idiot when really it's just a broken link. I invite you to just take a moment and check in with yourself around what

you make mistakes mean about you, mistakes that you make, or that miss or mistakes that others make on your behalf, or just simply mistakes that other people make.

What is the judgment you hold? What is the belief that you allow in when that happens? Because it's really telling if we see how judgmental we can be versus compassionate. And so, it has to begin with feeling compassion for ourselves. When we make a mistake. So, I fast forward all the way to literally this morning. In the middle of the night, I was woken up and I recognized that I had made a mistake, and in fact, a mistake that would ultimately cost me money.

And so I kept ruminating on it. Each time I woke up in the night and then by the time morning came, I sat down and wrote an email to the person I needed to and took ownership of my mistake, offered a solution that would have us meet halfway, and was graciously met. I was trying to make sense of this as well and realized it didn't make sense.

So all good. And this was a really beautiful lesson for me around first of all, making a mistake doesn't mean I'm an idiot. Doesn't mean someone shouldn't coach with me, doesn't mean someone shouldn't listen to my podcast. Making a mistake is part of being human. And if I can come to terms with, and come to an acceptance and understanding and a compassion of myself for making a mistake and own it and offer an apology and offer a solution, I am more likely to be met with something that is a win-win and feels good for everybody.

So again, check in with yourself about what you're making a mistake mean, how you keep yourself, how you might keep beating yourself up over a mistake instead of taking action. Sometimes that action is asking for help. And what I found is. If you are someone who's afraid of making a mistake, chances are, you're also someone who's afraid to ask for help. Again, because we make it mean something about us.

For years, for decades, I thought asking for help meant I'm weak. I'm stupid. And instead I now am very clear that asking for help means I'm willing. To allow myself to be supported by the strength and wisdom of others. So I don't have to do everything all myself. And, you know, I think back to my days at Hay House, and I think back to the ways that even though at one time I had a team of six, there were six people plus me.

Working on all the events I did, as much as I could by myself. It took me years to really learn how to delegate. And then once I did, it was a game changer and these kinds of concepts like delegate or collaborate. Think about your relationship to them. I, for a long time said I don't play well with others.

I wasn't a great collaborator. And then I really learned the value of collaboration. Again, similar to asking for help. Why am I putting this all on myself? Why don't I invite in and embrace the wisdom, the experience of someone else. And I'll tell you the reason, because for all those years, I was defining my own sense of worth and value by what I achieved and produced and did.

So therefore, if I got help, if I collaborated, if I made a mistake, That would chip away at my own sense of self-worth and value. Now, thankfully, I'm well aware that we are more powerful

together. That one plus one in terms of collaboration is exponentially more than two. And I really have been blessed with a team.

I work with now who I know I can delegate to who I know I can collaborate with, who I know will make me better than I can be on my own. So, look at ways in your life that you can reframe this. Really first recognize what is the way you are currently determining your sense of value and worth. Is it related to what you do, what you achieve, what you produce?

And if so, I invite you to begin a practice of really grounding and anchoring in the knowing that you are worthy, regardless of what you do or do not do. You are worthy simply by being here. Your worth and value isn't anything that needs to be proven or earned. It isn't anything anyone else can give you.

And if you are someone like me who grew up in a highly critical environment, you may, again like me think that. Any sort of feedback you receive is criticism, and it might be challenging to accept in input feedback from others. And you may need to set a boundary about how you receive certain feedback.

You may need to slow down when feedback is coming at you, that you're not able to digest.

It might really support you to know that, for example, I have a boundary around unsolicited feedback. I love feedback when I ask for it. I'm not a fan of feedback that I haven't asked for. I also recognize that I'm someone who has equated criticism with love in a really screwed up way. It began early on. And then it repeated itself in relationships because it was familiar to me,

I recreated it, even though it didn't feel good and it took me, and I'm being honest, well into my late forties and early fifties to really untie, untangled the enmeshment of criticism, equaling love. So I offer this so that you can actually reflect on your own experience back to what it meant to make a mistake, what it meant to be imperfect, what it meant to need help.

What you made those things mean about you and how you have continued to perpetuate that belief and what you can do now to shift it. Belief is not a fact. Belief is simply a long held idea about the way the world works and our role within it. And all of our beliefs can shift all of our beliefs can shift. So I invite you to really examine how can you make making a mistake, be something that can ultimately support you? How can you look at asking for help as something positive?

How can you allow criticism to transform into feedback that can be constructive for you? If you can listen through those kinds of ears.

All of this originates with the inner work we need to do to get ourselves in right relationship so that we're not constantly striving for some unattainable and ambiguous bar.

I have found in my own life and in the lives of clients I've coached, we set our own bar higher than other people tend to set the bar for us. And we keep ourselves in a position of rarely being

able to meet it. And then we get to beat ourselves up. So also notice what is the cost and what is the payoff of beating yourself up?

And are you ever stopping to celebrate when you actually meet the goal you have set for yourself or do you just go right back in and set your sights on the next one? Part of the reason we are self criticizing, part of the reason we are

part of the reason we're self criticized. And part of the reason we keep ourselves on that hamster wheel is that we don't pause long enough to see where we've come from, where we are now and where we want to go. We're just in constant motion.

So part of this conversation about mistakes and asking for help. And what you make it mean is also an invitation to pause, to slow down, to allow yourself to celebrate when you reach a goal that you've been striving toward, instead of just starting all over again, give yourself the space to pause. Give yourself the space to feel completion and satisfaction before moving on.

And you know what I just said, satisfaction. This is a really key word here. I am someone, and you may have heard me say this before, I'm someone who grew up thinking happiness and fun are for others. I wasn't really driven by any sense of pleasure or fun, or I wasn't ever really measuring my own happiness.

It wasn't something that felt important to me. However, satisfaction feels important and fulfillment feels important and contentment feels important. So, again, notice if you need to bring in different language around what's important and essential for you. So that you are not basing your own sense of how life feels and how you experience life on something outside of you on someone else's definition.

Someone else's definition of happiness or success. See what really resonates and rings true for you. Like I said about satisfaction, feeling satisfied, feeling fulfilled, feeling a sense of meaning and purpose over feeling happy.

Thanks so much for being here with me today, as I sort of muse on something that has been on my mind. And I thought since I had this real live example this morning, I would share it with you. And I look forward to being here with you again, next time on Your Permission Prescription. This week, I give you permission.

Give yourself permission to reframe, reframe mistake, making reframe, asking for help, reframe how you determine your own sense of value and worth and reframe what's essential for you to feel satisfied and fulfilled.