



EPISODE 62

Negativity Bias, or Why Insults Affect Us More Than Compliments

 YOUR PERMISSION PRESCRIPTION
with Nancy Levin

Nancy: How often do you allow yourself to celebrate your success? How often do you really allow yourself to take in what's good? One of the major ways that we can begin to have a shift, a reframe to focus on the positive and allow that to become our driving force is to really manage our minds. To see how our mind is tracking and consciously decide what we want to think.

Hi, and welcome to Your Permission Prescription. The podcast that teaches you how to confidently say “yes” to you and consciously create the life you desire.

Hopefully you've heard the big news by now. My next book is coming out on September 6th. It's called The Art of Change, a guided journal, eight weeks to making a meaningful shift in your life.

Now, this is so much more than just a journal. This guided journal is based on a powerful process I developed and it's proven to help people make big, meaningful changes in their lives that actually stick. The Art of Change is

the next best thing to having me by your side, providing you with tools and prompts to bring about the changes you want in your life.

And to celebrate the release of my sixth book. I've got a gift for you. For a limited time, everyone who orders *The Art of Change* will be able to claim a very special bonus. I recorded an audio program. Called *Eight Dimensions of Reinventing Yourself*. This audio is the perfect companion to *The Art of Change* and will go on sale soon after the book is released.

But for now we are offering it for free to everyone who orders my book. In *Eight Dimensions of Reinventing Yourself*. You'll receive specific teachings on the concepts of reinvention to contemplate. You'll be guided through explorations of discovery. So you can take action and you can keep me in your ears, just like you do when listening to my podcast. You can learn more about *The Art of Change* and how to claim your bonus at Nancylevin.com/journal. Now let's get into today's episode.

Welcome back to another episode of *Your Permission Prescription*. Have you ever noticed that you tend to get more hooked on criticism Instead of a compliment, or that bad news gets more attention than good, or that one person frowning in a sea of a thousand people clapping will draw your focus?

Here is the deal, negative experiences and events have a greater impact on our brains than positive or neutral experiences or events. This psychological phenomenon is referred to as the negativity bias. And it can have a powerful effect on your choices, your actions, and even your relationships.

So check in with yourself. Do you feel the sting of an insult more powerfully than you feel the joy of praise? Are you constantly scanning for what's wrong instead of what's right? Today, we are going to talk about how looking for what's wrong is a self-fulfilling prophecy, and so is looking for what's right.

So it's a shift to put on your "what's right" glasses to build the muscle of creating positive scenarios. You know, I often think about my mom. She walks into a store and she will say out loud, I know they won't have what I'm looking for. Now, all that does is create the mood of disappointment or frustration.

Now, walking into a store and saying, I bet they'll have what I'm looking for. Isn't necessarily gonna change the outcome of whether what you're looking for is on the shelf or not. However, you can change your relationship to your mood, walking in with, I bet they have what I'm looking for at least creates positive energy and you don't need to even get disappointed until the truth of if they have it or not.

And still, you can decide how frustrated or upset you're going to get. So this is like a little mindset hack to keep your mood elevated as long as possible. You know, as humans, we tend to latch onto negative experiences. So we remember traumatic experiences, more potently than we remember positive ones.

We recall insults more than we recall praise. We tend to even think more negative things than positive ones. Really notice that for yourself. How hijacked do you allow yourself to be by the negative? And this negativity bias has been proven research has shown that this exists in our brain, that we will default to the negative.

And in order to make the shift, we have to consciously focus on the positive. Now I wanna be really clear. I'm not talking about this in a Pollyanna way. I'm not talking about doing this as some sort of blanket positivity that isn't founded on anything. But just like I said before, it's a self-fulfilling prophecy.

If I focus on what's wrong, I will find it. Therefore, if I focus on what's right, I will find that. And so, we wanna make sure that we're not allowing only the bad things to grab our attention. We want to really allow the positive events and experiences to sync in. How often do you allow yourself to celebrate your success?

How often do you gracefully and graciously accept a compliment with a thank you and a smile, instead of brushing it off? How often do you really allow yourself to take in what's good? Here's a fascinating piece of research. The negativity bias influences motivation to complete a task. People tend to have less motivation when the incentive is framed as a means to gain something.

Versus when the incentive will help them avoid the loss of something. So what this means is that we tend to be less motivated by a positive outcome than we are by avoiding a negative outcome. So, when we are pursuing our goals, one of the ways that we can flip this is to begin to dwell in what is possible when we bring our goal to fruition, instead of what will keep us out of trouble.

Let the primary motivator be what we can gain, what becomes possible, what becomes available and open to us and let that become the driver.

Hi. Before we get into the next half of today's episode, I wanna make sure you know that my next book is coming out very soon. It's called *The Art of Change: a guided journal, eight weeks to making a meaningful shift in your life*. While this is my sixth book, *The Art of Change* is very unique from the other books I've written. In it, I provide a guided eight week journaling process that has proven to make the changes you desire happen in your life.

This model of reinvention has been tried and tested over many years and will teach you to bring what you want into your life while releasing what no longer serves. For a limited time, when you order *The Art of Change* you can claim a special bonus audio I recorded called *Eight Dimensions of Reinventing Yourself*.

This audio is the perfect companion to *The Art of Change* and will go on sale soon after the book is released. But for a short time, we are offering it to you for free. Go to Nancylevin.com/journal to learn more about *The Art of Change* and to claim your bonus.

So, one of the most important ways that the negativity bias impacts us is also in our relationships. The negativity bias has us focus on the worst in others.

Has us expect the worst, has us negatively anticipate how others will respond or react. Think about in your own life. How many arguments are the result of your own negativity bias of not holding others capable of already projecting a negative outcome? Think about the way that your negativity bias impacts your decision making.

It turns out that people consistently place greater weight on negative aspects than they do on positive ones. When making a decision, we fear the consequences of a negative outcome more than we desire the potential positive gains. And one of the major ways that we can begin to have a shift, a reframe, to focus on the positive and allow that to become our driving force is to really manage our minds.

To see how our mind is tracking and consciously decide what we want to think. For example, I send a text and I don't hear back in the timeframe I want. I used to go down the rabbit hole. They don't love me anymore. They don't wanna be my friend. They're mad at me. What did I do wrong? How can I make this better?

Go off on a whole rabbit hole, tangent of negativity. Now I opt for thoughts in the other direction. I didn't hear back from the text. Huh? Maybe they left their phone in the car. Maybe their phone ran out of juice. Maybe they booked an appointment that I wasn't aware of. I can create a whole list of reasons that will not negatively impact me just as easily as I can create all the negative reasons.

And here's the deal. Until I know the truth, there is no point in taking myself down the rabbit hole. So then hours later, the person reaches out to say, oh my god, I'm so sorry. I didn't get back to you. My phone ran outta juice. I saved myself hours of spiraling and spinning out. Now they may very well get back and say, You know, I needed to take some time to get back to you because I think we need to have a hard conversation. That may be true.

I also saved myself hours of spinning out and now I can come to the difficult conversation. Not completely down on myself, because what we tend to do in these situations is, especially if we are people-pleasers or peacekeepers, or conflict avoiders, we tend to take all the responsibility for whatever is going on in the relationship.

And especially for whatever's going wrong. It's my fault. What did I do? What can I do? How can I fix it? And the truth is it takes two to tango and we are each only 100% responsible for 50% of every relationship. So building in some time and space to really consider the options instead of defaulting to the negative can absolutely change our outlook, can change our energy, and can change the way that we relate to ourselves and others.

So part of this is really learning how to stop the negative self-talk. Start paying close attention to the way you talk to yourself, to the thoughts that run through your mind, especially when you find yourself in that place of, I shouldn't have sent that email or I shouldn't have said that.

Notice how that negative self-talk convinces you about how you think about yourself. When the thoughts arise, instead of fixating on past mistakes or even just past choices that you can't change. Instead, consider what you've learned from the experience. Notice what you make things mean. You know, if you're not getting a text back, notice how your interpretation goes negative automatically.

Look for the ways to reframe the events in a more positive light. So again, this isn't about wearing rose-colored glasses. This isn't about being Pollyanna. This simply means that you get to refocus your lens so you are giving fair and equal weight to good and positive as well. Look for new ways to create pattern interrupts in your thinking. If you find yourself ruminating over something and it's filling you with negativity, consciously redirect your attention elsewhere, consciously engage in an activity that is uplifting. That brings you joy. That shifts your energy. Go for a walk, listen to music.

And I really think most importantly, the thing that we need to do is savor positive events and experiences and moments, no matter how small. It takes more energy for positive experiences to be remembered, we need to give extra attention to the good things that happen. So when something really wonderful happens.

Take a moment, allow it to sink in, Anchor that feeling within you so you can return to it. So that even though the negativity bias can have a really powerful impact on your behavior, being aware of it means you can take action in a positive direction instead.

Thanks so much for listening to today's episode. If you loved what you heard, I'd be so grateful if you'd leave a review and share your experience. Even better follow this podcast so you never miss a new episode. And if you'd like some extra support or guidance, head over to my Transform Together Facebook group for an engaged community.

Where you can speak your truth, receive inspiration and ask for help as you navigate life's journey, or visit my website, Nancylevin.com, where you can find resources to help guide your path to reclaiming what's truly important to you. Thanks again for joining me.