

#81: Speaking Up Shame



Full Episode Transcript

With Your Host

Marissa McKool, MPH

[Redefining Rest for Public Health Professionals Podcast
with Marissa McKool, MPH](#)

#81: Speaking Up Shame

Hey, you all, I'm Marissa McKool, and you're listening to the Redefining Rest Podcast for public health professionals. Here we believe rest is your right. You don't have to earn it, you just have to learn how to take it and I'm going to teach you. Ready? Come along.

Hi, everyone. I have to tell you, it feels so good to be recording again. Most of you probably didn't know, over the past month, six weeks I haven't been recording the podcast. I batch recorded a bunch of the episodes ahead of time because I have a lot of things happening behind the scenes in my life. And I promise, promise I'll share more on the podcast soon. I am hoping to do a whole episode, just like a life update episode. And if you're on my email list you actually already know. Because if you're on my email list you always get the news first.

So if you aren't on it, why not? It's so much fun over there. Get on my email list. We have a link in the show notes, so much good stuff you're missing out on, and good coaching, free coaching. So anyways I have had some amazing interviews. You all have heard on the How We Rest series. Last week we Omari from Public Health Millennial. We've had Kristi from Public Health Connected, Sujani from Public Health SPOT. And then another one coming up in December with Zoila Reyna from Public Health Hired.

You don't want to miss that especially if you are on the job market or you might be soon. And I have a bunch of other really exciting episodes coming up. I really have been thinking about what my one-on-one clients from my six month program are working on and what we are working on together and really pulling some of the big picture teachings, and lessons, and coaching into episodes.

And I promise these are going to really resonate with you because these are things that your colleagues who are in very similar situations as you, struggling with similar things are working on in my coaching program. So some of the episodes are going to be on self-trust, how to practice rest,

[Redefining Rest for Public Health Professionals Podcast
with Marissa McKool, MPH](#)

#81: Speaking Up Shame

understanding that patriarchy, and public health, and how that impacts you, creating ten minute goals and so, so much more.

The other exciting thing, if you've been listening the past couple of weeks you've heard a little bit about is I have a new course that is coming out. And finally, finally I can share the details with all of you. It is starting January 9th. Now, if you are any of what I'm about to share, this course is for you, meaning if you work in public health in any capacity, if you've been socialized as a woman, meaning no matter how you identify now, if you grew up being socialized as a woman.

If you find yourself overwhelmed, overworking, exhausted, even reactive because of your stress, not having enough time for what you want, feeling like you can never get enough done. This course is for you. It's called How the Patriarchy Robs you of your Rest and How to Get it Back. When you go through this course, you're going to leave the course getting more mental and emotional rest than probably you have gotten all of 2022. You're going to understand exactly why you are struggling to rest and how to change that.

You're going to walk away with all the skills and tools you need to slow the fuck down without feeling guilt or shame. Guilt or shame is the biggest barrier I see with my one-on-one clients, for getting rest, for slowing down. You are going to walk away with the ability to prioritize yourself and understand why you struggle doing that now. You are going to finally feel better and okay with not getting it all done, to rest more. And by rest I don't just mean laying on a couch, although that can be a form of rest, and that can feel great.

But rest really means having more mental and emotional energy and capacity, having more time for what you want to be doing. Rest is really in my mind the ability to feel in control of your time, of your mental and emotional energy, of what you're feeling. And in order to get that rest even

[Redefining Rest for Public Health Professionals Podcast
with Marissa McKool, MPH](#)

#81: Speaking Up Shame

the rest you want versus the rest you need, either one, you need to be able to have the skill to do it without constantly worrying you haven't done enough and feeling guilty and shame.

And that's what this course is going to help you do. And one of the biggest things that's really come up as I've been working with my clients in my six month program is how much they don't realize until we work together and that I guarantee you have not realized, the patriarchy has impacted your ability to rest, to feel better, to feel in control of your life.

One of my clients this week actually said to me, "I realized how much my inner dialog is from the patriarchy." Most of you aren't realizing that when your inner narrative is saying, "I'm too busy, I have too much to do. I can't, I have to get it all done." Those thoughts are the patriarchy. You have been socialized to believe your role is to take care of everyone else first, hustle for your worth, prove you belong in the workplace and those beliefs keep you from resting.

Those beliefs are what you have to detach from to undo in order to not just feel better but be present, and have peace, and have more time for yourself, and do what you want. From hobbies, to vacation, to having the mental and emotional space to think about your next career move and believe what you want is possible. So if any of this, any tiny piece of this resonates with you, part of your experience, or part of what you've been trying to do or struggling with, I want you to join this course.

It starts January 9th, which is the perfect timing after the holidays, because a lot of us go into the holidays thinking we're going to get a lot of rest. It's going to be restful, I'm going to get off work. But then the holidays happen and they're not restful. Either there's family drama or running around trying to get everything done. And then we need rest after that. It's also perfect because it's right around New Years.

#81: Speaking Up Shame

Many folks set New Year's resolutions, even if you're not a resolution type of person you might be thinking about the next year and your goals, or what you want to be different. In order to make any of that happen, you need to learn how to prioritize yourself. As I said, rest isn't about doing nothing, it's about doing what you want for you while feeling confident, and empowered, and good and not feeling guilt, or shame, or anxiety. So it's a five week semi-live course. It's different than the Burnout Recovery course. So if you took that, it's a little bit different.

It starts January 9th, and it goes through February 10th. Each week you'll get a course video. It's prerecorded so you can watch it whenever you want, whatever fits your schedule. The videos are between 15 and 20 minutes. So I promise, you have the time every week. And each week you're going to get workbooks to apply what you are learning in the videos to your life. And then you're also going to get private coaching with me one-on-one on Zoom.

So if you've been curious about coaching, you've considered my six month program but you're not sure you want to try coaching. Before you commit to that or look into that more this course will let you do that. So this whole course, the five week videos, the workbooks, the private one-on-one coaching, the ability to get more rest, to feel more confident, to have less guilt and shame. To know exactly what's getting in your way of having time for yourself is only \$500. You all, that is only 8% of the cost of what it typically is to work with me, 8%.

My one-on-one coaching program is \$6,000. And this course is \$500. In the course you get the private coaching, plus course videos and workbooks. That \$500 for this course, for this five week course is the same cost as just two one-on-one sessions in my regular six month coaching program. Truly this is insane. There is no reason not to sign up. This is the best deal you will get in order to get help, to get more rest, to feel better, to

#81: Speaking Up Shame

feel confident, to have more time. to let go of the guilt, to let go of the shame.

So I want you to get on the waitlist, it's at mckoolcoaching.com/courses. We'll leave a link in the show notes. Enrollment starts December 1st. So once you're on the waitlist you'll get an email when enrollment opens and then you officially have to sign up, save your spot because spots are limited. And this is truly limited, this is not just some marketing sales gimmick trying to get you to sign up. I have my one-on-one regular clients from my six month program.

So each week I truly don't have the space in my schedule to just have the course be unlimited participants, as much as I would love that, I just don't have that time because I'm prioritizing my rest too. And I also want to be fully present for all of you. And so we're limiting the spots because of my schedule and so I can be fully present with you giving you all you need during this five weeks. So that means if you are at all interested you 100% want to jump on the waitlist so you're the first to know when enrollment starts and you can grab your spot before they sell out, because they will sell out.

Okay, with that, this podcast episode is actually closely related to this course because we're talking about speaking up shame, which w largely stems from the patriarchy if you're socialized as a woman, even though you might not realize it. So this past year I have been on my own internal journey of this. And I have started calling it actually, shedding my shame skin. I'll explain more in a little bit. But if you're socialized as a woman, so much of the fear, and anxiety, and shame, and guilt, and doubt, and judgment you experience around speaking up actually is straight from the patriarchy.

I just finished as you're listening to this, a three week leadership training with a team at the CDC. And almost a 100% of what we talked about each

#81: Speaking Up Shame

week had to do with not speaking up at all, or not speaking up confidently, and what prevents us from that. And this can look like either holding yourself back from speaking up, so your brain tell you, you don't know enough, it's not your place, you're not going to make sense, you should wait, you're going to look stupid. And so you don't speak up.

Or speaking up but feeling like shit doing it. So when you're speaking up, or right before, you feel a lot of anxiety. You don't feel that confident, maybe your voice is shaking. Maybe after speaking up your brain's telling you, you look so stupid, they're all judging you, you shouldn't have shared that, or a combination of both. I think for a lot of us it is. In some spaces we speak up but feel like shit, and some we don't speak up at all. That's definitely been my experience. And here's the thing, for a lot of people who speak up, myself included, other people around us might not realize we're experiencing all those emotions.

I host a podcast, I'm all over social media. When I worked in public health full-time I was sometimes the most vocal person in meetings especially about difficult topics, like advocating calling shit out. A lot of my colleagues would be surprised to hear I feel so much shame for speaking up. And then there's other areas where I really prevent myself from speaking up. For me it's really like dealing with insurance companies, or repair people, or the auto shop, I avoid speaking up. And it correlates for me mainly with industries that are mostly men.

Yours might be a little different but I want you to think about where that is for you. And here's the problem, I didn't even realize what was going on. I knew I felt uncomfortable sometimes, I didn't want to deal with challenging my insurance company. I knew I felt a huge knot in my stomach when I spoke up at work meetings. But what I didn't realize was all of that was the patriarchy, was the internalization of the patriarchy. And then that was optional. I just thought, this is just the way it is, this is just what it feels like, period, the end.

#81: Speaking Up Shame

No. What happened for me was, and sometimes this still happens, I'm still on this journey. If I shared most of the time I would do so with – I hesitate to call them butterflies because when we talk about butterflies it sounds like excitement, maybe moths in my stomach, although moths are a beautiful insect. So I don't want to put them down, but a lot going on in my stomach, not the fun, I'm going to perform, I'm excited. My heart beating so fast, I could barely hear myself. I'd have sweaty palms and tightness in my throat.

And then after I spoke up my brain would have a fucking field day especially if I didn't get external validation for whatever's shared. But actually a lot of times even if I did, even if some people came up and said, "I'm so glad you shared that." I would replay the situation in my head a million times. My brain would tell me things like you sounded arrogant. You didn't know what you were talking about. Everyone's upset with you. Then I would try to hold myself back from speaking up half the time.

I'd be in meetings and my brain would saying to me, "Don't take up too much space. Don't share too much, it's not your place." And if I listened to that voice I did feel better, not because I shouldn't have shared, because I was avoiding the shame I would have felt after speaking up because my brain would have been an asshole to me which is what the patriarchy wants. It wants us to feel better not sharing, not taking up space and feel like shit so we keep ourselves small and in our 'place' according to the patriarchy.

Where so many of us socialized as women we annoyingly spend so much mental and emotional energy trying to keep ourselves small, to not speak up, to not take up too much space, to not say something that might offend someone. So we don't show up authentically. We don't step into our power, and we don't realize how draining and not restful this is and that it's totally fucking optional. And constantly playing this narrative in your head, the shaming and judging narrative, hold ourselves back from all we can do in the world and create in the world.

#81: Speaking Up Shame

And this is exactly what the patriarchy wants, it wants to keep us stuck in these catch 22's. We've been told directly and indirectly our whole lives that a woman's role is to don't come off too smart, but also don't come off dumb. Don't be meek but also don't be too assertive. We're also told that we should make everyone comfortable and be nice and ladylike, and don't take up too much space and defer to authorities, but don't be too cocky.

And if you live with another marginalized identity you'll receive additional messages, like for example, Black women are told not to be angry, not to allow their emotion, not to come off angry because of the angry Black woman stereotype. And there could be other examples that you can probably think of based on your lived experience. When we internalize these messages we end up playing a constant ping-pong game in our head.

One of my one-on-one clients from my six month program this week used a phrase that I actually think is perfect to describe this. She was describing something else, but I think it applies here. She said her brain is always on risk management duty. And I think that's what happens here. Our brain is, even though it kind of keeps us stuck and feeling like shit, I think our brains' intention in a lot of ways is trying to keep us safe. But what ends up happening is it keeps us in this box where we've been told to fit. It's a false sense of safety.

We have been told, "Well, if you just keep yourself small and be quiet, everyone will like you, and you'll be good, and you'll be safe," and whatever. That's not really what happens. The patriarchy wants us to believe that, wants us to believe well, if we speak up too much we might jeopardize our chances. If we're our authentic self no one will like us. If we don't put other people first and people please we won't get anywhere.

And all of us probably have, including me, which I'll share an example in a moment, had the experience of speaking up and someone yelling at us, or

#81: Speaking Up Shame

someone putting us down, or laughing at us. So our brain says, "That's not safe," whether it's a parent, authority figure, someone else. For me, my whole life I've had this record player which I didn't realize was a record player until I started doing this work.

And it was these thoughts in my head that I had before I would speak. And then if I did speak, for days, or even weeks, or even literally months after I'd speak up. That would say, "You talk too much. You're a know it all. You take up too much space. You just want attention." As long as I can remember I believed that my brain offering these thoughts was just what happens, that's just your brain, that's just the truth. When you're a woman of the world these are just the thoughts you have to contend with, the experience you have to contend with.

And part of me thought, me speaking up in spite of these thoughts was fighting the patriarchy, I just spoke up anyways. But I wasn't really fighting the patriarchy because I felt like shit. And half the time it kept me from speaking up. So this past year I've really dug into this work, as I've shown up more on social media, through my business, I've really had to dive in here as I've joined different coach certifications, being in the room with coaches who are making literally \$13 million a year and speaking up and sharing my opinion.

And I have gone through several skins of shame, and this is what I mean. I've started thinking about it because I've gone through this several times this year, that it's almost like I'm a snake whose shedding its skin. Every time I do the work and there's another layer of the shame that I'm unearthing, I end up shedding another layer of shame skin. So many of us have been so deeply socialized not to speak up, or to curate how we show up, or to feel shame if we do. And this shame is deep and has layers. So every time you work on it you might unearth more.

#81: Speaking Up Shame

And for me it's just been this realization that I'm just shedding another layer. It doesn't mean I've done it wrong, doesn't mean I haven't made progress. It's just another layer to let go. And every time I do that work to shed I show up more authentically myself. I own more of my power. I learn so much more. I get so much farther on my goals. I'm so much more unapologetically myself which is what the world needs. I can bring my unique skills and perspective, and self that the world needs just like the world needs you and your athletic self, and your unique perspective.

And we get these messages that prevent us from showing up that way through the patriarchy, from all over. It's almost like the patriarchy sends its messengers through other platforms. So let me explain. I definitely got some of this from my mom, some of you might have as well. For me I remember my mom constantly saying things like, "Well, you're just a know it all." And maybe in her mind she was just being a fun tease. But reflecting back that really imprinted on me. And when I really think about it, where did she get that from? The patriarchy.

Our moms or other women in our life, people socialized as women also have internalized things from the patriarchy. And then they share those internalizations whether they know they are or not. I remember this one moment in fifth grade, do you all remember DARE programs if you had them? I don't know how that program still runs, even though so many program evaluations shows it backfires on its goals. But that's not here nor there, a discussion for another day.

Anyways it was fifth grade, the DARE program, if you're not familiar is a police officer comes in and is supposed to prevent use of drugs and alcohol, it doesn't work. But it did show a positive affect for relationships with the police. But anyways, they had an anonymous community box. I submitted a question that was like, "Why do men get access to gyms in prison and women don't get makeup?" And I remember, this was something I heard the host of The View talking about.

#81: Speaking Up Shame

My mom had that on, and I heard them talking about it. And my brain in fifth grade kind of I was like, "Wait, men can work on their looks, but women can't." And I was wrestling with that. And this male officer read that to the class, and I don't remember his exact comments, but I vividly remember wanting to melt and die under my desk and was so thankful it was anonymous. Because he definitely laughed, he definitely made some comments indicating he thought it was a dumb question. He didn't even answer it.

And now looking back I can see as a kid really I was grappling, was starting to see gender inequality. And me speaking up and asking that and then getting shut down is part of the patriarchy, part of shutting women down from asking these questions, from really challenging the patriarchy and inequities. And there's a ton of other examples in my life and there is a ton in yours too, both personal examples but just messages from movies and, media, and religion, and all over the place.

So many of us experience speaking up shame as a result of the patriarchy and how it kind of morphs, and shows up, and communicates, and translates in all these ways. And whether that's the shame drives you not to speak up or you shame yourself for speaking up. So I want you to answer these questions. Who would you be if you didn't feel shame when you spoke up, no matter what anyone else thought or said? Who would you be if fear, anxiety, and shame didn't prevent you from speaking up?

What would you be doing in this world? What would you be saying? What actions would you be taking? We think that shame is just an indicator that tells us, hey, don't speak up or, hey, you shouldn't have spoken up. Some of this happens with anxiety and fear too. We think the experience of the emotion, that emotion, we think that's an indicator light telling us something true and factual, giving us a message we need to learn from. That's not true at all, it's the opposite. The emotion is not indicating anything other than you had a thought that created the emotion.

#81: Speaking Up Shame

You had a thought that create anxiety or shame, not the other way around. When your brain thinks, I sounded stupid, that thought created the feeling of shame. The feeling of shame is not telling you a fact of the world that you sounded stupid. The feeling of shame is just a physical sensation that starts as a result of your brain offering you the thought, I sounded stupid which is totally optional. Those thoughts you think whether consciously or unconsciously are not truths and not facts, they are not objective, they're optional. They're beliefs you have internalized that you don't have to keep believing.

The emotions you feel, the shame you feel is not indicating some truth from the universe. So again, I'm going to ask you, who would you get to be if you didn't feel shame about how you showed up, what you shared and the space you took up? What would you get to experience if you showed up exactly as your true authentic self and took up space and didn't feel bad about it? What would be different in your life? What would be different in what you would go for, and what you would achieve, and what you would try?

In order to break out of that speaking up shame, so you can be authentic, and show up, and take up space, first you have to feel the shame. There is no way around this. This is non-negotiable. It does not feel like sunshine and rainbows. It is so fucking uncomfortable but it's the truth. You have to move through it, and you can. In fact as uncomfortable as it is, it's more uncomfortable and it creates suffering when you resist this part and don't feel it.

For me sometimes this will look like me crying in a bathtub and I fucking hate baths, or being frozen on my bed, breathing through my shaking. Or crying on the phone in a hotel room over something I said at a training, my brain was being an asshole to me about. You have to feel the shame in your body, not resist it, or avoid it, or suppress it. Be with your body and process it. I'm not going to go through all the steps.

#81: Speaking Up Shame

I have an old episode focused on this, it's called Experiencing Intense Emotions, it's episode 44. I explain in detail how to do this so I'm not going to go over it today and actually I use shame in that example, so you can go listen to that. But the only way to address your speaking up shame and to change it is to first feel the shame, there's no way around it. And it's not like feeling it once and you're done. This is going door to happen over and over. The good news is the more you do it the better you get at it meaning you can handle this discomfort, you don't freak out as much.

It moves through you easier and quicker. I've had three big phases of shedding my shame skin this year and each time I just remind myself, okay, I'm just shedding another layer of shame, keep shedding. You might have to do it in meetings and parties. I sat in a training where my brain kept telling me the whole training, I shouldn't have spoken up. I wanted to melt again under the table like that fifth grader. But I let the emotion be there, I didn't resist it. The more you process your shame and you shed your layers of shame, the more you get to show up authentically as who you are.

The more you get to be confident in who you are, the more you can speak up and take up space without feeling shame, or guilt, or anxiety. The more you do that the more you contribute to the world in the unique ways only you can, the more fulfilling your life is going to be. When you stop holding yourself back because of shame or fear and you start really going for what you want in life, that's where you fill yourself up. It doesn't mean you get out of negative emotions. It doesn't mean everything is going to be perfect.

You truly are living to your fullest potential because you're living into your fullest, truest authentic self. The second thing you have to do is really see and recognize that the thoughts you have that are creating the shame are not true, that they're not facts. You don't even necessarily have to change the thoughts and get rid of them. Just detaching from them and truly seeing that they're not facts, they're not indicators, they're not true measures of some objective truth the universe is telling you.

#81: Speaking Up Shame

Truly seeing they're optional, they're fictional, they're internalized will reduce so much of your suffering and allow you to truly take up space, and speak up, and be yourself. And all of what I'm describing is exactly what we're going to work through in my five week course, how the patriarchy robs you of rest and how to get it back. It's going to help you do this. This course is going to give you the structure, and the guidance, and the support to actually put some of this in practice.

The workbooks, the one-on-one coaching is going to help you take the theory, which is really this podcast, I am presenting you theory, and put it into practice. It's like the difference between working out on your own versus taking a workout class, both of them you can totally get results from. But do you personally benefit from having a guide, someone facilitating your experience, from having accountability to help you? Do you like not having to be the one to make a plan and keep yourself accountable, and you can just show up and someone else has the plan and keeps you accountable?

And for you, which tends to get you better results if you struggle with speaking up or not feeling shame when you do? I want you to get on the waitlist for this course. If this episode spoke to you, if it resonated with you, this course is going to help you so much. And listen, your brain is probably going to throw up reasons why not to. I'll be busy, I can't afford it, it won't work, it's not that bad, I can do it on my own, I'll do it later. When those thoughts come up I want you to ask yourself, is this just the patriarchy again?

Is this my inner patriarchy dialog trying to prevent me from shedding my shame skin, prevent me from speaking up, and taking up space, and learning how to without guilt weighing me down, without shame, without anxiety, without fear? Is this the patriarchy in my head trying to prevent me from being authentic and keeping myself small? Because that's what the

#81: Speaking Up Shame

patriarchy wants when it says, “No, you don’t need help with this. It’s not that bad. You’re too busy.”

Patriarchy wants you not to shed your shame skin or to speak up. It’s going to do everything it can to prevent you from doing that but is that what you want? No, if you’re here listening to this podcast, if you work in public health, you want to change the world. You have big goals, you’re a go getter. You want to be happy and no longer exhausted from your mind. You want to feel confident and empowered. You want to contribute. You have amazing innovative ideas you’re not going for out of fear and shame.

You have skills, and ideas, and perspectives to share in the world that are unique that only you can provide and you’re holding yourself back from that and feeling like shit while you’re doing it. You’re denying the world your greatness because of this dumb stupid fucking patriarchy, no more, we’re going to change that. So go sign up for the waitlist, mckoolcoaching.com/courses so you can be the first to find out when spots open up and you can grab your spot before it’s sold out.

Because the world needs you and your unique self and authentic self. And you need to be able to show up to the world like that, without guilt, shame, and with confidence, and empowerment, and certainty, and feeling fucking happy. Alright, you all, okay, I’ll see you next week, bye everyone.

If you found this episode helpful then you have to check out my coaching program where I provide you individualized support to create a life centered around rest. Head on over to mckoolcoaching.com, that’s M-C-K-O-O-L coaching.com to learn more.