

## #85: Theories of Rest



## Full Episode Transcript

With Your Host

Marissa McKool, MPH

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with Marissa McKool, MPH](#)

## #85: Theories of Rest

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. How are you? Today is a Friday for me and yesterday I went snowboarding, my first ride of the season. It was really fun, but I am really sore. I went on a Thursday, I took the day off of work, I put my out of office on. And I just had a day of rest. And for many of you, maybe this is your first time listening, the idea of rest being a physical activity like snowboarding might be foreign to you.

But on this podcast and from my perspective and the work that I'm really trying to do in the world, what I have really seen and learned is that rest isn't a specific set of activities. It's not just lying on the couch, or sleeping in, or getting a pedicure. Rest is what you give your mind or body when it needs it. So for me taking a day off work was really restful to my brain. Moving my body in a new way was really restful to my body. And being in nature somewhere beautiful was so emotionally rejuvenating for me.

And then last night I cried for many hours. I have a personal conflict going on in one of my relationships and it's been tough, and it came up last night. And I woke up this morning with puffy eyes. Those of you who have fallen asleep after you've cried, you know. I put a heating pad on it. I used my little facial roller, and ice, and tried to put makeup on to make it look less puffy. And I think it probably looks worse now but luckily I work from home so no one's really going to see it.

But I say this all to say that life is 50/50, even when you have a practice of rest where you really are in tune with your mind and body and you're able to give it what it needs. You still experience negative emotion, you still experience challenges, that's part of it, that's part of life. And facing those challenges and those negative emotions and anything else.

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

## #85: Theories of Rest

You are more capable to face those things and really have compassion, and empathy, and love for yourself when you do have a practice of rest, when you do give yourself, your mind, your body, your emotions the rest that it really needs. So that is related to today's episode because we are talking about theories of rest today. I should also note, there's still construction going on in the apartment above me. I don't know when they do it. They don't give me a schedule. So if you can hear it, my apologies but that's just life you all.

So today's episode really came out of a coaching session I had with one of my one-on-one clients where they really realized their theory of rest, they did not put into practice. So the goal of today's episode is for you to determine if your practice of rest actually matches your theory of rest and if you want it to, or if you want to change your practice of rest or change your operating theory of rest.

Now, before I get into sharing what are the theories of rest and how do you know if you're practicing them. I really want to ask you all to consider sending this episode to a friend or a colleague, just one. There are about 150/200 of you who listen every week. And I love you all so much who hit play every Monday or every week, listen on your walks or in the car. So many of you email me and message me about what you thought about the episode, and how helpful it's been. And I love, love hearing that feedback.

And if all of you share with just one friend or colleague, we would have almost 200 more people in public health who are overwhelmed and overworking, get help with actually experiencing rest, mental and emotional rest. To start ending their burnout, or preventing it, to stop overworking and to start feeling better. And what an amazing collective impact we would all have on the field of public health. And you would get to be a part of that, one of the driving factors to that just by sharing this episode with one person.

## #85: Theories of Rest

It would mean so much to me and to that one person you're going to share it with.

So today's episode is something I check-in with myself about regularly. We swim in the waters of hustle culture. It doesn't matter how amazing of a coach you are if you are a coach, if you're a rest coach like me, it doesn't matter how much coaching you've had or therapy you've had. It doesn't matter how long you've been managing your mind or doing thought work. You will always have times where your theory and practice of rest do not match. And that is okay, nothing has gone wrong, that's unavoidable in the world we live in.

What matters is building the skill of recognizing that and then making different decisions moving forward. So all of you listening, most of you are in public health. And I want you to think about, in public health, how we talk about theory. We have lots of theory. In grad school you covered a lot of them. If you write manuscripts, you have to put them in your introduction. So just a few examples. There's the socioecological model which basically theorizes that our behavior, our experience of our behavior, the actions we take are experiences in life.

And the outcomes of our life are impacted by different factors at varying levels, from the individual level, our relationship with ourself, the relationship level, our relationship with others, the community level etc. There is also the health belief model that hypothesizes that what prompts someone to take action such as getting preventative services is related to their belief, whether they are at risk or not for that outcome. And there is tons of other theories out there. This episode isn't really about talking about all the public health theories.

But just to illustrate that theories are essentially ideas, or concepts, or even hypotheses you can say. And yes, in public health, they have been researched and they're informed by research, how they're developed, all of

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

## #85: Theories of Rest

that. But when you have a theory you have to put it into practice, to implement it, to test it. And what happens when you put a theory into practice? You learn if the theory works, if it's accurate, if it needs to be tweaked, if there is something you're missing, if it was totally off the mark.

The goal of creating and having a theory is to ultimately create a different outcome. That's the purpose of theories. Now, there's probably a camp of people who think the purpose of theories is just to analyze and think about life and how we function. And that's totally fine. But when we think about public health and behavior change, and when we think about our individual lives, us changing our lives, ending our burnout, feeling better. Theories are ultimately about implementing them, to create a different outcome, using them to make changes to create a different experience.

So if we theorize that people only go to get a vaccination if they think they are at risk for getting that infection. Then in public health we want to try to use that theory to change the outcome and have more people get vaccinated, so rates of infection are lower. But you have to put that theory into practice. And when you put the theory into practice you might learn that theory was way off or it wasn't tailored to that community, or it wasn't implemented in a way that actually got the result you thought it would.

Same goes with your personal experience of rest. For those of you who are new to the podcast, I'm so glad you're here. Rest is not just the inaction, the lack of doing. Rest is so much more expansive than that. Rest is giving your mind and body what it needs so you can function optimally, so you can have energy, so you can enjoy your life, so your life can be fulfilling. And we all have a theory of rest whether you're aware of it or not, an idea, belief, perception of how you should experience rest in your life.

I have generally found that most people operate from one of two theories, and sometimes both, often both, I do. I switch between the two because this is the world we live in. And there might be others but I'm just going to

## #85: Theories of Rest

talk about these two that I have seen over, and over, and over again in my coaching. The first being theory of earned rest. And the second being theory of expansive rest. So the theory of earned rest is the belief that you have to earn your rest, that you have to get enough done to rest.

And when this theory is implemented into practice, when your practice of rest is operated by this theory, this is what it looks like. You aren't able to enjoy TV at night, watching Netflix, because you're just thinking about all the things you didn't get done today or all the things you have to do tomorrow. So you're not even able to be present. Maybe you end up getting on your phone and scrolling social media to avoid those thoughts and feelings.

It can also look like not allowing yourself to end your workday when your workday ends, let's say at five because you have a report that you're working on and it's taking longer than you thought. So you're telling yourself you have to finish it tonight. Another example that I think everyone in public health has experienced is not taking your lunch, not stepping away from your desk to take your lunch, working while eating or not eating till 3:00pm because you don't believe you've done enough yet.

Now, this is a theory we have all been taught and sold by hustle culture and toxic capitalism. And we all believe this theory on some level. We all operate from this theory on some level including me. Now, some of you, this is your only operating manual for rest. And that's how I used to be too. And it created so much exhaustion, and overwhelm, and anxiety. And it really sucked the joy, and fulfillment, and presence out of my life.

Now, the other theory is the theory of expansive rest. This is the belief that rest is available to you whenever you want. That rest is an outcome of listening to your mind and body. When this theory is implemented into practice or when your actions and your decisions are driven by this

## #85: Theories of Rest

operating theory this is what it might look like. Hearing your stomach growl around noon and stopping to eat your lunch away from your desk.

Getting home from a travel trip where you didn't get home till 11:00pm because your flight was delayed three hours on a Sunday, and you decide to not unpack your bag or worry about chores so you can get the sleep you need for Monday. Or working on a manuscript and noticing and feeling your brain getting foggy, having to rewrite a few sentences, and stopping and coming back to it another day, recognizing your mind needs a break.

Now, this is a theory most of us have not been directly taught or indirectly for that matter. we haven't been exposed to very much. We don't have a lot of examples of this in practice. For most of us this is not the theory of rest our parents operated from, certainly mine didn't. This is not the theory of rest school is structured around or our workplaces. But this is the theory of rest when you implement it into your life and take actions from it, that will allow you to find fulfillment, to experience joy, to have energy for the things you want to do with your life.

To have more mental and emotional capacity to face the challenges of life, to create more space to experience positive emotions. Which theory are you putting into practice? If you, I mean we all do have a theory of earned rest. But if you are recognizing that that is the theory you are operating from, that your practice of rest is based on earning rest, do you want to continue that? How is that helping you? How is that working for you? How do you feel choosing rest based on that theory?

What results are you creating in your life when you do not let yourself rest until you've done 'enough,' till you deserve it, till someone else gives you permission, till you've earned it? If you have a desire to live into expansive rest, to respond to your mind and body, listen to it, give it the rest it needs, choose to take rest that you find fun, and exciting, and fulfilling. If you have

## #85: Theories of Rest

that desire, are you living into that desire? Do you have that theory to operate from, why or why not?

In the coaching session that this topic really came to the surface with my client, they realized that their personal theory of rest was expansive rest, but they weren't implementing it. They were actually implementing earned rest. They wanted to operate from expansive rest, where they listened to their mind and body, but they weren't doing that in practice. They were only resting when they believed they had done enough but they never told themselves they did enough to truly rest.

Or when they told themselves they could rest, they could not enjoy it because their mind was just going over and over all the things they need to do, they should have done. I think this is the same for many of you, that you believe you're operating or want to, or have a theory of expansive rest. But audit your experiences day-to-day and see, is that expansive? Is working on your flex day, expansive rest? Is checking emails while you're sick, expansive rest? Is spending your whole Sunday trying to get all of your list of chores done, expansive rest?

Is making a to-do list twice as long as you have time for expansive rest? And listen, this still happens to me too and I have to catch it when I notice, wait, I'm not practicing my desired theory of rest, to have an experience of expansive rest. What matters is how you practice your rest. You can believe that expansive rest is important and possible all you want. But if you are not implementing that theory into practice it doesn't matter.

And for so many of you, so many of my clients, I know you believe in the theory of expansive rest because you champion your colleagues, your friends, your partner, the staff you supervise, to listen to their mind and body, to give themselves rest. But you don't do that for yourself. You're not putting that into practice.



## #85: Theories of Rest

Going back to the public health example, if we believe the theory that people who think they are at risk for a disease are more likely to get vaccinated. But we do not design the vaccine campaigns to clearly articulate who's at risk so more people get vaccinated, more people recognize they might be at risk and get vaccinated. That theory doesn't matter because it's not been implemented into practice to change the result.

The same with your rest. If you want to feel more relaxed, at peace, present, confident, less stressed, less overwhelmed, if you want to stop checking your emails at night, no longer have the Sunday scaries, stop working on your flex day. You have to put a theory of expansive rest into practice. Now, for some of you this means starting with changing your theory of rest, building the theory of expansive rest, the belief in that theory and then putting it into practice.

For others of you, you have the theory of expansive rest, you're just not putting it into practice. So which one are you? Answering that question tells you where you need to start. Now, listen, notice, I've said over and over, practice, not perfection. There is no way to be perfect at rest. There is no way to always live into expansive practice of rest, not in the world we live in. For our lifetime we will swim in hustle culture, and toxic productivity, and the patriarchy, and white supremacy. All of these systems promote the idea of earned rest but that's okay.

The goal isn't to be perfect. We can still practice, and live into, and reap the rewards of an expansive rest theory even when we live in this world. In order to practice more expansive rest you have to, one, understand at a deeper level why you are so attached to believing you have to earn rest. And for many of you, you might not think you have this belief. It is so subconscious, and it operates in such subtle ways that it's hard to see on our own sometimes. And this is really where coaching comes in.

## #85: Theories of Rest

The second piece is you have to make a conscious choice to rest expansively even when your mind doesn't want to let you, even when your brain still believes you should earn it, you have to earn it.

And number three, you have to know how to follow through on resting even when your brain is trying to tell you, you shouldn't, or can't. .So you have to understand why you have a belief of earn rest so you can detach from it. You have to make a conscious choice to rest expansively. And you have to know how to follow through on that rest even when your brain still believes you should earn it.

And these three steps you absolutely can do this. This is what I do with all my clients. This is what I do with myself. But I'm going to make it even easier for you because you will go into the world after listening to this podcast and practice this on your own. And you can get some good changes, but you're going to make such a bigger transformation and change in your life being shown step by step how to do this from someone who's done it deeply on themselves and helps people in their life and their clients do this too.

So you don't have to make the mistakes I did. You don't have to figure out some of the stuff I did. You can learn from me, and you can get there twice, three times, four times as fast as I did. And this is exactly what you're going to learn and do in my new course, How the Patriarchy Robs You of Your Rest. You're going to actually learn how to detach from your theory of earned rest, build a belief, a theory of expansive rest and how to implement expansive rest.

That creates the results you want to have in your life, whether it's getting your to-do list done more efficiently and effectively so you have more time to yourself, to the activities you want to do with your family. So you can be present in those. So you can choose to rest without feeling guilty. Maybe for some of you this is about actually relaxing without your brain ruining it

## #85: Theories of Rest

by nagging you about all the things you haven't done. Maybe it's about sleeping better because you're no longer worried about all you didn't do or have to do tomorrow.

So you wake up energized and not in a panic, go, go, go mode for the day or dread. So you're less reactive to those around you. Maybe it's so you can come home after work not feeling exhausted and get to relax during your evening. Or maybe it's to feel proud of what you've accomplished. New year's is coming up and I know for a lot of folks, whether you do new year's resolutions or not, it is very natural around this time of you to just reflect on the past year and your experience. And kind of paint a picture of what you want next year to be.

Whether that is you have a desire to work out more consistently, or travel more, or get a new job or anything else. For any of the goals you have for next year, whether it's a formal goal like a resolution or it's a paint the picture, I would really love this. In order to achieve that, in order for 2023 to look different than 2022 you have to, have to, have to, I cannot emphasize this enough, change your operating system for rest. You have to change your theory of rest to expansive rest and practice rest from there.

One of the biggest reasons that you have not achieved that goal you have yet, that you have not had a different emotional experience, that 2022 has felt a lot like 2021 and 2020 is not because of the pandemic, it's not because of some potential recession. It's because you have not changed your operating theory of rest. Until you do, you will not have more time, you will not have more mental and emotional energy, you will not have more clarity, you will not have more space or capacity to not only live the life you want and experience the life you want but go for the goals and achieve the goals you want.

## #85: Theories of Rest

That's why this is so important. It impacts every area of your life from work to family, to relationships, to the relationship with yourself, to your health, to your wealth, everything.

Now, I designed this specifically for those of you who work in public health full-time, are socialized as woman, who are super ambitious go getter, who feel exhausted when you get home at the end of each workday, always feel like you have more to do than the time you have. You feel like you spend most of your days chasing checklists and have tried almost everything to have a better experience. From new calendaring systems, to planners, to eating a different diet, to sleeping more, to drinking more water, to exercising more, whatever it is, and you still feel exhausted and overwhelmed.

And you don't get that consistent, sustainable, expansive rest on the daily, on the weekly, but have never tried life coaching before. This is for you. It's a five week course that will truly transform your life. It starts January 9<sup>th</sup> through February 10<sup>th</sup>. And I want you to come join me because this is for you. This is going to change your life. This is going to change 2023. If you take this course you will look back next year, in five years, in 10 years and see 2023 and this course as being the turning point.

Now, if some of you are thinking, well, that's just not a good time. I already have so much going on, I'm busy at work, or I just finished therapy, or I have a big project. I want to offer you that if that's what you're thinking, those are the reasons it is the best time for you to do this. If you wanted to find a partner it would not be a good idea to hire a dating coach when you are not actively dating. You would need a coach when you are dating.

The same with this, you don't join a course or hire a coach to help you get more rest, and create more time when you aren't busy, when you're slow, when things are easy No, you join the course and have a coach when life is its busiest so you can rest. When you learn how to rest, how to change

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

## #85: Theories of Rest

your operating theory of rest so you can actually live into expansive rest, when your life is the most chaotic, when it's the busiest, when you have big projects going on, when you have lots happening in your life. rest becomes easy.

It's like athletes who train in high altitude, so in a high altitude, if you're not familiar, there's less oxygen. So if you are used to being at sea level and you go run at a high altitude, you're going to get out of breath real fast. Athletes go to high altitude to train so that they can build their endurance, their lungs with less oxygen. So then when they run their race at sea level it's actually easier. Same here, doing this work when you are busy, when life is chaotic, when you have a lot going on, actually makes rest easy, no matter what's going on in your life.

So there are limited spots, many of them have already been taken, but we still have some left, as of now, as I'm recording this. And this is just five weeks to change your experience for your whole career. You invest 90 minutes a week for five weeks, that's less than 10 hours over a month long. And you're going to get five hours of mental and emotional rest back each week. In those five weeks, that's 25 hours of rest plus five hours per week indefinitely after the course.

So I want you to head to [mckoolcoaching.com/courses](https://mckoolcoaching.com/courses). You can learn a little bit more there, sign up, it will direct you to the calendar where you sign up for your private coaching slot to be enrolled, simple. You'll get all the details in your welcome email. We start January 9<sup>th</sup>, go over there, join now, don't wait. Alright you all, love you all. I'm so glad you're here today. Can't wait to chat with 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](https://mckoolcoaching.com), that's M-C-K-O-O-L coaching.com to learn more.

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