

#94: The Maybe Hole



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With Your Host

Marissa McKool, MPH

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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 is it going? I hope you're doing well. I'm so glad you're here and you pulled up this episode and hit play whether you're on your drive to work, on a walk, folding laundry. Wherever you listen to this or read this if you're reading the transcript I'm so glad you're here. If you are new around here, welcome, I'm so glad you're here. Whether a colleague or a friend sent you an episode, or you saw one of my posts on LinkedIn, maybe you participated in one of the recent webinars I did with various different public health organizations.

I'm so glad you're here and you're listening in. Welcome to a community that is dedicated, committed to redefining rest so you can have more time in your life, have less stress, less emotional suffering, feel better, do more of the things that you love and want to do and have a fulfilling life. You are in the right place if that is on your vision board for 2023 or if that is your secret goal, if that's something you want, welcome.

Before we get into the episode I want to kind of share with you what's been going on with me as an example of someone who is living a rest-centered life. I want to share that having a life centered on rest does not mean you always feel positive or always feel good or you don't have challenges. whether they are periods of intentional growth or periods where it wasn't really intentional but it's happening. So I feel like I'm in a really good place right now. We just moved. I'm loving where we're living. We've been snowboarding a bunch.

I am so excited about everything happening in my coaching business. I've been having some great opportunities to work with public health organizations to help them. I of course love working with all my one-on-one

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clients. We just wrapped the How the Patriarchy Robs You of Rest course which was so amazing, so much fun. I am so glad I offered this course and I'm so excited for everyone who took it. I'm making new friends in Colorado where I live now.

I have some fun trips coming up. Actually, this week me and my partner are going to Brackenridge to celebrate our anniversary. As I've shared before in the podcast, I'm going to see Adele, which I cannot be more excited for. I'm going to Miami in March. So many good things happening. I'm really setting my schedule to have more time to myself to read, to think. I've really been getting into baking even though half the time it turns out terrible. And I'm having a lot more spaciousness. And at the same time, I'm going through a lot of discomfort and growth in different areas.

I recently joined a six-month program with my coach and we just kicked off in January and already I'm going through a lot of discomfort. Well, actually to be totally honest, I have been resisting and not allowing some of my emotions and some of my thoughts particularly around my career and my business and my belief in myself and where I can grow and what I can create over the past couple of months. And now being in this coaching program with my coach, my long-time coach is really having me face that and allow the discomfort and sit with it.

And my brain does not like that which is why I signed up for this coaching because I know that helps me really grow in the way I want to. So I can achieve the goals I want to, so I can help more people. So I can expand my nervous system capacity. So I can expand my ability to feel positive emotions, to allow negative emotions. To really evolve as a human.

So this is invited growth but it still can be very uncomfortable and actually I've been getting coaching today and yesterday and I've really come around to being like, "The next couple of months are going to be me sitting with this discomfort, probably a lot of tears, probably a lot of processing things,

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probably stuff coming to the surface I didn't know was there because I've been resisting it." And I've gone through this so many times before. Last year I went through this.

If you listened to my Experiencing Intense Emotions with Kindness and Self-Care episode. That was in the midst of one of these growth periods. Ever since I started coaching I've been doing intentional growth in different areas from dating to career to family to friends. And every time I pull another layer of the onion there is this period of discomfort in order to intentionally grow and ultimately it's worth it for me. You get to decide if it's worth it for you. But on the other side not only have I evolved and grown but I've become more connected with myself.

I have a deeper understanding of myself. I have more compassion and also I've evolved to the place where I can be the person who receives more of what I want in my life. And then there are other areas where there is growth that I wasn't expecting or intending. This past year of being engaged, my partner and I have been going through a whole lot of growth and challenges that neither of us was really anticipating or expecting.

And there have been tears. There has been lots of holding space. And there has been discomfort. And that's okay, that's part of living a rest-centered life. That's part of living a fulfilled life and intentional life because in order to hold the space and have the space and the capacity and the ability to really accept more of what you want in your life, to go after it. We really have to evolve through who we are now into the next version of ourselves. And that's discomfort and that's growth. So that's where I'm at.

There's been a lot of tears, there has been a lot of coaching. I have started therapy. There is a lot happening but it's all good. It really is all part of the human experience. And when you do it intentionally or even when there's something that you're not expecting comes up but you kind of approach dealing with it intentionally really there's much power in that. You really get

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to own the power inside of you, your authority and it is really quite amazing. And I really do find for me personally, and a lot of my clients that having a coach to help you through that is really, really helpful.

I certainly will always have a coach to help me through these things. I believe everyone can benefit from a coach but you can also hold the space for yourself or have your friends or a therapist or whatever else. So if you're going through a challenging time, if you're in discomfort, if you're processing stuff, listen, I'm right there with you. It doesn't mean you're doing anything wrong, you're on the right track.

So with that let's talk about today's episode which is not really related. I just wanted to share where I'm at with you all. One of the biggest barriers to rest, actually it has really been, you know what, it is because when we think about resting and having more time for ourselves and capacity and living a rest-centered life, actually this is one of the biggest barriers and that's indecision which I have started to call the hole of maybe or the maybe hole which now that I'm saying that loud sounds a little weird but the hole maybe, whatever you want to call it in my one-on-one coaching program.

And I'm going to use a visual to explain. Imagine you're on a path to a specific destination, you're on a trail there whether that destination is a goal, a raise or a new job or an experience like trying golf for the first time or learning how to sew. Maybe the destination is no longer doing something, no longer eating meat or ending a friendship. Now, picture there is a big hole in the ground on your way and you get into that hole. It's easy to get into, you've shimmied your way down. And you thought, let me just see what's down here.

Maybe there's something important. Maybe there's some information I need but then you can't get out. The dirt's too soft and it crumbles when you try to climb out. There's no ladder. You're stuck. There's no one there to pull you out. Anyone that walks by and you ask them for help, they say, "I don't

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know. I don't know." Or they give an opinion that's not helpful, that's the maybe hole. This is what happens when you get stuck in indecision. You have at least one desire although I find most people have multiple desires which is essentially just a want.

You have a desire to become an executive director or a want to go to Ireland or a desire to find a partner or a want to be able to get more of your work done efficiently, to get home on time. There are a lot of desires and wants that we have. And when you acknowledge that and name it, and especially when you start taking steps towards it your brain goes, "Maybe this was a bad idea. I don't know if I made the right choice. Maybe I shouldn't. What if I'm wrong?"

And you start questioning yourself, you let doubt come in and you get stuck in the in-between not deciding either way, not deciding to go towards your desire and not deciding to say no to it. You aren't saying yes or no to anything, you're stuck in maybe. And being in the maybe hole prevents you from getting to your goals, from having more time, from experiencing something new, from doing what you want. You're stuck in the maybe hole thinking maybe I shouldn't do this, maybe I shouldn't do that, I should do this. Wait, maybe I shouldn't. Maybe I should.

You get into this hole when you don't make an active decision either way and we think maybe is innocent, that maybe isn't a problem, that maybe is helpful to us. And while sometimes maybe can serve us what I find is most people don't know the difference between when it's serving you and when it's not and they get stuck in the maybe hole. There is a difference between looking into the maybe hole and just being like, "Huh", and observing from above and then making a decision, versus getting into it and getting stuck.

If someone asks you to go to lunch and you say, "Maybe, I need to think about it." And then you come back to them with an answer within a couple of hours or a day and you say yes or no, you did not get in the maybe hole.

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If you are thinking about joining a gym and you tell yourself you need to think about it, and you never make a conscious decision yes or no, it's always just a maybe in the back of your mind, you're in the maybe hole. And that hole is easier to get into and it's harder to get out of and it doesn't serve you.

You just stay in that hole draining so much mental and emotional energy, ruminating, doubting, ping-ponging, questioning yourself. And you end up experiencing increased anxiety and overwhelming and doubt. Listen, this is not about what you 'should decide'. This is about the action, the intention and the decision to choose either way. When you get into the maybe hole that's not an active choice. When you are stuck in the maybe hole you don't have any power. Your power comes from your decision whether it's a yes or a no because a direct yes or a direct no moves you forward in one direction or another.

And maybe keeps you stuck in one spot. You tell yourself the reason you get into the maybe hole is you're worried you'll make the wrong choice or that you'll regret it. But the real reason is you aren't trusting yourself. When you get stuck in the maybe hole because you aren't trusting your power, your power to the side, to say yes or no. And you might tell yourself, well, you're worried what other people will think or they have more knowledge. No, you aren't trusting your internal knowledge and authority. And to get that trust back or to hold space for the trust in yourself you have to make a decision and make a choice.

So many people in public health, particularly women in public health struggle with owning their power to choose because women are socialized that we should defer authority to others, that other people know best, that we can't trust ourselves. So we feel uncomfortable owning our power and making a choice and we get stuck in maybe. Where are you in the maybe hole right now in your life? Have you been thinking about leaving your job

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because they haven't given you a promotion you want but you haven't started updating your CV or applying to jobs?

Do you have a secret desire to start a baking business but you're not really choosing to try or not, just sitting there on the back burner in your head? Maybe you want to do a solo travel trip to South America but you keep putting it off and questioning if you should. If you weren't in the maybe hole, if you decided intentionally a clear yes or a clear no right now and you got out of that hole, what would be different? You would get so much mental and emotional space back that you could direct somewhere else.

You could get certainty and control back. You get to start moving forward in a direction on a path where you want to go rather than spinning in mental circles but moving nowhere. Here is part of the lie of maybe. Part of the reason so many people choose to get stuck in the maybe hole is because they believe if they make a decision now they can't change it later but that's not true at all. If you decide right now it's a no for starting a baking business and you are firm in that and clear and conscious, in a year you can always decide yes.

But if you don't say no and you spend a whole year being in the maybe hole questioning, wondering, doubting, ruminating, kind of thinking about it, avoiding it. You are wasting so much mental and emotional energy you could direct to something else, something that would serve you and help you. How do you get out of the maybe hole? I want you to really think about that right now. Imagine you're in the hole of maybe, think about it. How do you get out? What do you think the answer is? It's actually really simple and straightforward. It's the same way you got into it.

You have to decide, it's a decision. Now, this decision feels harder than deciding maybe because our brains are scared. Your brain's going to tell you, you can't, you shouldn't, what if you regret it? That is why getting out of the maybe hole feels hard not because it is hard because your brain

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makes it hard because ultimately it's just a decision. Being in the maybe hole, getting in there is a decision and getting out of the maybe hole is a decision, that's it.

But to your brain, going into maybe is safe so it lets it be easy. But getting out of maybe and owning your power, making a decision to your brain is dangerous so it makes it hard by telling you, you shouldn't or you can't. And the only reason it feels hard or scary is because we have been told that we can't trust ourselves., that we don't know what's best for us, that we have to follow a certain path, especially if what we want to do is out of the social norm or what people think we should do or what everyone else around us has done.

How to get to your desire is you decide. You decide to take that step forward. And you have to start by deciding to get out of the hole of maybe. And what happens when you decide to get out and never get in that hole again? Let's say you fill that hole up with dirt or cover it up with a construction cone so you can't go in anymore, what happens if you don't let yourself get in that hole and get stuck? You will get to wherever you want to go, whatever it is your want.

You will create and live the life you want because you will be making decision after decision of what to do, of how to spend your time, what you want to create, what you want to go after, what support you want to get. And you keep moving forward. You decide to turn or go straight, to go faster or slow down or to keep going. It moves you forward. You can always decide to move to the trail to the right rather than to the left. But the point is to be moving forward and not be stuck.

Whether it's to have more time or be more present with your family, to feel less resentment, to leave your job, to have a better relationship with your partner, to have more time off, to have less work to do, to make more money, anything at all. To create the life you want, to have a rest-centered

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life you can't be stuck in the maybe hole. You have to move forward. And moving forward comes with decision-making and owning your power to make decisions.

The path to a rested life, a rest-centered life, a fulfilling life, a life you want to live where you are present, trying new things, doing what you want is paved with decisions, decision after decision. There is no way around it. Every decision is a step forward. Every indecision is a drop in the maybe hole that delays you in getting what you want in life. I really want you to decide to get out of that hole and to not go back into it. Whether it's deciding on what to have for dinner or when to fly home the next trip or what to do in your job or where you want to go next in your career or anything else.

Once you choose to no longer get stuck in the maybe hole and own your power and your authority and trust yourself to make decisions you will move forward. Doesn't mean there won't be discomfort along the way as I shared at the beginning. I do this all the time. I have lots of discomfort but I'm moving forward towards my goals and I'm creating the life I want and I'm living the life I want. That's what it's about versus getting stuck in the maybe hole because it feels safe but not really living the life you want.

If you let your survival brain choose between staying in a maybe hole that gives you a false sense of safety but continuing to live a life you don't really love versus getting out of the maybe hole and deciding to move forward even if there's some discomfort, your survival brain is going to say, "Let's stay in the maybe hole." And listen, you can choose that.

But if you let your prefrontal cortex, the part of your brain that really allows you to use logic and strategic thinking and planning and creativity and envisioning. That part of your brain will choose to get out of the hole and move forward and make decisions and create the life you want and allow the discomfort to come along on the journey. It's not going to be there the

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whole journey, it will come and go. It will be a part of the journey, it won't be the whole journey and that is part of the process to creating the life you want.

So listen, you all, I want you to think about that and if you are in the maybe hole right now and the desire you have is to change your life, to have more time, to feel better, to stop being overwhelmed, to stop overworking, to feel peace and presence and contentment, I want you to come join my coaching program. Come sign up for a consult, we work together for three months. I support you through the process of moving forward and making those decisions even when your survival brain says, "No, let's go to false safety."

I'm here, you'll get tools to help you move through it, to create the life you want, to not get stuck in the maybe hole, to move forward and we do that together. So if you're interested, sign up for a consult, it's completely free and there's no obligation to join. The reason for it is so we can get to know each other. You share what you're struggling with and what you want to be different and I share how my coaching program can help you. We can decide together if it's a good fit and then you get to choose if you want to join or not. No obligation.

But if you're in the maybe hole, but you know you have a desire for a better life, to feel better, to do more, we want you to come sign up for a consult, mckoolcoaching.com/coaching, come sign up you all. And with that, I'll let you go. Have a great week. Talk to you next week.

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.