

Ep #12: Resentment and Rebellion



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With Your Host

Kori Linn

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This week we're talking about resentment and rebellion, how they're related to people pleasing and what you can do when you feel them come up for you at work or anywhere else.

You are listening to Love Your Job Before You Leave It, the podcast for ambitious, high-achieving women who are ready to stop feeling stressed about work and kiss burnout goodbye forever. Whether you're starting a business or staying in your day job, this show will give you the coaching and guidance you need to start loving your work today. Here's your host, Career Coach, Kori Linn.

Hey y'all, before we get into this week's topic, I just wanted to share with you something that happened in a coaching call recently because it was so powerful. And I think it will be really helpful for people right now, many of whom I know are struggling with lots of things, whether it's work stuff, or personal stuff, or just still being in the Covid times. I know we all have a lot of things coming up for us. And even though it's a new year there is a lot still that we're thinking about, a lot still that we're feeling.

So what came up on a client caller recently was a client of mine is experiencing depression. And as a mindset coach I'm focused on teaching people how they think about things and how they think about things matters and what that creates for them. So for this particular client we were talking about the difference between her depression and the way she thinks about her depression. And this is so fascinating because I think for a lot of people it seems like the depression is what makes the depression hard. That kind of makes sense.

But what we actually discovered when we were talking about it was the depression is not the best, it's not her favorite thing ever but it's totally manageable. And what makes the depression feel so fucking terrible is the idea, her thought that this is all there will ever be, I'm always going to feel this way. There's no point even trying to feel better. So I think this is so fascinating because when we had this aha breakthrough on our call her experience totally changed. Her depression didn't magically go away.

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Depression is something that is more complicated than just mindset. There is a medical angle to it. And so I can't work on the medical angle of it. I'm not a doctor. I'm not a therapist. But what we were able to do was we changed the story around the depression. And so by the end of the coaching call she was like, "This is fine, not my favorite thing ever, definitely not what I would order off a menu if I could order anything I wanted. But when I changed the thoughts about the depression it's totally manageable."

And I think that's so important for everyone to hear it now because I know that there are a lot of people out there right now experiencing depression, experiencing anxiety, experiencing other difficult things that they're grappling with.

And so I wanted to share that with you so you could think about when I'm struggling with this thing what is so hard about it? Am I imagining it's going to go on forever? Am I telling myself there's no point in even trying to make it change? Because often when we can begin to change those stories around the thing, our experience of the thing changes, just like my client, you might find that when you're willing to examine what makes it so terrible you're able to find things that you can change right away even if you can't change the thing that you're thinking about.

So her depression did not magically go away but like I said her entire experience of it changed. I have done a lot of coaching as a client and before coaching I had a lot of anxiety, I've done a lot of coaching and I still feel a lot of anxiety. But my experience of anxiety is so different than it was before. So anything that you're grappling with, anything that you're struggling with, I just want you to pause and be like, what am I telling myself about this thing?

Is it possible that if I tell myself something else about this thing, is it possible that if I experience the thing without the story I've been telling about it, it could feel differently, I could feel differently, I could feel better?

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So I just wanted to share that with you because I think like I said, there's so much that people are struggling with right now. And even the littlest tiny shifts from it's always going to go this way to it feels this way today and maybe it won't always feel this way. That kind of thing can be super powerful. It doesn't have to be a huge change in how you talk about it to create a huge difference in how you feel in your day and in your life, so that's that.

And now let's move on and talk about our topic at hand which is resentment and rebellion. So a few weeks ago we talked about people pleasing and how it's not really about pleasing other people at all. But we didn't talk about the two things that I often see happen when people do partake in people pleasing behavior patterns. Those two things are resentment and rebellion.

Resentment is the more obvious side effect of people pleasing and it goes like this. We do something we don't necessarily want to do in order to try to control someone else's thoughts and feelings and then we resent that person even though they did literally nothing. And it was totally our choice to take the action that we took. I know what you're thinking, is it really totally our choice? Did they really do nothing? What if they actually asked or even insisted that we behave in a certain way? Here's my answer to that.

No matter what anyone says or does we always still have complete agency over our own actions, even if they're our client, even if they're our boss, even if they're our mom. We might choose to behave a certain way because we want a certain outcome or we want to avoid a certain outcome, but we still get to choose. And I think seeing that choice for what it is and taking responsibility for it is so empowering.

The real reason we feel resentful after engaging in people pleasing behaviors isn't because of the other person, it's because of us. It's because we are telling ourselves that we don't have a choice. And that's a lie. We totally do have a choice. We totally did make a choice. We just also don't

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like some elements of our own choice sometimes and sometimes we blame that on other people or on the situation.

Here's the thing, there's nothing inherently wrong with doing this. You get to do it if you want to. It doesn't make you a bad person but it's not super enjoyable and it generally does not create anything you actually want to experience. Here's something I see sometimes, people feel resentful and they see that as a sign that there's something wrong with the situation or that the other person did something wrong. It's like we feel entitled to be resentful almost. Now, I agree that resentment is a sign but I think it's a sign for us, about us, not about the other person, not about the situation.

I think resentment is a sign that we need to examine what we did, what our reasons for doing it were and why we're feeling resentful now. This is one of those ways in which we have things pretty much backwards. We think that resenting the other person or the situation makes sense. We think that resentment is the way to assert our power but we're the only ones who feel our resentment. And you all, it doesn't feel very good, it feels like shit actually, I should know, I have a lot of experience in this area.

And yet most of us choose to feel resentful instead of choosing to take responsibility for the fact that we are the only ones directing our own lives. And I have a lot of experience with this one too you all. So if you have experienced this you're not alone. Here's part of the problem, resentment can actually feel good for a little bit, right when it starts it almost seems empowering, the same way that anger can seem empowering at first.

Righteous indignation can feel good because it comes with the certainty that you're in the right and the other person is in the wrong. But here's the problem with that, once you get over the initial high of believing that you're right and the other person is wrong, you're left feeling trapped, and powerless, and small. Because when you don't take responsibility for your own actions and choices then you also feel powerless and like you're at the mercy of everyone and everything else all the time.

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And the double irony is that the more you feel disempowered the more you'll engage in behaviors like people pleasing. You'll try to people please to get your power back but you wind up feeling more and more disempowered, more and more powerless instead.

Here's an example from my own life, back when I worked in corporate. Sometimes I would do things I didn't want to do and then if the other person wasn't super appreciative then I would feel resentful because I was trying to people please them. So what I wanted was for them to be pleased and tell me all about it and they were not complying with my wishes you all, which is how I learned so much about this subject.

But back to it, so I would do something I didn't want to do, I would expect the other person to be super appreciative, they wouldn't be. I would feel resentful and then I would feel disempowered because I would forget that I could appreciate myself. So what would I do? I would go right back and try to people please some more because I was still looking for that outside validation. I was still hungry for that approval.

I wanted to feel empowered with approval, so I kept trying to go get that from somewhere else. But it didn't work because the more I people pleased and then felt resentful, and then felt disempowered, and then tried to people please and still didn't get the validation I wanted, it's just a negative cycle. It's just like a downward spiral and I just felt worse and worse. And then the worse I felt the more I was trying to people please others. So you can see why it's a recipe for burnout and just deep dissatisfaction at work. So that's resentment.

And then the other side-effect of people pleasing is rebellion. Resentment is a slow burn but rebellion is like a firecracker. Rebellion is what happens when part of you gets tired of always trying to do the right thing, always trying to make sure everyone is happy and that no one is upset with you. It's an impossible order because you can't control other people's thoughts and feelings. So of course we try it, and try it, and try it and then we get burned out on it and then we get into rebellion.

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So you've probably experienced this yourself. You've been striving, and you've been pushing, and you've been achieving, and maybe even you've been bending over backwards and people pleasing quite a bit. And then suddenly part of your brain is like fuck it. Who even cares about this shit? I am so done with this right now, let's go get a coffee, I'm not even going to change my Slack status, I'm going rogue, they can't stop me.

And you do the attitude equivalent of popping your collar on your bad kid leather jacket. You feel wild and it's a little thrilling to be honest. It feels a little bit good at first, the same way resentment does. It feels dangerous, even though you also know it's totally not dangerous, it's just a tiny rebellion.

You're going to be back to your perfectionist overachieving within the hour, the day, the week or as soon as a new emergency pops up. But for that little bit of time you get kind of that joy of rebellion. It seems pretty innocuous, in many ways it is. Like I said before there's nothing wrong with it. I'm teaching you about these but there's nothing inherently wrong with these behaviors but here's the thing. It will for sure have you feeling less powerful in your career and it will also slow you down in a big way.

When you over-perform and people please yourself to the point of rebellion, you're setting yourself up for disappointment. Why? Because you are creating an internal system where you are both the main parent and the rebellious teenager, you're both, we have high standards in this house and also you're not the boss of me. And it doesn't just play out at work, it plays out when you have personal goals, like exercising twice a week, or getting up early to work on your novel, or finally creating that budget you've been talking about.

When the only way we know how to perform is to overdo it, be resentful and rebel, then that pattern will show up everywhere in our lives. Again, not inherently wrong, it does not make us bad people. But why slow ourselves down with this way of doing things? Why spend so much of our time feeling this way if we don't have to and it's not helping us create the career we

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want? Here's the good news, it does not have to be this way, people pleasing is a habit and you can change it. Resentment and rebellion are also habits and you can change them too.

When you notice yourself feeling resentful you can get curious instead of getting mad. Why do you feel this way? Did you do or say something that you wish you hadn't done or said? Are you feeling disempowered? Why? And if you're feeling rebellious you can get curious about that too. What are you trying to get away from? Are you bored and tired of it but not ready to admit to yourself that you want a new role at work? Are you at your limit with stress over a project you're working on?

When you spend your time being curious about your own feelings instead of acting them out you'll figure out what's really going on. And when you figure out what's really going on then you're in the position to actually create a change in your life. And you all, I just want to add the reminder I always add which is that this does not have to happen overnight.

For those of us who are people pleasers, for those of us who spend a lot of time in resentment and rebellion, it's not going to be an immediate change. It's going to be small, and gradual, and slow, and it's going to be little incremental shifts over time and that's wonderful. I think sometimes when we learn about people pleasing and we learn about what we're doing, and why we're doing it, there can be this temptation to want to just totally flip the switch completely to being another way immediately, and if you can do that, great. I cannot do that.

So for me it's been a lot of gradual incremental change. And that takes time and that's okay and you can make little tiny efforts and then just celebrate the shit out of yourself. It's totally big work to change how you think when you've been thinking one way your whole life. I just happen to think it's totally awesome work and totally worth it because you can radically dramatically change your life, create more meaning in your work and just have a lot more fun you all.

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So that's what I've got for you today. So as a reminder, the review is when we people please we often also experience resentment and rebellion. And sometimes even when we realize we're experiencing resentment and rebellion we don't want to let them go because they do feel a little bit good at first, but they are slowing us down and they're keeping us from creating the kind of careers we want. So what if we were just willing to try and do things a little bit differently?

And if you love what I teach and you want some help taking things a little bit deeper and figuring out how this all applies to your own life, I've got good news for you. I've got space for a few new one-on-one coaching clients starting this month. So let's hop on a call. I'll give you some coaching right away to help you get going. And if it seems like a good fit I will share with you how we can work together. Just head on over to my website and click on the 'work with me' button and get started there.

Also bonus, my coaching offering is totally virtual, so it's to better serve my global audience and yes, I do work with people who are not native English speakers and we've had great success doing that. There's even a testimonial on my website with someone in that category, so you can check that out on the testimonials page.

Alright you all have a lovely week and I will talk to you next time. Bye.

Thank you for listening to Love Your Job Before You Leave It. We'll have another episode for you next week. And in the meantime if you're feeling super fired up, head on over to korilinn.com for more guidance and resources.