

Ep #126: Too Much & Not Enough



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With Your Host

Kori Linn

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This week we're talking about the ideas of being too much and the idea of not being enough.

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.

Hello, hello, hello. Happy Wednesday to you, I hope you're doing very well. I'm sort of doing only okay today. I woke up with a bit of a headache that sort of went away and appears to maybe be coming back. I might have to take a little something about that. And Alex is out of town, which is perfectly fine, but also kind of just throws me off my rhythm a little to not have her around. And so I feel a little sad when she's gone and just a little bit off of my rhythm.

Also, I'm taking care of the dog, which she normally does. So that throws me off my rhythm a little bit too. And you know what? That's okay because being off of our rhythm is part of life and sometimes it's even part of being on our rhythm. Like when we're on our rhythm, we're not necessarily on our rhythm 100% of the time, all the time.

And I think that's really important for me to model and to tell you about because I think I talk a lot about how amazing things are and how amazing my life is. And my life is amazing, and it literally is beyond the wildest dreams of what I used to dream about. And also, there are days where I'm like, I don't feel great, or I don't particularly like what's happening, or I feel grumpy or inconvenienced, and that's just part of it.

And so if you are having some of that, it doesn't mean you're failing. It doesn't mean you're fucking up. It doesn't mean you're never going to get to where you're trying to go. It just means you're having a human experience and it's just part of the larger tapestry of your life, which

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involves a lot of things. Some of them are amazing and super fun, some of them less amazing, less super fun.

Okay, guess what we're talking about this week, y'all. We are talking about the idea of being too much. And I think this is such an important topic because it's such a common thought pattern that I see happening with a lot of my clients and just with people in general. And by people in general, I really mean people socialized as women. And I think it also comes up for people with other socializations as well, but specifically I'm going to talk about it in the framework of people socialized as women.

And to be frank, people not socialized as women but who identify as women may also deal with this thought pattern, but I'm not 100% sure. So take whatever you can from this podcast for wherever you are and leave whatever doesn't serve you.

And that's sort of always how I want you to approach the podcast. Take what is interesting to you, what's meaningful to you, what seems like something you want to work on, even if there's a lot of ideas in the podcast that you want. Sometimes just take one at a time because it can be hard to incorporate a lot of new ideas at once. So just take whatever serving size is the right serving size and amount for you.

So being too much. And then I think let's also talk about not being enough or feeling like we're not enough because I think that these thought patterns really go together. Okay, so what I want to talk about is, have you ever noticed that when you're worried about being too much, you're worried about being too much specifically in the way of how you were socialized as what a woman should be?

And if that is not the area in which you worry that you're too much, sub in whatever it is you worry about. But for me, and for a lot of the people that I've seen this thought pattern happen for, it has specifically to do with how we're socialized as women to be pretty, but not too pretty, and be kind, but don't take shit from people. It's like all this specific socialization that women

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receive about how to be a good person. And a lot of it does not get socialized for people who don't identify as women, right?

So people, when they're socialized as men, they don't get this as much. And specifically, it's like, oh, be assertive, but don't be too assertive and don't be aggressive because then you're a bitch, right? Or be emotionally attuned, but don't have too much emotional needs or that's no good.

And actually, it's interesting because now that I'm thinking about it, I do think men get this socialization in like they're not really allowed to have feelings in general. But I don't see men going like, "I don't know, am I too much? Am I too much? I'm afraid I'm too much." I think the socialization that men get shuts it down so much harder that they're just like, right.

Whereas for women, we get this sort of thing where we're like, be this exact thing in the middle. But don't be too much of this, but don't be not enough of this. And I think that's why people socialized as women have these two thought patterns of being too much and being not enough.

And realizing that this comes from patriarchy, and this comes from a culture that, benefits from women being a certain way. And when I say benefits, I mean like culture, patriarchy benefits when women do what we're told to do and behave how we're told to behave. Because when women do that, women are non-threatening and women do a lot of unpaid emotional labor. And women do a lot of caretaking and managing of tasks and people and feelings and all kinds of stuff.

So when people specifically socialized as women want to create and build their satisfying as fuck life and their satisfying as fuck career, they often run into this like, oh, am I too much? Am I being too much? Am I asking for too much? Is it okay? Am I allowed? Because they're shucking off these roles and identities and ways of being that patriarchy has taught them is how they're supposed to be and is what it means to be a good person.

But really what it means is to be a good woman person, right? Because, again, the lessons that are taught to people socialized as boys and people socialized as girls are not the same lessons. So I think that this is really

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interesting to think about because, for me at least, it gives me a little wiggle room.

Like when I'm like, oh, am I too much? I'm like, well, too much according to who? Too much according to what? Who benefits from me thinking I'm too much? Do I benefit? Do the people I love and care about benefit? Or do they not and is it someone else, right?

So if you think about one of the ways that this too much thing shows up for a lot of people is like, too emotionally needy. Do I have too many feelings? Do I have too many needs and preferences? And so who benefits from that?

Well, I don't benefit from the thought pattern that I have too many needs and preferences because if I think I have too many, then I'm like, okay, I got too many, I can only pick a few. Or better yet, let me just not have any and just be available for other people's needs and preferences.

That's not serving me. That's not helping me. I'm not benefiting from that. That's not helping me live my wildly satisfying life and career. And I would also argue it's not helping the people that I have my closest relationships to because if I'm not able to authentically explain my needs and preferences and desires to them, we're not going to authentically be able to connect.

Now, in the way that patriarchy wants it to be, I could still be of service to someone else in a sort of dominance setup, right? Like I could still serve someone else's needs and desires without being in contact with mine, but that's not going to be a true connection, right? That's going to be like me shutting myself down, pretending I don't have any needs and preferences and that I'm like a weird robot automaton so that I can care for someone else almost like a servant.

And so first of all, even if that benefits other people, I'm not super excited about that. I don't think I'd like to do that. But I would also argue the kind of connection that I'm looking for in my life and that the people in my life are also looking for from me, that would not be served by that kind of faux relationship because it's not a real relationship. It's not a real connection. It

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doesn't go both ways, it's not reciprocal. It is a one way service, one way servanthip.

And so to me, I'm like, well, that doesn't benefit me, and it doesn't benefit the people closest to me, it doesn't give them an authentic connection to me. So that's not what I want to have happen. And then who does it benefit? Well, it benefits structures of power. If I'm a good little girl and do all the things that I was taught to do culturally, that's going to benefit the existing power structures.

Do I want to benefit the existing power structures? You get to choose for you, but for me, no the fuck I don't. I don't want to benefit the patriarchy. I don't want to benefit white supremacy. I don't want to benefit ableism. I don't want to benefit Puritan work ethic. And so getting really clear on that is really helpful for me.

Now, I'm going to be really honest with y'all, this "am I being too much" thought, it still comes up for me. And I'm not saying like just once in a while. It comes up for me still all the time, like pretty often. And I think it's a really powerful thought pattern because when we're like, "Am I too much?" It's like, how would we ever know, right?

And so I think a lot of us, we don't like the way that thought feels and so we're like, "Oh, I'm not going to go to that neighborhood." And so then we don't push out of our comfort zone. We don't push out of the socialization that we have been taught is what's available to us. We don't try new things. We don't take bigger risks. We don't dream of and then go on to create a life that feels wildly delicious to us because it would be so yucky to bump into that thought, "am I too much?"

It's so interesting, this "am I too much" thing, it brings up so much shame and cringe for people, it's so deeply unpleasant. And listen, me too, I don't like it either. But having this awareness around what does that pattern actually mean and who actually benefits from it? That allows me to actually engage with the thought pattern.

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So if I make some kind of big, bold decision for my life and I get that “am I being too much” thing, it’s still not pleasant, but it doesn’t feel as bad as it used to because I can see it for what it is now. And what it is, is a way to control me while I think it’s my idea. So I want to say that again. The thought pattern, “am I being too much” is a way to control me.

It’s a way for other people who taught me that thought pattern to control me, and to have me self-regulate that control, where I’m like, “Oh, I would hate to think I’m being too much, so I’ll just be less.” I’ll just ask for less. I’ll just settle for less. I’ll just pretend I’m satisfied with this smaller, less interesting life, and then I’ll slowly waste away on the inside, right? That’s not a super fun thing, so I’m not going to do that. And when I have awareness about what this thought pattern is, I’m less likely to do that.

Okay, and then the flip side, what if I’m not enough? I think it’s so interesting that so many of us have both of these thought patterns. I’m like, how could we be too much and not enough at the same time? But it’s kind of a trick question because it’s like, oh, you can be both because you’re too much of these things the patriarchy told you not to be. But you’re not enough of these other things that patriarchy told you you should be, right?

So it’s like, oh, I’m too bossy and I’m not loyal enough, right? But bossy according to who? And why are they applying that label? And who benefits from that label? And is bossy actually just supposed to make me ashamed and shut up? Because I have no interest in that.

And loyal is so interesting because I do value loyalty highly. But a lot of times when a problematic culture talks about loyalty, what they’re actually talking about is one’s willingness to stay in a situation that’s not working for that person because of this supposed ideal.

So if we’re like, “Oh, I’m not loyal enough,” is it actually true that you’re not loyal enough? Or is it more like you’re not willing to sit around and be abused? Or you’re not willing to sit around and be belittled. Or you’re not willing to tolerate a certain kind of behavior, and so the culture calls that

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disloyal because the culture would benefit from you tolerating that kind of behavior.

So that's what I mean when I'm talking about we can be considered too much and not enough by the culture because of what it's labeling as good and what it's labeling is bad.

And the same way that with the too much thought pattern, you can be like, wait, who benefits from this thought pattern? Do I benefit from this thought pattern? Do the people I love the most benefit from this thought pattern? Do the things I care about the most benefit from this thought pattern? You can think about that when your brain says you're not enough also.

And I think that what you'll find is, generally when these thought patterns pop up, they're not ever benefiting you. They're not ever benefiting the people you love the most in a way that is truly about being connected and in community with those people. And they're not benefiting the things you care about the most either.

These kinds of thought patterns are about keeping you behaving in a way that works for a larger system, such as patriarchy, such as white supremacy, such as ableism, such as Puritanism. And there's lots of other isms, but I'm not going to talk about all the isms.

I mean, heteronormativity, right? Like this is how a person should be inside of this structure. And if you're not that, then here's all these ways for you to question yourself so that you sort of get back in line versus you being able to liberate yourself from that cultural structure and go on to create a life and career that's really meaningful and satisfying for you, even if it doesn't follow all the rules that you were taught about what it means to be a good person or a good woman.

So good news, bad news. The bad news is there's no perfect way to be that everyone cosigns is perfect. And I think when you have thought patterns like am I too much, am I not enough, that's a little bit why those thought patterns are sticky for us, is they tap into this desire for us to be

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like, oh, this is the right way to be. And if I be that way, I'll be safe. And if I be that way, I'll be loved. And if I be that way, I'll belong.

And because people can all have different opinions and those opinions can conflict and what one person thinks is good, another person thinks is bad. And another third person thinks is like boring or irrelevant, or something else. Like there's no way to get that and to do that and to achieve that in a way that everyone else will then sign off on.

And so what that actually means is that you get to decide. And in fact, you're the only one who can decide for you. So that's sort of the good news. It's like the bad news is that there's no perfect way to be, but the good news is that there's no perfect way to be, which actually gives you so much freedom and so much allowance to find your own way of being.

And if you're having a hard time getting out from under these thought patterns, another thing that can be useful is just to embrace them. If my brain is like, "Am I too much?" I'm like, yeah, totally, I'm so much. It's so great. I'm just going to be so much. And some people won't like it and that's fine. But I like so much. I like so much with lots of things. I like so much if you're serving me cake. I'm like, yes, serve me so much. Oh, delicious, right?

And so kind of embracing that part of who I am as a person is really enjoying extravagance, and extraneous and the excessive whatever. And so if my brain is really hooked into this pattern that I'm too much, sometimes I can question it and ask, who benefits from that way of thinking? And sometimes I'm just like, yeah, be a lot. It's okay. Some people like a lot. That's fine. It's super fun. Variety is the spice of life, whatever.

And the same thing with like, am I not being enough? It's like, yeah, you know what? Maybe what you have to give and what the situation wants from you are not a match and it's not enough. But what if that's okay, too? And what if it not being enough, doesn't mean you're not enough, right?

Because sometimes in life, we don't have enough energy, or we don't have enough time, or we've prioritized something else, and what we have to give

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might literally not be enough for another person. But what if that's okay? What if it's okay sometimes that there are gaps and surpluses and variety? And what if actually, that's a much more delightful and sustainable way to live, than always trying to be perfect and fit ourselves into these perfect little boxes of not too much and not enough and just the exact right amount of what's palatable for everyone else.

Because trying to live your life by what's palatable for everyone else is like a surefire recipe for you not having a great time because you're not even oriented to what you want and what would feel good for you. So you're certainly not going to get to your satisfying as fuck life that way. And you probably would have a hard time even knowing what satisfying as fuck to you if you're used to orienting always, always, always to what everyone else wants or thinks is good.

Also, orienting to what everyone else wants or thinks is good is a recipe for feeling insane because those motherfuckers don't even agree, right? You'll be like, "Well, my mom thinks I should do this. But my aunt thinks I should do that. My husband thinks I should do this. And my brother thinks I should do that. My bestie thinks I should do this." They don't even agree, so stop trying to please everyone else, it's not going to work. It's not possible.

And even if they all do agree, who gives a shit? It's your life, you get to do what you want. Now, I realize that may be easier said than done, but we're not going to solve all of this today, I just want to help you wiggle a little bit this idea that you need to be whatever you could be so that your brain would never have objections to how you're being because brains are always going to have objections, probably, right?

My brain will tell me I'm too much and not enough at the same category, at the same thing sometimes. This actually has happened to me in my business with my pricing where my brain is like, "You don't charge enough, no one will take you seriously." And simultaneously my brain is like, "You charge way too much. People think you're crazy." And I'm like, okay, so it sounds like actually, maybe this is just my brain freaking out that other

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people might have thoughts about me, and other people might have judgments.

But both of those sets are not going to benefit me. And again, I could also go the other direction where I'm like, you're right, brain, it's too much and not enough because pricing is wild. And the fact that we even, as humans, invented money is silly. So we're just going to charge this much and some people will love it, some people will hate it, some people will think it's a great deal, some people won't. And yeah, we're just going to carry on.

So basically, I think it's an extremely common thought pattern for people who were socialized as women and, as we've discussed, probably people in other socializations as well, to worry that when they're being who they actually are or who they actually want to be, they're being too much, and also simultaneously not enough.

And I think one way you can get out under those thought patterns is by asking who benefits from them and really thinking about that. Like where did I learn this? When I worry that I'm too much, who exactly am I thinking would think I'm too much and why? Do I actually give a shit what that person thinks?

And then trying to wiggle and get out from under the thought pattern that way. Or the other way is just fucking embrace it and celebrate it. Be like, yeah, I'm way too much, it's great. Everyone's so lucky, like you get an extra serving with me.

It's kind of like if I went to a restaurant where they were like, "Oh, here's your glass of wine. And here's your too much extra half glass of wine." I'd be like, "Yeah, okay. Yeah. Okay, I'm here for that." And other people would be like, "No, this is too much." And I'd be like, "I'll take your extra, it's fine." Right?

So you can really just get out from under these thoughts by questioning them. And you can also just delight in them and let them become part of the party, basically.

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Okay, we talked about a lot today and these are really sticky thought patterns for a lot of people. So if you're having trouble budging them on your own, you're not alone. That's very common. And you don't have to do it alone.

You can come meet with me every week and we can have basically a fun coaching party where we have a fun time together and we also work on all your sticky thought patterns and all the sticky problems in your life. And we help you create more delight, more satisfaction, more fun, more humor, and anything else it is that you want to work on. A better marriage, a better experience of your current job, a career switch.

Really, we can work on anything in one on one coaching. So if that sounds like a super yummy, fun time to you, because it does to me, hop on over to my website and sign up for a one on one consultation call. We'll have just a lovely conversation where you'll tell me what's going on with you and what you want to create more of or less of.

And then I'll tell you how I'm currently working with people and if it seems like a good fit, then we'll move forward and you can be my one on one client, or sign up for the next round of Satisfied As Fuck, and we'll help you get out from under this thought pattern. And we'll help you create a lot of other beautiful, spectacular things in your life and career as well.

All right, y'all, that's what I have for you today. 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.