

Ep 35. Stop People Pleasing



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Kym Showers

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I am Kym Showers, and this is *Reinvented After 40*, episode number 35: Stop People Pleasing.

Hey, friends. Welcome to *Reinvented After 40*, a podcast for all you women in the second half of life who are ready to take responsibility for your own wellbeing and create a life you love living.

I'm your host, Kym Showers, and after spending the first 40 years of my life people-pleasing and following all the rules, I was exhausted and ready for a change. I reinvented myself. I stopped outsourcing my happiness. And I've been brave enough to live a different kind of life.

I'll be here each week to help you do the same thing. It's gonna be fun. Let's go.

Hey, everyone, hi, welcome back to the show. So, we're talking about people pleasing today. I love this topic. I am a recovered people pleaser and I love people pleasers. I love when they come to me to be healed from this need to please disease because there's so many of us. Most women are pretty good at it because I mean we love to be liked. We want to be included. We're uncomfortable when anyone is mad at us. We live in fear that we will lose a relationship, so we get good at people pleasing. It makes us feel better.

We do it because we believe that we can control someone else's feelings, which we can't. We think we can, we think we can make other people happy, but I promise you we cannot. Other people are happy or unhappy because of the way that they are thinking. It doesn't have anything to do with me or anything to do with you. So, there are a number of characteristics that people pleasers share so let me just tell you a few of them that you might be able to relate to. It might give you a little indication that you possibly are a people pleaser.

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You might have a difficult time saying no. You are preoccupied with what other people might be thinking about you. You feel guilty when you do say no. You think that turning people down will make them think you are selfish. You agree to things you don't like, and you struggle with low self-esteem. You want people to like you and you do things for them to earn their approval. You're always telling people you're sorry. You take the blame even when it's not your fault. You never have any free time because you're always doing things for everyone else.

You neglect your own needs in order to do things for others. You pretend to agree even when you don't. If you are anxious, stressed, and overwhelmed, and even a little resentful on a daily basis you my friend are probably a people pleaser. You are so busy filling your days, running around, being involved in everything that everyone else thinks is important. You have a hard time making decisions because you don't want people to judge you, so you stay stuck in indecision and never really do what you want.

You're trying to keep people from being mad at you. Your brain thinks it's important, so you monitor other people's moods and then you take their moods personally. You are more concerned about what you think other people expect from you and what you think other people want you to do rather than what you expect from you and what you want to do.

So, to break the habit of people pleasing and get your life back, I have three steps today that you can start taking and that you can start practicing. But this is not an overnight fix. It has taken me probably a good 10 years. I worked on this the last 10 years pretty intensely and intentionally. So, this isn't an overnight fix, but this is a practice that you can just practice the rest of your life. And it will eventually set you free from people pleasing.

It's an intentional shift in your awareness and an intentional change in your habits to build a healthier relationship with yourself. And in turn build healthier relationships with other people. So, I have traveled this road. I

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know exactly how you feel, right now I do. But before I give you the steps to practice I want to first talk about what a people pleaser looks like on a daily basis, what people pleasing actually is.

People pleasing is saying yes when you'd rather say no. So, for example you've been working all week and you planned to take, let's just say, all day Saturday for yourself and literally do nothing. That was your plan. But then your husband asks you to help him with a project. And then your mom asks if you could pick up a few things for her at the grocery store. And then your friend texts and asks you to go get manis and pedis with her. So, then you start feeling that, let's say anxiety that is pretty familiar to you.

You start feeling that anxious feeling creep in because you can't say no to any of these people because you don't think you have a good enough reason to say no. Taking a day off and doing nothing is very unfamiliar to you and you don't think it's a good reason. It's so uncomfortable for you to tell your people no. You're not used to it, it feels selfish and mean to say no. All very legitimate invitations and your brain tells you, you should go and do the things that they're asking you.

You don't want your husband, or your mom, or your friend to think they're not important to you. You can't say no because you will feel guilty the rest of the day. So instead of saying, "No, thank you, I have plans today," you say, "Sure." You say sure to all the invitations. You make it all work. The day that you planned to rest and take care of yourself quickly got filled with other people's agendas. You say yes to someone else and in turn you say no to yourself, and this becomes a people pleasing habit.

This habit, you guys, leaves you feeling resentful, overwhelmed, anxious and exhausted because you don't take care of yourself. It starts to chip away at the relationship you have with you and that's the worst part. You don't want to disappoint others, so you get good at disappointing yourself instead. You don't want to leave others in a bind, so you get good at putting yourself in a bind over and over, day after day, year after year. It's just

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easier to say yes. It becomes your way of relating to people. It becomes who you are.

You're the yes girl. You're the pleaser. You're the one everyone can count on, easier to betray yourself rather than to feel like you've let someone else down and this is people pleasing. I know the feeling, I know the habit very, very well. I was more in tune with other people's needs and how I could meet them rather than being in tune with myself, knowing my own needs and meeting them first. I would do all the things for all the people and kind of secretly hope that they would return the favor.

People pleasing is me meeting your needs so that you can will meet my needs for validation, meet my needs for belonging and connection. I do things for you because I need you to help me feel okay about me. I need you to like me. I need you to include me in your life and to not be mad at me. I do things for you so you will do things for me. This way of being in relationship with people is people pleasing. People pleasers have an agenda but are most always unaware of it. We just don't even realize we have it. We're just so in the habit of pleasing people, it makes us feel okay.

It calms our anxiety, I can feel happy if you are happy, so I work at making you happy. I can feel amazing about myself if you think I'm amazing. So, I work overtime so that you will see how amazing I am, tell everyone else how amazing I am and then I give myself permission to feel amazing about me. It's a never ending job, actually an impossible job. It's never enough. I'm always insecure. I'm always apologizing. I have chronic anxiety.

It's kind of like playing that game of Whac-A-Mole. As soon as one person is taken care of, another person with another need pops up. So that's the way that I live. That's what a life of people pleasing looks like. It just sounds so exhausting. But I promise you guys, there is a way out of this, and I have found it. And I would actually say I'm 90/95% cured of it. And I'm going to give you my three steps that I have practiced for many, many years.

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So, step number one, say no, just say no. If it's not a hell yes, it's just a no. Saturdays are my day to rest. I'm no longer available to anyone on Saturdays. It's not mean to say that. It's not mean to say no. It's actually a very kind way to relate to people when you say no. You're being clear. You're being honest. You're holding yourself in the highest regard and you're holding them in the highest regard. You're being someone that they can trust and absolutely someone you can trust. Step number one is say no.

Step number two, stop apologizing. Just notice every time you say, "I'm sorry," you're going to be very shocked when you just, that's just your goal in the next week to start paying attention to how many times I say, "I'm sorry" throughout the day to people. It's going to shock you and I want you to stop doing it. It's a bad habit. Catch yourself, stop doing it, stop saying, "I'm sorry." Most of the things that people pleasers apologize for are not anything to apologize for. Just because someone is mad or uncomfortable doesn't mean you've done anything wrong.

Get comfortable letting other people own their own emotions and behaviors. You probably 90% of the time have nothing to apologize for. So, step number two is stop apologizing.

Step number three, tell the truth. Tell the truth to yourself first. People pleasers have a tendency to lie and that's the truth. We lie to make other people comfortable. We tell little white lies all day long. We're not telling ourselves the truth. We hide behind them. We lie to make ourselves look better. We lie to cover up our mistakes because we're usually perfectionists and we don't think we should be making mistakes. We lie to be included. We lie to fit in. We pretend that we like things when we don't like them. We do a lot of saying yes when we mean no. That's lying.

Be impeccable with your word and do it for your sake. Do it for your sake. Don't make excuses. Don't lie. Other people's moods and behaviors have nothing to do with you. So always tell the truth starting with yourself. Just

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spend the next week just being aware of the times you tell little white lies. That's just lying. Step number three is tell the truth.

So let me recap those three steps that I really want you to start taking and it's going to be a lifelong practice. Step number one, in your journey to set yourself free from the need to please other people, step number one is to say no. Step number two is to stop apologizing. Step number three is to tell the truth. These seemingly small practices will make a big difference in your journey away from people pleasing. And into your journey of self-trust, self-confidence, self-love, self-acceptance, so building a strong self-concept.

So, I really want you to start practicing. I have an example from my own life. I actually have lots of examples but this one came to mind that I want to tell you about as evidence that I really have broken free from this need to please. And I just don't get myself stuck in relationships that I don't want to be in. That's what we do when we're people pleasers. We get stuck in relationships we don't want to be in. So, we have to be willing to lose relationships and let people go in this journey of trusting ourselves and validating ourselves, and telling ourselves the truth.

We learn to have our own back. We learn to be our own best friend. We're so much more willing to try new things and be brave, and because we're willing to fail. So, this is actually how coaching can help you and how coaching has helped me so much. On these podcast episodes I have been teaching you tools that I teach my clients and we practice on a deeper level of course when we're working one-on-one. But we practice the tools of emotional adulthood.

We practice the tools of boundaries, and the manual, and self-confidence, and holding space for other people's emotions and not feeling like we have to fix them. We practice the tool of processing negative emotions and just being willing to let people go. The more coaching you get the more you'll put these tools into practice every single day and the less you will people

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please. It really is a byproduct of getting yourself healthy. Your need to please to feel okay dissipates.

The results of doing the work to step into your highest self is you find yourself free of people pleasing. It's a natural outcome. You have everything you've ever needed inside of you. You are the one to validate you. You do not need other people to validate you. You are the one to please. You are the one you are waiting for. Life on the other side of people pleasing looks like a life of peace, confidence, a lot more time and energy to be and do exactly what you want to do.

For example, this is the perfect example, in my own life how far I've come from setting myself free from the need to please others and free from getting into relationships that I absolutely don't want to be in. So, I told you all at the beginning of March that I hired my trainer. I hired a trainer for the first time the first week of March for my birthday gift to myself. But what I haven't told you is that I fired her the second the week of April because she canceled on me the morning of our appointment twice in two weeks because she told me she was too tired.

Now, my old people pleaser self would have said, "Oh gosh, totally understand, everyone gets tired. Get all caught up in your rest, and I'll see you on Thursday." But secretly inside I would have been irritated. I would have been irritated with myself and I would have been irritated with her, but I would have kept working with her and hoping that she would show up for our appointments and not cancel at the last minute at 4:30 in the morning.

And then I would be resentful the next time she canceled on me. I'd blame her and be mad at her but only because I was really blaming myself for being in this situation, for allowing this, for staying with someone who I didn't trust just because I was afraid to tell her the truth. Because I was afraid to say no, because I was afraid to fire her. This is how people pleasers get themselves stuck in relationships that they do not want to be in. But you guys, I'm not a people pleaser anymore.

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So, the morning of the second text telling me she needed to cancel because she had a rough weekend and she was tired that morning, I didn't even bat an eye. I told her the truth and I fired her. I said, "I only work with people who are committed and consistent, at least as committed, and consistent as I am." I said, "Thank you for getting me started and I wish you all the best." She tried to talk me out of it of course and she profusely apologized. But honestly there was no need for any of that because I wasn't mad at all.

I just found out some really useful information and I was in the market for a new trainer, that's where I put my energy. I hired someone new, and I let her know clearly what I needed and so far she has been excellent. So, I just took care of myself in that situation. I didn't get myself in a pickle. I choose to be with people who make me better, especially the ones I pay because I've raised my standards for myself. I am the most consistent and committed person I know. So, I only work with people who are consistent and committed.

And when they let me know that they are not, then that's good useful information for me and I move on. I only work with the best people. That's the standard that I hold myself to and that's the standard that I hold everybody else to, especially the ones that I pay. I expect people to show up. I expect people to honor their commitments to me and I expect that from myself. I spend time with people who make me better. This is what happens when you stop people pleasing. You end up getting exactly what you want in your life.

And you end up really being surrounded by people who are actually ahead of you in life and people that you admire and that you'd like to be more like. That's the people I'm looking for. And then also a friend asked me if it's okay to be a people pleaser sometimes? And I thought that was a good question. Of course, it is because we all are. We are all people pleasers sometimes. But I want to be clear with you because it took me some time to

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get clear with myself about what truly makes a people pleaser just so we know.

There is a way to relate to people from a healthy loving place. We do things or don't do things for a reason. And the reason we do things for people is what I want us to be clear about. So, people pleasing is doing things for other people because you don't want them to be mad at you, or you don't want them to be disappointed, or you want them to like you and validate you. Or you want them to feel better, you want them to be happy, those are all terrible reasons to do things for people.

So, if we do things for people because we genuinely want to and it aligns with what we value and our goals, and it comes from a place of love and generosity for ourselves and for others with no strings attached, no hidden agenda. We do not want anyone to think we're amazing or love us because of it because we already know we're amazing. We already have enough self-love. We already have enough self-validation. Then I like those reasons. Those are good reasons to do things for other people. And that's what we're always working for, that's what we're working towards.

Another example from my own life that just came up. I used to get anxious about when I was throwing a party, or when I was getting together with friends, I would get anxious about what the people might be thinking that weren't invited. And so, I had a lot of anxiety about not inviting people, or about inviting people. I worried that someone would get their feelings hurt if I didn't invite them to a gathering. I would literally agonize it and lose sleep over it. And so, I would invite people just because I didn't want them to feel left out or be mad about it and not talk to me.

And that's a terrible reason to invite anyone anywhere, I would never want to be invited for that reason, just so you know. I wasn't sure what a good reason was then when I was a people pleaser. I was very confused about it but now I do. I invite people because I genuinely want to spend time with them and that's my only reason. That's a good enough reason. I would just

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never invite anyone anymore to anything just because I thought it would hurt their feelings if they weren't included. I just hold them in high enough regard that I wouldn't do that to them or to me.

Can you see the difference? Can you see the genuine place of trust, self-love, genuine connection with people when you're doing it from that energy? The more connected I am with me the more aware I am of my own wants, and needs, and desires, the more I take care of myself without looking for it from anyone else. I have mostly cured myself of the need to please. It pops up every once in a while and I recognize it and I love that.

There you are, that hint of anxiety when I say no to someone or that little touch of stress, I feel it in my chest when someone might be disappointed, or I think someone might be disappointed. Or that little whisp, that breath of loneliness when old friends are together without me. And I let it all be okay. I just settle into the discomfort, and it doesn't kill me. It's a very small price to pay for growth, for freedom, for confidence, for making my dreams come true. And I want the same thing for you my friends.

And if all of this rings a bell and you can relate to any of this and you would love to set yourself free from people pleasing, hire me to be your life coach for the next six months and I will teach you the tools that you can put into practice slowly and surely day after day, week after week. And you will find yourself with more self-love, more self-acceptance, more self-confidence and with a lot less need to please others. It's the natural outcome. Every client I've ever coached will attest to this. So, raise your standard my friends and let's get to work.

Alright, that's what I have for you today on this amazing topic of people pleasing. I love you for showing up and I will see you next Thursday.

Thanks for listening to *Reinvented After 40*. If you want more information or resources from the podcast, please visit [KymShowersLifeCoach.com](https://www.KymShowersLifeCoach.com).