

## Ep 23. Other People's Opinions



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With Your Host

**Kym Showers**

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## Ep 23. Other People's Opinions

I am Kym Showers, and this is *Reinvented After 40*, episode number 23: Other People's Opinions.

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.

Hello, my friends and welcome back to the show. I have a fun topic for you today, what other people think about us. Other people's opinions, I love this topic. Oh, my goodness, I've been thinking about this for a while. My entire life I have cared what other people thought about me and I still care, namely I just want people to like me. I want to fit in and be popular, and in general to be respected and included.

We all want to be liked, it's our human nature, it's the way our brains are wired. But the problem for us comes and the problem for me came when we value other people's opinions about us more than we value our own. Every woman that I've ever coached is worried about what other people think about her, what they might think if she does what she really, really, really wants to do.

This is the number one reason women stay stuck in a life they don't love. They stay stuck in a marriage they don't love, stuck in friendships they don't love, stuck in a job they don't love, stuck in a church or a religion they don't love. The number one reason us women don't make the changes in

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our life that we really want to make is because we're worried about the opinions of other people. And we have good reason to be concerned, our brain is concerned that we'll be criticized and talked about.

Our brain is concerned that if they criticize us we might get kicked out of the tribe and be on our own and that we could die. Our brain likes to personalize and catastrophize, make everything about us and then take what could go wrong all the way to the worst case scenario. Our brain likes to convince us that it's dangerous to do something that might upset someone else, or that goes against what our group thinks.

This is why it's so uncomfortable for us to be straightforward and honest when we know they have a different opinion, and we'll think we're wrong. When we know they'll talk about us, and judge us, and criticize us, especially for someone like me who loves to be liked and loves to be included. I think I represent most women because we all like to be liked and all like to be included. We want true love and true connection and loyalty. We want people to say nice things about us. And when other people value us then it gives us permission to value ourselves.

When other people judge and criticize us then we think something might be wrong with us, that's why it's so painful. And so, we get good at managing or trying to manage other people's opinions about us by doing what we think pleases them and we do it at our own detriment and at our own expense. The one thing we cannot manage, or control is other people's opinions about us and it's very exhausting to try. I know, I've been the queen of trying for most of my life.

But I'm happy to report, which you probably already know about me, I spend very little energy anymore thinking about other people's opinion of me. I have come so far and have done a lot of very uncomfortable work to get to this place. The work has been primarily on building my own good, solid, strong, positive, compassionate opinion of myself. I am more

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attached to my thoughts about me and my thoughts about the world in general than I am to anyone else's.

I really do believe that what you think of me is literally none of my business. I know it doesn't have anything to do with me. Even if you think I'm great and amazing, that opinion is completely coming from your own thoughts and your own experiences, not from me and who I am. I just am not that affected by or interested in your opinion of me anymore. And that is a 100% a miracle, let me tell you. It has freed me up to keep doing my thing in the world, to keep being brave and having a blast with my life.

It frees me up to have an authentic honest relationship with you because I'm not spending any time or energy trying to manipulate your opinion of me. Can you see that? You are literally free to think whatever you want about me and about the world. I don't need you to think I'm awesome for me to think I'm awesome. I know I'm awesome. It lets you off the hook. And the same goes for you. You just have to know that you are awesome. You won't need me to help you feel awesome.

If you know you're awesome you'll show up to your life and to your relationships as your most authentic self, which is such a fun way to live. You'll draw the right people to you. You won't have anything to prove to anyone. You get to love yourself just the way you are and do exactly what you want and create a life you love living. No more contorting yourself to fit in the tribe or to stay comfortable and safe.

So, today to help you kind of detach from the power of other people's opinions in your life, I have three strategies that I want to offer you to help you stop worrying about what other people are thinking. And when I say strategies, I mean thoughts, and ideas, and practices, they're my thoughts, and my ideas, and my practices that have helped me so much, just passing them on to you.

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So, strategy number one and I love this one. You're not that big of a deal, no one is thinking about you. Everyone is thinking about themselves. This is very powerful. It's been the most helpful thought for me. I mean for the most part no one really cares that much about what you do or what you don't do. And if they do care they'll get over it. They're mostly worried about what everyone is thinking about them. We get so worked up over nothing. I have so many examples of this from my own life.

But the one that I'm remembering right now is when my kids were little and I was being all things to all people, which I was really good at. Clancy was in kindergarten and Riley was in second grade. And they went to a private Christian school, and I was room mom in both of their classes which was a huge job. Not only that I was on a small team of women at our large church who ran a massive weekly Bible study. Not only that my house was perfect, and I had many best friends and a big family, and I threw lots of amazing parties. And I prayed for an hour every morning at five o'clock.

And I aspired to be the perfect mom and the perfect wife. My calendar was full, and colorful, and filled with all the things I thought were the most important things because it's what I thought other people thought were the most important things. I loved it all, but my unconscious underlying motive and goal was to be loved, and appreciated, and included, and not judged, and not criticized.

I tried my best to be what everyone needed me to be, or what I thought everyone needed me to be. It wore me out and I started having debilitating anxiety, and panic attacks. And I actually ended up in the hospital and then on my sofa in my pajamas for six months recovering. It was one of the worst years of my life and one of the very best years of my life. I got therapy, and a new understanding of myself, and how harmful people pleasing had been for me.

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I remember so many things about that season that made a huge impact on me forever. The most important one is that the world goes on without me, the classrooms went on, they just found new room moms. The Bible study went on, it opened up a space for someone else to lead and teach. My family even functioned pretty okay too. I'll never forget how loved I felt by my people, and I was incapable of doing anything to earn it.

My aunt told me something that I'll never forget, "Honey, you're not that big of a deal. You don't have to do anything, and the world keeps spinning, let yourself be." And that's my first strategy for you my friends. When it comes to worrying about what other people think about you, you're just not that big of a deal. No one's even thinking about you, so do whatever you want. I love that.

Strategy number two. People's opinions about you are none of your business. I mean truly, you guys, when we have opinions about other people our opinions are coming from our own perspective and our own experiences, and our own mindset. It has very little to do with that person that we're thinking about and everything to do with the way we think and feel about ourself. So, if someone is thinking something critical or judgmental about you, it's because that someone has probably practiced at being judgmental and critical about themselves first.

The more self-love and self-compassion we have the less critical and judgmental we are about everybody else. So let their opinions be their business. Don't make it yours, stay in your own business, in your own thoughts, and feelings, and actions. Pay more attention to what your opinion is than you do to what their opinion is. If they are criticizing you and judging you, don't talk about it to other people. That's called gossip and that takes something that isn't even your business and makes it a huge ordeal.

If someone is thinking or saying something negative about you, it's totally their business and not yours. You don't have anything to set straight or to

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prove. Just keep in your own lane, swim your own race, and keep being your awesome self. And remember that people change their minds and opinions often. So, what they think today they may not even think about you tomorrow. What they say to one person about you may be totally different than what they say to another person about you.

So, see, it has everything to do with them and nothing to do with you. Other people's opinions are none of your business.

Strategy number three and the most valuable and important strategy of all. Develop your own strong healthy sense of self. Decide on purpose to curate an honest, positive, powerful opinion of you. Start with awareness. Just start being aware of what you think about you on a daily basis, not mirroring other people's thoughts about you, but what you actually think about you, what do you notice about you? What's your honest opinion of yourself? It's the most important opinion you have. You know best what's best for you.

You know best who you are. What matters to you is important. The things that you're drawn to are important. The way you see things is important. Give yourself credit for everything you are and all you've accomplished, your likes and dislikes, your sense of style, your creativity, the way you interact with people, the things you think are beautiful and funny, all the unique attributes that make you, you, are important. Notice them, notice you, pay attention, be brave, do the things that scare you. Get good at the things you want to get good at no matter what anyone else is thinking.

Be willing to step away from the crowd and go your own way for your own sake. You will grow your self-concept and you will develop a powerful opinion of yourself that will set you free from worrying about what anyone else thinks about you. That's the answer. You have your opinion of you and that opinion trumps everyone else's.

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These are the most successful people in the world. They don't think they're better than anyone else, they just know no one is better than them. And the better they get at loving themselves and accepting themselves, the better they get at loving everyone else. It's like when one boat rises, all the boats rise. So that's my strategy number three, develop your own strong, healthy sense of self.

So, to recap my three strategies, thoughts, ideas, helpful hints to help you break free from worrying about what other people are thinking about you, number one, no one is thinking about you, just remember that. Number two, their opinions of you are none of your business. And number three, develop your own strong, healthy opinion of yourself.

And then I just read this old fable that I'm going to read to you to help you remember how useless it is to live your life by other people's opinions. You may have heard this one before and I love it. An old man, his wife and a donkey were going to town. His wife rode on the donkey and the old man walked. As they went along, they passed some people who remarked it was a shame that the old man was walking, and his wife was riding. The man and his wife thought maybe the critics were right, so they changed positions.

Then, later, they passed some people who remarked, "Well, what a shame, he makes his wife walk." So, then they decided they'd both walk. Soon they passed some more people who thought they were fools to walk when they had a decent donkey to ride. So, they both rode the donkey. Now they passed some people who shamed them by saying how awful to put such a load on a poor donkey. The woman and her husband figured they were probably right, so they decided to carry the donkey.

Oh my gosh, can you see this story is so true and I love it because it's the perfect example of how futile and nonsensical it is to listen to other people's opinions and try to make them happy. Everyone has an opinion and they're supposed to. But your only business is deciding what is best for you, you



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get to decide. And if other people disagree or think you're doing it wrong, they totally can but it doesn't mean that you have to change positions, or you have to hop off the donkey and start walking. You get to decide who rides the donkey into town and you know what's best.

You stay committed to what you want and what makes the most sense to you. Trust yourself, trust where you're headed, trust that the most.

So that's what I have for you today, beautiful people, please share this episode with anyone you think might benefit from it and thanks for listening and following along with me. Have the best week ever and I'll 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](http://KymShowersLifeCoach.com).