

## Ep 25. Taking Things Personally



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With Your Host

**Kym Showers**

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## Ep 25. Taking Things Personally

I am Kym Showers, and this is *Reinvented After 40*, episode number 25: Taking Things Personally.

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, guys, how are you? Welcome back to the show. What is going on over there? It is Presidents Day today. And Jeff doesn't get that many days off, but he does get Presidents Day off, so he is living his best life. He's actually up on the mountain right now taking a hike. I swam this morning. I know you're going to maybe get tired of me talking about my swimming, but I am going to keep talking about my swimming. I have upped my swimming routine to three mornings a week from two mornings a week because I love it so much and I'm getting so much better and so much faster.

I have this little competition with myself every time I get in the pool, and I truly am getting faster, and getting better, and getting stronger, so, there you go. Also, so this is February and you're going to be listening to this episode in March, the first week of March which also happens to be my 61<sup>st</sup> birthday and I love my birthday. I love celebrating. I love growing up. I love growing old. I love growing wise. I just love growing.

So, I'm looking forward to it and my family's whisking me away to Santa Ynez for some wine tasting and a couple of fun meals. And an overnight

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stay at a little dreamy hotel. So, I'm super looking forward to that. And then also this week I'm headed up north for four days at my business mastermind. So, remember we met back in October for the first time, and this is our second in person meeting for the year. So, I'm really looking forward to that and been very challenging and inspired this week up there.

So anyways, that's what's going on over here with me. I hope you're doing well and you're growing as I am. And you're just excited about life in general. So today let's talk about taking things personally. Because this is a perfect follow-up to my last two episodes, Other People's Opinions and Friendship Now. As much as I say I don't take things personally, the truth is that I still do. I don't want to take things personally and I've got so much better about not taking things personally but there are times I witness myself taking something personally and I know that you do too.

So, let's talk about it. I came up with four questions that we can ask and answer today that I think will be useful to us. Question number one, what does it mean to take things personally? Number two, is it bad to take things personally? Number three, why do we take things personally? And question number four, what can we do to stop taking things personally if we want to?

So, to answer question number one I Googled, what does it mean to take things personally, that's the easy answer. So, here's Google's definition of taking things personally as a verb, as an action. To interpret a remark or action as directed against oneself and be upset or offended by it. To be affronted, to be aggrieved, to be upset, to be indignant, to be offended. Feel hurt, feel insulted, take exception, take offence, take something amiss, take umbrage, regard something as a slight, take as an insult, be angry, be annoyed, be wounded, be insulted, be hurt, be disgruntled, be resentful, be put out.

So how about that? What it means to take things personally is when I interpret someone else's remarks or actions as directed against me

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personally in a negative way. And then I react to that by getting upset, being offended, being put out, taking offence, being indignant, all those feelings as a reaction to taking something that someone else has done or said, personally. This is pretty clear. We all do it and know exactly what it all feels like.

I'm guessing there is a taking things personally spectrum from on one end of the spectrum never taking things personally to always taking things personally. And my guess is that most of us fall somewhere in between the extremes depending on the day, and the mood we're in, and maybe how well we slept last night. So that's what it basically means to take things personally. That answers our question number one.

Question number two, is it bad to take things personally? I say not at all because the truth is we're humans and we're wired to take things personally, whether they're meant personally or not. We make other people's words and actions mean something about us and we're supposed to. It doesn't mean that they are bad, or that we are bad, or that anything is wrong. It just means that we're human and this is what humans do. It takes the pressure off of us if we can just accept this is what normal humans do.

Maybe you want to take something personally and that's totally fine. You get to do whatever you want. In fact, I took something personally recently, and I decided I wanted to. I actually decided to be offended by it. And I decided to feel mad about it for one day. I gave myself 12 hours to be hurt, mad and offended about it and then I let it go. It was a beautiful, powerful experience. I didn't react. I responded intentionally and honored myself and processed my feelings and then I let it go and I moved on. I was totally aware of what I was doing.

It was my choice. I didn't have to tell anyone else about it, though I'll probably tell my coach because I tell her most things. And I think she'll probably be kind of proud of me. It's actually pretty fun to intentionally take

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something personally and know that it's us doing it. And then we get to decide how we want to respond. It's completely different than blaming them for doing something to me or against me. Can you see that? Because they didn't, they weren't thinking about me when they said the thing, or they did the thing.

I was thinking about me. I decided to make it about me on purpose. It wasn't a bad thing to do that. It was between me and me and we settled it. So, to answer question number one, is it a bad thing to take things personally? No, I say no. We can if we want to but just know that it's always our choice and it's always us taking it personally and never them doing anything to us. That's where all our power lies.

Question number three, why do we take things personally? It's because we make meaning out of every circumstance. We take words and we look at actions and we interpret them. We give them meaning. We have a tendency to put ourselves at the center of every event, in the center of every circumstance and at the center of every situation.

If we feel insecure and lonely for example, we're likely to interpret words and actions negatively and then hurt our own feelings because we see everything through a lens of how it affects us. A lens that does a poor job of seeing the bigger picture. We tend to react to everyone else's actions and words as if they are a personal judgment or statement about us, thus other people's anger makes us angry. Other people's lack of respect makes us feel unworthy. Other people's unhappiness makes us unhappy and so it goes.

If you're staying home on a Friday night and see friends out together on Instagram for example, you might automatically take it personally and feel left out. Our friends out to dinner has nothing to do with us and yet we take it personally and hurt our own feelings. Our brain thinks it's a problem. We want to be included and this feels like they intentionally unincluded us, but

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more than likely not. I always like to ask myself, how is it better that I'm at home and not out with them? How can I love them and love myself? Do I want to be hurt about this? No, I don't want to be hurt about this.

When I'm out with my friends am I intentionally leaving anyone out? No. But might someone feel left out anyways? Yeah. It's just how we are sometimes. It doesn't have to be a problem unless we want it to be a problem. We can accept it and let our brain know it isn't about us and let it be okay. We don't have to react. Create a space between your emotions and your reactions. This is when having a coach is handy, when you want to sort it out without talking to the wrong people and stirring up drama, sort it out with your coach.

The circumstance is always neutral, your coach will help you see it. Your coach will help you think about it differently and learn how to process it and then let it go. How to intentionally not take it personally if you don't want to because that's always a choice, it's always possible.

Question number four, what can we do to stop taking things personally if we want to? It really is possible, you guys, but it's also a lifelong practice. It's not something that happens overnight. It's just like everything else we want to get good at. There is no cure for being human, we will always have thoughts and feelings. We will always at some level take things personally, but it never has to be a problem. We can create so much self-awareness and self-love, and have our own back, and we never have to react. We can intentionally respond.

Self-compassion covers the experience, makes it okay. This is the work we must do for our own benefit, so we're not easily bothered, so we're not easily offended, so we're not easily annoyed, or insulted, or wounded, or hurt. That's not a fun way to be. I know, trust me.

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When Jeff and I were in our early years of marriage, when he would come home from work I would ask him how his day was, and he would tell me a quick couple of things. He asked me how my day was, and I had so many things to tell him. And I would start telling him about my day and he would walk away in the middle of me telling him something. I had just started my story and I used to take that so personally. I made it mean things about him, and things about me, and things about our marriage. I would get myself worked up about it, and bothered, and definitely offended.

But you know what I think now when he walks away from me when I'm mid-sentence, or when he changes the subject when I'm in the middle of a story? Truly, I'm completely amused by it. It cracks me up because it's just him, not me. Well, it might be me too because I just have a lot more words to say and he simply doesn't have the capacity to listen to details. He just wants the facts. It isn't personal, it's not about me and so I don't take it personally anymore. It's the way he's wired.

When we feel rejected, or ignored, or left out it's because we have taken something personally that probably had nothing to do with us, more than likely had nothing to do with us. It's so helpful to know this, and keep perspective, and keep a bigger picture on a daily basis. It's helpful to know that we can practice the skill of not taking things personally. We can learn to manage our own thoughts, manage our own emotions, and look at everything from an elevated viewpoint.

We can detach ourselves emotionally from other people's words and actions and see them as completely neutral. It's an empowering practice especially for us women who have the tendency to ruin our own good time by taking things personally. It's always a choice, you just have to know this. Calmness is your superpower. It's all of our superpower to remain calm, to have the ability to not overreact or take things personally, keeps your mind clear, your heart at peace.

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Even when it seems personal rarely do people do things because of you, they do things because of them. They say things because of what they're thinking and how they're feeling. If you're willing to view other people's behavior as a reflection of their relationship with themselves, it's much easier to stop taking what they say and things that they do personally.

And always remember the antidote to taking things personally and creating our own suffering is self-love and self-compassion. These two traits solves everything, the better we get at loving ourselves and having compassion for ourselves the less we take things personally.

So that's what I have for you today my lovely people. I hope that you are having the best week ever. Have a toast for me on my 61<sup>st</sup> birthday, Saturday March 5<sup>th</sup>. I'll be thinking of you because I'm so grateful for you and you following along, and you sharing this podcast with your friends. And just celebrating growing up with me, it's everything, and I love, love, love you so much. Have the best day, have the best week 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](http://KymShowersLifeCoach.com).