

Ep #70: Dropping Pressure with my Coach Megan Ladd



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DR. PRIYANKA VENUGOPAL

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Priyanka Venugopal

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Dr. Priyanka Venugopal: Hey, this is Dr. Priyanka Venugopal, and you're listening to the Unstoppable Mom Brain Podcast, how I dropped the Pressure with my coach, Megan Ladd. I am so incredibly excited to bring you today's podcast conversation with my actual coach, Megan Ladd. You know, if you've been following this podcast for a while, that I'd really like to share my real life experiences in both my weight loss journey and in my life as a working mom.

I am the first to admit and share on here with full transparency that there is no such thing as the quote unquote finish line where you are completely cured of all of your obstacles, because our life is just this forever journey and I had to learn this kind of the hard way. And that was when I actually started working with my coach Megan.

On today's podcast, you're going to learn about why I decided to work with Megan and really a lot of our work was me dropping the feeling of pressure in my life because I knew that if I felt pressure along the journey, along the way of me hitting my, my goals and creating my results, that I was going to also feel pressure to maintain it.

One of the things that I tell my clients all the time is if you feel worried and pressured in your experience of weight loss, when you hit your dream ideal weight, you're going to feel worried and pressured in maintenance. There are so many parallels between weight loss and business, and that is some of what we touch on in today's podcast episode.

So I cannot wait for you all to listen in on this conversation where we talk about my journey and really how any high achiever can start doing the work of dropping the pressure so you feel more calm, more ease, and even have more fun in hitting your dream goals. I cannot wait for you to enjoy today's episode.

Welcome to the podcast, Megan. I am so incredibly thrilled to have you. This is the first time I'm almost a little nervous. This is the first time I've ever had my own coach on the podcast, and so we're gonna be sharing all the secrets. Yes, all the secrets are coming out into this episode, but I am thrilled to have you.

Have let, let's just first start with having you introduce yourself, how you became a coach, and then we're gonna get into all the secrets. All the secrets, this podcast.

Megan Ladd: Perfect. I love it. This is the open book podcast. We're, we're just gonna dive right in. Yes. Okay. So my name is Megan Lad. I am the Joy Coach and my mission as a coach is to help high achieving women experience more joy in their work and in their lives.

Really that was inspired by my own journey as a former overachiever. Now I would say high achiever, recovering perfectionist, and someone who had experienced a fair amount of success, you know, in school growing up and then in work by putting so much pressure on myself, burning out and eventually discovering a different way of being in my work and my life.

So now I dedicate my work and my life to helping other people do that too. And I became a coach because, well, my parents were both therapists, so I grew up in a household with a lot of personal development going on. But I met my first coach at a networking event right after college. I was on a totally different kind of corporate track.

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And she just rocked my world and I had never experienced someone cut through all of the professional masks like that and really get us to open up and connect on a deep level, this room full of strangers. It really kind of opened my eyes into a different way of even just dropping the small talk and being real with people.

And I was like, who is this woman? How did she do that? I want to learn that. And that kind of set me down this path of looking into coaching and then, Totally. I think this happens to a lot of coaches. You discover it, you experience some of the shifts yourself, it blows your mind, and then there's no turning back.

So that was kind of how I first got into it, was just my own personal experience of having my mind opened and, and getting outta my own way a little bit, dropping the anxiety at this networking event and actually making some real connections that night.

Dr. Priyanka Venugopal: Oh, I love that. And I also love that there is no turning back, like [00:04:00] once there really is once you experience that, I feel like that's such a true story of, I think of anyone that experiences coaching or even like micro shifts in their personal world.

It is, it's hard to go back. It's like once you've seen something you can't unsee it. . It's like one of those things that were last, such like, such an, it's like your DNA has been imprinted on when you experienced some of these transformations. One of the things that I love that you just said, and I'm curious if you can speak to this, is you went from being an overachiever to a high achiever, and as you said that, I was like, oh, spicy. Because that feels like exactly how I think I've probably identified. I would never have called myself an overachiever. Like, I mean, I probably was, but I never used that as a label. But that's kind of been what our work together has been.

So how do you define being an overachiever versus being a high achiever, which just feels so much, so much more lovely. I don't know. You tell me.

Megan Ladd: Yeah, I think of when I was an overachiever and when I work with people who are kind of in that state, it's going past your own limit of what feels good physically, mentally, emotionally, and energetically.

So it's almost like that drive to succeed or prove yourself or perform well comes at the expense of your own wellbeing in some way. It's almost like if there was an order of priorities, it would be above your own wellness and happiness. It's like, I must accomplish this at all costs kind of thing.

Which you know, can work honestly, in school, if you're cramming for a test or something, or if you're passing a board exam, right, and you just, you're like, this is my crunch time pedal to the metal. But then there's these built-in breaks, and so you can kind of maintain your sanity, but out in the working world, you don't have summer breaks anymore, right?

You don't have these built-in lapses to just catch your breath, and so then it's easy to end up on that hamster wheel. For years and years and maybe even decades until you reach a point where you're like, oh my God, I'm exhausted. So I think of [00:06:00] overachieving as achieving at your own expense, and I think of high achieving as I am driven and I am ambitious and I have these goals that are important to me.

I'm going to work towards them alongside factoring in my own sanity.

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Dr. Priyanka Venugopal: Oh, I love that. And it kind of reminds me a little bit, so just to backtrack for everyone that's listening, how we even started working together was, I started to feel last year in my business, and I think that this was sneaky. So I'm curious about your thoughts on this.

Is I have always loved my business. I love thinking about my clients and the results that they're creating, and I think that I allowed that piece of my like relationship with my business, which is I love what I do to kind of mask this pressure that I had been feeling in the background. And for me, I think I've had this, this, and we've talked about this in our coaching relationship as well.

I've probably had pressure alongside me for decades because I used to really think that that's how I'm going to over deliver results. I'm going to create more in my life. That's how I'm going to pass my exams, my boards, my residency. Every single area of my life, I think was driven by pressure. So I didn't realize that it was this optional part.

Yeah, I, I kind of just probably started even becoming an entrepreneur with pressure alongside, and what I noticed last year was, wait a second, how come I love my business so much? I love so much of what I'm doing, and yet I'm feeling this way. It's, it, it's kind of exactly what you're describing. It's like I kind of felt like my wellness was almost in the background and I was putting my business and the joy of my business in front of that, which didn't feel very joyous.

Yeah, it was almost like this catch 22, and I remember I was telling a friend of mine about how I was feeling and she was like a good friend of mine who I've known for such a long time, and she's like, listen. Do you know Megan Ladd? And I'm like, oh, who is Megan Ladd? She's like, you have to work with her.

And I think she knows my coaching style. And she had been working with you directly as well, and she's like, you would be such a perfect fit. And that was [00:08:00] when I started basically like hunting you down on Instagram and following you. And I'm like, like getting into all your stuff. And she was so right. I think that what you do is really helping, I think high achievers and business' leaders discover joy.

So what do you think it is about that piece of just like that pressure had been alongside for so long and it really felt masked for so long?

Megan Ladd: Yeah, I think this is extremely common and how it goes for most people who are used to that coupling of achievement with the pressure.

It is hard to identify when it's all that you've ever known, and it almost feels like it's just a part of succeeding. Like it's hard to picture it, like you said, what does it even look like to work towards my goals without feeling it? And for a lot of people what it feels like, even on a physical level can be like a gearing up of sorts or fuel.

It kind of feels like fuel. It can be motivating. Let's say you hit or you set a stretch goal for yourself. It's like, okay, time to get to work and it can have this kind of energy behind it, which can feel good in the beginning and kind of jumpstart you. But then again, if you don't have a defined endpoint, it's like running on the cheapest fuel available, but you've just never experienced a different kind of fuel.

And how I think of the upgraded fuel is really tapping into your desire for what you want to create and the joy of even being in the process of bringing that to life. So for instance, I'm sure you could speak to this a ton, but

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on a health journey, not just focusing on a certain number on the scale, but how am I actually feeling and noticing how my body is starting to feel better along the way?

It's that equivalent, but in terms of how you work, so if you're setting a goal instead of feeling like. I need to hit this or else, which is a really common thing. I can't fail kind of fears around failure, or if I do, if I don't hit this, there's something wrong with me. It kind of has this negative energy attached to it.

It's getting back to the joy of what you're doing and your love of the work and how good it feels to be in a single conversation with a potential client, that kind of thing. But, going back to your question, I pictured almost like initially the success and the pressure intertwined and we don't realize we have the opportunity to unravel those two.

But when you start looking at it, and we did this in our work together, when you start even looking back at your former successes, pressure might have been there the whole time, but if we were to tease it out, is that pressure really what led to you accomplishing your goals, and when we really look at it, there's all these other parts of you and aspects of you that actually were the secret sauce the whole time.

So you can start to play with, what is it like? Let me just experiment with letting go of the pressure and showing myself that my whole world doesn't fall apart, that my business doesn't fall apart, that I don't just become, this is a common fear, a lazy couch potato. My fellow high achievers tend to have that.

Dr. Priyanka Venugopal: Absolutely.

Megan Ladd: Without this pressure, I'm just gonna lose all motivation. What if I have no desire to work anymore? And that never happens, but sometimes we need to ease in and just show ourselves that with these experiments. At first, let me just try. What would it look like if I just placed that pressure down and didn't put this unnecessary strain on myself for just one week?

And then you start to collect the evidence. I know you could probably speak to this too, it becomes more believable.

Dr. Priyanka Venugopal: So I feel like there's a couple. So first of all, I love that you said experiments because you and I went on multiple experiments in our coaching together. And I think in the beginning I remember when you said like, okay, so we're gonna go on a little experiment.

And I was like, what do you mean experiment? Like I don't wanna go on any experiments. I wanna know exactly how I'm like, it's so crazy. And I think that this kind of reminds me of how many times in our coaching together I'd be like, this is exactly the work I had to do when I lost all of my weight.

Megan Ladd: Yeah.

Dr. Priyanka Venugopal: And I think I've said to you, I'm like, oh my gosh, this is so similar to what I do, what I had to do in weight loss. Like when I weighed over 200 pounds, I couldn't feel pressured in my process to lose the weight. Otherwise I would've felt it in my maintenance. Yeah. This is actually something, it's so interesting, like you were saying in the health journey, and then I wanna circle back to why it was hard for me to drop the pressure.

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I remember I had to teach myself, and this is something that I've really talked to my clients in the Unstoppable group about, is if I feel pressure in the process. Then I'm gonna get to my goal and then I'm gonna feel pressure to maintain it. Yes. It's like, ooh. Like how, like I, how, like I better figure it out.

I like, I need to get it to strident if I don't hit it and then I get to the goal and I'm like, how am I gonna maintain it? How am I gonna maintain it? And it's like the pressure you seem to think like, oh, when I get the goal then the pressure's going to go away. But it just doesn't. And I had to learn that lesson so many times.

I had to fail so many times to see like, wait a second, I just, I just hit my goal. And yet like I'm still feeling this pressure. Clearly there's, I'm like, I'm missing something. But yeah, to be totally honest, and maybe we can talk about this, I felt scared to be honest, like to put the pressure down.

Remember, I came to you saying, I know I'm feeling this pressure. I don't know how to even operate without it. And when you were saying, okay, we're gonna go on this experiment, I'm, I felt like, ugh, do I, do I wanna go on an experiment? But I was willing to, I think, trust you because you were so confident in like, listen, can you imagine how you would feel if you didn't feel the pressure?

And I was like, Ooh, that sounds like the land of rainbows and daisies. I wanna go, yeah. But like I did feel that fear and, and I'm curious if you can speak to that. Yeah. Like high achievers who have had it for so long, I know I don't want it, but like there's a fear in putting it down.

Megan Ladd: A hundred percent. It's so normal because it really can feel like you're just totally disregarding a way of being that has worked for you. And so what can be helpful at that point in time is A) recognizing why you even have a desire to shift your approach, because it's almost like, well, this isn't exactly working for me.

It's not feeling great. So sometimes when there's enough discomfort, it opens up a willingness to at least try something new. And then it is helpful if they, the experiments are really short, right? Like, Hey, can you commit to a few days or a week of taking this stress out of the equation. And there's practical ways.

You know, we would set up experiments of exactly what that looks like, working these hours, taking this weekend off, what to do if you are off on the weekend and you feel some of that stress come off instead of unconsciously just diving back into work or whatever and missing out on time with family.

There's practical ways that kind of ground it, and I'm sure we could talk a lot about that too. But the fear is so normal, and I think even just seeing it for what it is brings a lot of peace. Even just, oh, of course I feel nervous. This is so normal. Our minds never want to abandon something that they think is working for us and associate it with success or doing well.

And so just seeing it for what it is. Feelings, you know, if there's enough discomfort to make a change. And then if it helps, you know, leaning on someone else's confidence or belief in you, like you leaned on mine because I just knew. And so you were like, okay, I don't even know if I fully see it yet.

It sounds a little bit like rainbows and daisies and unrealistic, but you seem to be pretty sure. So I'll be, I'm willing, like it sounds dreamy enough to be willing to take a chance on the off chance that that's actually possible for me.

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Dr. Priyanka Venugopal: Absolutely. And I still remember on our first call when I was talking to you about really like where I was at and where I wanted to go. It was, it was two things. One was, I think what you're saying is correct. I got to the point where I was like, you know what? This discomfort, there's a constant sensation of like, I could do more and I could, like, I could work more. I could imagine more.

It felt good, but also didn't feel good in a way. Yeah. And that was like, you know what? It's taking me out of really being present with my kids. It's taking me out of being present with my, with my husband. It's taking me out of like being present in my current life. Yes. Like I keep thinking about the future and like tomorrow's results and creating more in my business and more for my clients, but it's taking me out of being present right now and I don't want that anymore.

So I was willing. And then the second piece was, Your confidence. Like I think in our conversation you were like, oh, this is like, so possible for you. And I was like, really? Yeah. I was like, oh, if she believes it's possible. And again, I, I really came into our conversation from having seen you online and then having followed you for a while.

I just felt this trust for you. Then I was like, I mean, if she believes it, I want this more than my discomfort. So I'm willing to go in that process. But I, I mean, listen, if you're listening to this, it is scary to try something new and unfamiliar. But we had to anchor, yes, we had to = anchor to things.

I think. So when we did these experiments, maybe you can speak to this, so. The way that we would go on these experiments is that they were kind of short-lived either a week or a few days, or even a few weeks long, but I had to create safety for myself to put the pressure down. Yes. Like I had to really anchor to knowing how am I going to accomplish my goal without the pressure.

What do you think about that? Can you speak on that?

Megan Ladd: Yeah. When I think about an experiment, the anchors are basically like the procedure that you would outline or the steps of the experiment. And so they just really ground it in reality, because sometimes people think, you know, on the one end is pressure and it's very practical, and on the other hand, you're just like head in the clouds like floating through life, like totally just ladi da, like disconnected from reality.

Actually, it's still working towards your goals and experience. The satisfaction of a good day's work just without that driving force of you gotta do more, you gotta do [more. And I will say, you touched on this, but I think the biggest lie of the pressure filled space is I'll relax when. I'll relax. Once I hit this goal.

I'll relax once I, you know, get to this certain position at my company or make this certain amount of money and it's like the dangling carrot and it just keeps moving. And so continually postponing the joy and operating from this place of not enough. You nailed it when you said, even in the weight loss journey or health journey, it's like how you feel in the way there is how you feel at the end destination.

And if it's. I gotta get this, I gotta get this, I gotta get this. And then you get there. I gotta maintain this. I gotta maintain this. It really never ends unless you intentionally decide to kind of pull it out of the equation. So the anchors and the experiment are basically a way to comfort that part of yourself as you're getting used to not letting it run the show.

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So you can think of it like taking it out of the driver's seat, putting it in the passenger seat. It can still come along and direct some things, but it's not the one actually in charge. So anchors can look like. We would talk about what you were working towards. So if you were in a launch, what the practical steps involved with that were.

And there's these different components. And just as an example, you know, you can have emails that you're prepping, you can have social media posts, podcasts, and so actually coming up with a schedule where you can know, these are the days that I'm doing these things, like adding that healthy amount of structure.

So that you could tell your brain when it starts to be like, are we gonna get it done? Are we gonna hit our goal? Like, Hey, we have time set aside to do all these things. And you developed this really lovely calming way of connecting in with that pressure filled part of yourself to kind of just soothe it.

Like, Hey, we got it under control and we're gonna do this on this day. And there's comfort in that because, The pressure filled part of you's biggest fear is that you're gonna drop the ball, but if you're actually on top of it, it can almost settle.

Dr. Priyanka Venugopal: Yeah. I love that actually. Yeah, and I think that the part of the way that I started to engage with my pressure, or even nervousness or doubt, like any of those emotions that used to come up for me was really reminding myself, I'm just feeling like this because I care so much about my results.

And I think that that's what high achievers really, they just want these results so bad. But what I'm noticing again and again, this is both in weight loss and business and probably like every area of our life is if I keep needing to take a break from my life. We need to reevaluate. Yes.

And that's what the pressure was. So like what you were saying about like, you know, if like when I hit this goal then I can relax. When I hit this goal, then I can take a break. The fact that I keep needing to take these breaks is why I wasn't maintaining or hitting goals consistently. And I think that our work together showed me, wait a second, if I plan for the times that I'm really going to turn my mind off of my work and really be present with my kids. And if I had on my calendar, these are the times that I'm going to do work and these are the times that I'm going to rest, like what would it look like for me to just honor that? But I would say that the experiment was never perfect, but like it really created evidence.

Yeah. That was a, so that was the, that was the experiment. So I would go on an experiment. I would say, okay, for this week at this time, I'm closing the laptop. I'm not checking my phone. Everything's being put away. I'm not going to think about work. I'm really going to be present. And like many times I'm like, Ooh, I could do this.

I could do that. Like it would come up, but I'm like, oh wait, remember like we have it on the calendar? Yes, we have decided when we're going to do that. There's plenty of time. I know you love that result. Don't worry. Yeah. Like I had to talk to, I had to talk to that feeling of pressure. Like, listen, it's okay, I got you.

And then at the end of the week, I think I even sent you a message and I was like, that was amazing. And I just like had the best weekend ever. And I also was so much more productive. Yeah. And so like I had to start creating evidence for myself that, oh, it was safe to put the pressure down and then it could probably take bigger, like do bigger and bigger experiments.

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Megan Ladd: Yes. You know, that is something that the high achieving brain loves to hear is that it actually enhances productivity. And if you think about it really, it's that you have more resources available during this kind of focused flow state time. And I just thought of this going back to what you were saying earlier.

You know when people feel maybe hesitant to let go of that pressure or nervous, or there's some fear present. I always encourage people to think about a time when everyone has one, a time when that pressure wasn't activated or they weren't in a stressed out state and something worked out well, and maybe what worked out well was just you were on a vacation and you were able to just let your worries melt away and you had a really sweet moment with your partner or your kid and just anchoring.

That's another anchor, right? Anchoring into those moments where. You're like, oh my gosh, I was feeling relaxed and the world didn't fall apart. Or maybe it was a time at work where you felt really prepared for something. So there wasn't that kind of visceral, nervous, we gotta get this perfect response.

Maybe it was a presentation you've done a million times and you just knocked it out of the park because you were feeling calm and centered and grounded. So anchoring into those moments also that you've previously had as evidence of actually, I do even better. I perform even better, and I'm more productive when I am in this rested and relaxed state.

Dr. Priyanka Venugopal: Yeah, and I think the experiment I'm thinking of was what I wanted to prepare, like I think a series of emails and videos and podcasts before I took a trip. And I really wanted to go on the trip and feel totally detached from work, like in my mind and also like physically from my laptop. And yeah, [I think that the thing that really helped me do that and helped me focus the week in advance was like, we're gonna rest so much.

Like, we're gonna have such an amazing time on this trip. Let's just focus right now. Yeah. And so what was so crazy, and I think I messaged you this is when I, I just got done like, like three weeks worth of work in three days. Yeah, because I was able to, and this is I think the productivity piece, I was able to remind myself like, listen, we are so taken care of.

Your rest is coming. Your vacation is going to be amazing. Let's just like knock this out. And like, because I was in that state, I think I didn't feel distracted. I wasn't scrolling Instagram and Facebook and getting distracted with all the random things that I would usually distract myself from. I was like, let's just knock this out.

Let's just get it done. So my productivity I think improved because I was like, remember, we're so taken care of. Like this trip is coming up. It's going to be amazing. Yes. And I think that that is something I have to keep it. And actually speaking to the next thing, I feel like what I have had to learn is I would have a good experience like that and I would be like, guess what?

Pressure's gone problem solve. Megan, I am fixed. I'm fixed of the pressure. And then like a few weeks later I'm like, so the pressure came back and um, now like now what I think, and I'm curious what you think about this. Like I used to think that, oh, like once I've solved the pressure problem, it's gone forever.

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And that's just like, Not a thing yet. I totally did it. Yeah. So what do you think about that piece where like we kind of resolve it, we do let the pressure go, we prove it to ourselves, but then it comes back and then it goes away, and then it comes back. So what do you think?

Megan Ladd: Yeah, I think that's totally normal, especially if it's been a part of your life and way of being maybe for your entire life.

And as you're describing it, and I'm sure you can speak to this too, it's just catching it sooner, knowing how to calm it down and inside of you, because really it's based in fear and just a part of being human is experiencing that fear sometimes. And the way I think about it is, you know, at the beginning, maybe it's just unconsciously present to some degree all the time. And then you start to bring some awareness to it, and then you start to learn how to calm it down and take it out of the driver's seat, and you start catching it sooner. So before you might be aware of it once you're, you know, running a million miles an hour and you're like, oh my gosh, I have a throbbing headache.

I didn't even realize that I've just been going all week nonstop without catching my breath. Then you start to catch it, maybe just creeping up in an activity and you're like, whoa, let me slow that down. Then you start to just catch the feeling or maybe some pressure filled thoughts around it, and at some point it can be like you spot it from a mile away and you just see it coming and you know how to kind of talk it down, how to gently dismiss it.

And it's almost like it just comes into your periphery and then it floats away and it's no longer running your life. In fact, it's no longer a really active part of your life. It just gets triggered sometimes when you're in situations that it's used to coming along for the ride and maybe even running the show.

And so knowing that and normalizing it can bring a lot of peace of mind too, because then you don't think there's something wrong with you when it shows up or, oh my God, it's back. Right? It's not one of those things. Yeah, it's just like, Oh, I just set this new goal, or I'm coming up with this new plan in my business, or I'm changing Business models tends to be a vulnerable time for anyone.

Or maybe you're going for a new position at work or just something where it's natural to have some fear come up. Is your flavor of fear as a high achiever, is that pressure. It's probably gonna show up, right? And so the freedom and the peace of mind is just in not operating with it unconsciously.

Dr. Priyanka Venugopal: Yeah. I love that. I almost think actually that that fear that comes up, it's like pressure has been the coping mechanism to navigate the fear. And so it's so natural if it's such a reflexive, automatic habit that it comes up again. And I love what you said, and I think that that was totally my experience, which is up until, I would say last year and like the end of last year, I definitely felt a lot of this pressure, like a heaviness, and it just followed me along all the time.

And I was like, This is, this is not the way that I wanna be operating. And I think in our work together, what I started to notice over time was like, oh yeah, this is, that's just the pressure that's coming to visit. And it's not a problem and nothing's going wrong. I don't love it. I don't love that I'm feeling the pressure.

But what you're saying is so true. Just becoming aware of it. I started to see it in my periphery further and further out, like, yes. Oh yeah, this is just like a normal part of the process, and I think that was so key that

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nothing is going wrong. Like I'm not going backwards, I'm not falling behind. I'm not like unlearning things and skills I've learned.

Yeah. But like, oh yeah, it's just my like very, very natural coping mechanism. And it's not a problem, which I think is totally so good. Oh, so good. Okay, so I'm curious, so we worked together for a while. I'm wondering what did you think about me as a client? I mean, be totally honest. We're letting all the secrets spill.

What do you think?

Megan Ladd: I know I wish ...

Dr. Priyanka Venugopal: Difficult, not difficult?

Megan Ladd: Like you are not difficult at all. I will say. I think this is common amongst high achievers as well as being very tuned into themselves and self-aware, at least, like you can self-reflect you're, you're conscious of a lot of stuff, but at times I feel like that can be even more frustrating if you see what's happening and you're aware of it and you can't shift it on your own.

I would say that might be the hardest thing for someone who can watch their pattern play out or just know that they're feeling this tension and stress in their body. And you can't do it independently. I think that's really hard. It's like I'm used to doing a lot of stuff on my own, so just opening up and receiving that support.

But honestly, I feel like you're very coachable and I think it's because you were ready. Most people, by the time that they come to me, they have tried on their own. And I think that that's just an important distinction whenever you decide to work with any kind of coach, right? Is just being willing to trust and open yourself up to receiving that support.

So I think you were at that point, and so you were very tuned into, you know, what was going on for you internally, but you also trusted me and you were open and willing to try new things. Honestly, high achievers are great clients too, because like me, they love homework and they love having tangible to-dos and then they do them.

So I wish that I had something like funny or dramatic to share about you as a client, but I'm not a dramatic client. I don't think a dramatic client, a very, yeah, great client. And I feel like that really, you know, I think about this on my own too. From the client perspective, it's like you wanna take responsibility for your own experience, like you're not coming to a coach to change, fix, or save you.

And in fact, as the coach, I would never want to establish that dynamic because I work with people who I think are brilliant and capable and totally not in need of any fixing, right? There's nothing here that's wrong with you or needing to be fixed. And so I think knowing as the client, I'm coming to this person and I'm willing to open myself up and receive support and guidance and trust their process and I'm gonna do on my end what is needed.

Maybe that's just as simple as showing up to sessions really vulnerable and open and down to try new things, right? And then if we make commitments in terms of any next steps on the call, I'm gonna follow through over

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the next week and I'm gonna do those things because we're doing a lot of this inner clearing and shifting on our work together.

And then those steps in between can kind of anchor those changes and continue to build that momentum. So honestly, it was probably a lifetime of being like an amazing student and you know, and great at follow through because you you did that.

Dr. Priyanka Venugopal: I actually remember coming to you. I'm like, Megan, if you, whatever you tell me to do, I'm just gonna do it.

Like, I think I, I think really got that point. Yeah, you did. You did. And actually, I think part of your process, from what I remember when we first started working together, you actually ask in your application form, like you ask certain questions and I'm like, oh dang. We're like, I'm like, I'm being serious.

I have to be serious about this. And, and I think that, again, what you're saying is like, I, I really did get to the point where I'm like, I'm surrounded by, by brilliant coaches and coaching friends and coaching peers. And you know, it's not that I was short of coaching. I've been in business coaching containers for, for a few years now.

So it's not that I wasn't getting coached, but this was an area, very specific area and it's like it was affecting my personal life and my business. Like I could see that it was, Kind of in every area, but it needed special attention. And I don't think that I was able to do it on my own. But you're right, I was at that point where I could see, see it happening.

I could see myself in it. And I think I even would tell you, like logically, I know this is, I know what I'm doing and I would like give you my whole model. This is my feel, this is, these are my thoughts. I didn't even tell, these are the thoughts that are creating my pressure. Yes. And I was like, but I just cannot drop them.

It's like these thoughts really felt so true to me. Like, and, and I think that that was the part that felt kind of, I felt like, not powerless, but I felt so frustrated by, so yeah, it's like I, I could feel like, okay, I have these thoughts, which is like, I wanna get it right. I really wanna do a good job.

I wanna do my best. And it sounded like, I mean, good on paper thoughts, like, I wanna do my best. Sounds really like nice on paper, but it was creating a lot of pressure for me. And I remember coming to you saying, I can see that this is the thought that's creating pressure, but it feels true. Like, yeah, I do wanna do my best.

I don't know how to drop that. And I think that that did, you're right. It's like now that I'm reflecting on it, it does create this frustration of I can see why I'm doing this, but why can't I solve this on my own? So what is it that you think it is about working with a coach? Especially when you are aware of your patterns, like what is it about working with a coach that helps you drop, drop that stuff?

Megan Ladd: Yeah. So when you're in it and you're just, I'm picturing within your brain, you're just living within that reality, like you said, where it feels so true. And so having someone who is outside of your head who can look at it all, and also who's familiar, like very familiar with this way of being and thinking.

It's like I could see it from a neutral perspective where I mean, I could offer some perspective, but I could also see things that you couldn't, right. Even things as simple as, let's say you had a thought like, I just wanna do

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my best, and it feels so true, and maybe it even feels like a good thought to some degree as you're sharing it with me.

I pay really close attention to the energy behind my client's words and I could immediately tell when you would share things, whether it was coming from a grounded, loving place inside of you, or that pressure filled, almost panicked place. And so as you're sharing even around things like making a decision in your business.

Sometimes I'll just have you brain dump and share your different thoughts. And I'm not just listening to your words again. I'm listening to the energy behind them, and that's how I can kind of tell and reflect things back to you. Here's what I'm noticing, here's what I'm seeing. And then over time, as we have sessions, oh, this is reminding me of when you did this and kind of noticing patterns and ways of being, and I get to know your brain really well, but it's like I'm watching from outside of you and I'm not in the emotional sway and current of it.

And I can kind of put things together and it's like, you'll say something and I'll catch it and I'll reflect it back to you, and sometimes I'll reflect the energy behind it back to you or just ask you about it. And it's like you can see it in a different way. It's almost like we're putting it on the table and examining it together.

And once we do that, you're no longer living inside of it. You're now examining it with me. And then you can say, oh my gosh, is this something that actually feels good to hold? Is this something that I want [00:36:00] to bring with me. And usually if it's something like I just wanna do my best, but there's that pressure behind it, I would ask you, you know, how it feels when you're thinking it, or I would kind of reflect something back that you said.

And it's interesting as a coach, um, sometimes if the client, you'll share things like just a stream of thoughts and you'll share something that you don't think is that important, but your code will pick up on it and say, wait a second, let's go back to that. Sometimes you'll feel like, I don't even remember saying that thing, but it was an unconscious little slip.

And so having someone outside of you who's not in in it with you, I think that's the biggest advantage. And I remember when I was first telling my husband about coaching years ago, and now he's a career coach, so he's is totally in this world now, but he, I remember telling him one of the first things we learned when I was learning to become a coach was not to give advice.

And that was actually so hard at first. I never realized how much advice I gave until I was challenged with not giving advice. And because, especially I will say for people who kind of feel independent, we might think we want someone to just give us advice, but if we get into a conversation and someone's just piling on a bunch of to-dos, our brains do tend to resist that.

And there's so much more power in guiding people into their own way of being maybe within a process or structure, but finding their own path. And so when I was first starting to coach, I remember I would say to my husband, okay, I'm gonna, I'm gonna share something, but I don't want advice. I just want you to tell me what you see.

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And he's like, what are you talking about? And I was like, this is basically what coaching is like. I want you to just notice is there something I'm missing? And then eventually, of course, I got my own coach because he was like, I think this is beyond my, my limited role is a husband. Yeah. Yes, yes. I was like, this is healthy.

I will find a coach, but you know, it's, we still do the, do you want me to listen or give advice, question that when we sit down. Honestly. Best question ever. And I will say nine times outta 10. It's not give advice, it's just listen and hold space. Oh, that's okay. Yeah.

Dr. Priyanka Venugopal: Yeah. It's so funny because I, you know, with my husband, I I remember when I first started coaching, like forget becoming a coach. When I first started getting coached, his whole relationship was like, I don't even know what I mean. He'd heard of a coach just like myself, like we know, kind of a coachings, but not really.

And I remember in the beginning he was just like kind of watching from afar, fairly oblivious to the process until he kind of started seeing my own personal changes in our relationship with him, with our children. I know obviously with the weight loss, and I remember about a couple, a couple years later, he started I think picking up on little things that it wasn't on purpose because I would never coach him.

But I remember he said to me, this might have been a year or two ago, where he was like, you know that, that's just something you're thinking right. Like I was, I was telling him about like, I think something I was struggling with and he was like, that's just a thought. I was like, oh no, you did not just say that.

But it was so spot on and I think, yeah, kinda circling back to what you were saying around like me knowing kind of what's happening in my mind, but not being able to do it on my own, what my experience has been as a client in every coaching container, and definitely with you and our work together was, I think I felt that you were holding this space for me. That was of like full belief in my biggest dreams. Yeah.

So I would think about my biggest dreams and I would have a little bit of doubt and a little nervous. Like, I don't know if I can, is it possible? Like the normal stuff? And I think that the way that you held our conversations and our coaching was you came into that like one it, your dreams are 100% doable and possible and, but it wasn't. It was like light. It was like, let's just, and let's just meander. Let's just see how would we get there? And when I would tell you, oh, like I'm having this thought. I can see that it's a thought. I loved one of the strategies that you used in our coaching. It was like, let's just follow that.

Like, yeah. What happens when you, like, let's keep it, like, let's just see what is, what's at the end of that road. Yeah. It's like we're, we're like in this forest and if we followed the path of like, I have to do a really good job. I wanna do my best. Like, then what happens? And then what happens? Then we walked to the end of the road.

I'm like, oh shoot. This is a crappy place to be because like, we're in like the Muddiest pond. Let's backtrack and kind of navigate a new way. And I think it, I kind of felt like I had a, like a loving hand alongside me. And you're right, it wasn't like you were guiding me anywhere. You didn't have the direction, you didn't decide my direction for me, but I really felt supported in me navigating my own journey, and I felt safe to do so.

So I kind of feel like that's, that's what helped me unpack it. But I do think high achievers are like, I should be able to do this by myself. And that, that's a hard one.

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Megan Ladd: Yeah. I do think too, Going back to what we touched on earlier, it can take that degree of discomfort to open up to a different way or sometimes, I mean, you're touching on this as well, just knowing that there's a different way that's available and having a desire to create a different experience.

And usually they coincide, you know, I'm not thrilled with this, so therefore I want that. It can be clarifying to be in that discomfort, but you had a real desire to be present in your life and the things that you were describing were so realistic and so doable, and it was very easy for me to have that full belief in you because I just knew you would get there.

You know what I mean? It's like I didn't have to try, cuz I, I have experienced it and I've helped a lot of people experience it, but everything you were describing just felt so reachable. And I think when you're in the place that you are in and a lot of people are in where maybe it hasn't been your experience ever, it does feel kind of unrealistic.

And so then having examples like even you right now, sharing about your experience, I find that so helpful. Like, hey, I have been in your shoes. I know exactly how you feel, and I got to this place where I experienced so much more peace of mind on a daily basis, and I'm still actively working towards my goals.

That can be so helpful too, almost as a role model of sorts, or just a shining example like, Hey, I did it. It's available to you too. The more examples, the better.

Dr. Priyanka Venugopal: Yeah, and I think I also had to personally overcome this, like I had this disillusionment that I was going to just let go of pressure forever.

Like again, I was gonna be cured of this ailment that I had. And I think the thing that I had to discover along the way in our, and this really happened a lot in our work together, was it's not that I needed the pressure to go away, I had to change my relationship with pressure. Yeah. And I think that, Now what I know is that if I want to, and if I'm intentional about it, I can totally put the pressure down and operate with more joy in my business.

And also I never needed to be cured. There was nothing that was ever, like, I didn't have an ailment. Pressure had been my coping mechanism to do so much, and yet, like I think I had a lot of negative self-talk. Like, there you go again. I can't believe the pressure's coming back. Like you're like, you're falling behind again.

So high achiever should me, but I had to, I had to see like, oh, this is not an ailment that like, you know, you take some medicine and it goes away. It's like, It's gonna be around because it's been my coping mechanism forever, and that created a lot of relief for me that I can put it down when I'm intentional and listen if I'm not intentional, if I become complacent.

This is, I think, just me being honest, like whenever I'm being complacent in like, let's say you recommend doing something and I get kind of complacent about it. I'm like, I'm not gonna do that anchoring thing that Megan talked about. I'm not gonna, I'm not gonna like block my times out. I'm just gonna like wing it.

I've noticed whenever I'm complacent in the process, guess what comes back? Yeah. The pressure. You know? So I think that it's just been such a nice loving reminder, like, don't be complacent in your life like I want. And I think that that is probably one of the messages that I would love to leave anyone listening.

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If you want to drop the pressure. And if you want a life that is feeling more joyous, feeling lighter, having more ease, you have to prioritize it. Yes, don't, it's not gonna happen on its own. And I think this is true, I see with weight loss and I think in our businesses that we are worth prioritizing.

Let's not be complacent. It's okay if it takes a little bit of effort. I'm curious what you think about that.

Megan Ladd: I couldn't agree more. We are designed to kind of operate on default. I think our brains will choose the easy kind of lazier path. And ironically, for high achievers in this instance, the laser path is putting on that high pressure.

But it is easy to default to that when again, years and years of operating that way. And everyone has their own coping mechanisms, you know, so, I can certainly relate to what you're sharing and I can think of times, this is random, but I'm even thinking of my husband and I got married in Mexico and two years before our wedding, we went to look at the venue and pick hotels and we did an engagement shoot and I was kind of in that automatic, unconscious place where, just that pressure filled way of being like very type A stressed out.

I don't know what it was about the engagement shoot, but it triggered something and I was so stressed that weekend. I think it was that old wanting it to be the perfect kind of energy and I made it so important in my mind. And then I didn't even enjoy the shoot as much as I could have, you know, and, and that kind of weekend ironically, it felt kind of stressful and we didn't find a hotel that we liked.

And then our flight, we were on our flight home and they made us get off the plane. We weren't okay to fly. And we ended up having to stay in Puerto Vallarta another night unexpectedly, and they put us up at a hotel that we walked into the lobby and we were like, this is the hotel.

This is where we want people to stay. And there was something that had shifted in me, I think I had, because I was ready to go home. I had already accomplished the things that I thought that trip was for, and I felt my whole body relax. And that last unexpected night in Puerto Vallarta was the best night of our trip, and things just started to fall in place.

Like we decided we would do our rehearsal dinner there, and we got a block of rooms and all these to-dos just kind of unfolded with so much more ease. But also what that experience taught me was I do not wanna bring this energy into my wedding. And I was actually really grateful for that experience because I got a little taste.

This is what it's like to be in perfectionist. Everything has to go according to plan. I have to be a stressed out bride energy and I was just a hard no, but it was, I had to bring that, like you're saying, that intentionality into it. And then I will say from there, We had the most stress free, magical, but it was a choice too, but magical unfolding of our wedding planning and wedding day.

And I felt so at ease because I had decided to drop that pressure. So it does sneak up. Yeah. Long way of saying it in moments, in tiny moments and big moments, it might show up and it's not a problem. Yeah. And if you're relating to it in this kind of loving way, because I'll tell you, if you try to be mean to this inner sense of pressure or have negative self-talk towards it. It does not end well. You're shaking your head. I feel like you can relate.

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Dr. Priyanka Venugopal: It's like the pressure of the pressure. It's like, yes, you feel pressured to get rid of the pressure. Like talk about the rabbit hole. It's like, yes, it does not end well.

Very, very dark and it goes forever. It's just like you can't get out of that. But the way that I like to think about it in, you kind of touched on this in, in your story, which I loved. It's like, what a good teacher. Like anytime I think that like I, I do become complacent. This happens and this will likely happen forever.

Like anytime I become complacent and I notice a pressure creeping back, or let's say I experience a face in my life where I disconnect from my kids, from my family, and I'm like, Ooh, I've been feeling a lot of pressure. Like what a good teacher. What a good teacher. See, they can remember we don't love this.

Yes. What a good teacher. Like, let me not be complacent. Like, I've just been so complacent. What a good teacher. It's like to me it's, it's been my roadmap, my personal roadmap in how I've overcome my own, not perfectionist tendencies. I feel like I'll always have perfectionist. So I'm not a recovering perfectionist because I think I'll always have those tendencies, but the way that I engage with it now is like, oh, like this is like such a good lesson for me to learn.

Remember how it feels the other way, and then I get to choose. Yeah. And then I get to choose again, which I think we all deserve that. Especially I think high achievers, professional women. I feel like we're living a life that's like we've worked so hard for. Yeah. And like this is, this is our, this is our life.

And like, do we want to be 90 years old having lived a life full of pressure? Or do we want to have lived a life where we were present and like with our family really creating the memories that we want without all the pressure. This is such an important conversation. So thank you so much for sharing all of this.

It's been so good. So Megan, just to kind of wrap up, if somebody is listening to this and they're like, yes, I identify as this overachiever and I have a lot of pressure, but I know that I don't want to feel that way anymore. What are some tangible steps that they can start taking right now where they can at least start their journey on dropping the pressure so that they feel more present in their life?

Megan Ladd: Yeah, the first step I would recommend is finding a reference point in your past, so thinking of a time where you felt that sense of ease and internal relaxation, and using that as a reference point just to first and foremost, open yourself up to some belief that this is possible for you, not just possible for us or other people, but no, I have, even if.

I do feel the pressure a lot of the time. I can think of at least one instance for a lot of people it is on vacation, but I can think of one instance where I have experienced that internal calm, and even just going back to that place in your mind, refreshing the memory to the point where you can feel it in your body.

So I remember I was on a consult with a client and her family loved Maui, and we were just tapping into the feeling she was describing their trip, she was describing where she was on the beach, and just letting herself viscerally go there and just to re-familiarize with what it feels like in the absence of pressure.

That alone can be very powerful. Just elongating that, that feeling and that memory. So maybe at first you can only hold the feeling for five seconds, but maybe then you just, I would even do it for a week daily. Right. Can

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I just go a few more seconds than the day before and just noticing and re familiarizing with what that is like, so you can just believe that it's possible.

Use that as your reference point. Then I would try on your own personal experiment, your own way of grounding it. And so if applying this to work right away feels too risky, apply it to something that is very low stakes in your life, right? So let's say that you're knitting something and maybe it shows up there because you don't wanna mess up and you wanna get it perfect.

Maybe you just play with it, let me drop into this memory where I feel calm before I start knitting. And then my intention is to bring that into this and take the pressure off of this. Maybe you can even tell yourself, Hey, if you mess up, it's okay. We'll just undo that loop, that kind of self-talk that you referenced earlier.

So bring it to something that is low stakes. Maybe it's baking something, right? And normally you feel really stressed out. Like this batch of cookies has to be perfect. But you're like, this one's just for fun. If they turn out great. If not, it's totally fine. They can go in the trash or whatever it is, but just start playing with it and, and show yourself, show your brain that you can still do things without that pressure.

Dr. Priyanka Venugopal: I love that idea of doing the experiment with something that feels low stakes and proving to yourself like we actually did accomplish this, and how nice that experience was. And then giving yourself the permission to like, I wonder what it would look like to run a different experiment with something that's a little bit more high stakes like, What would that be like?

Yes, and I'm all for taking some bold action. So listen, if you're listening to this, like stick with knitting, go to baking and then move on to something more high stakes. Like challenge yourself. Yes. I just, I just think how fun, how fun would it be? Like I think this is the other piece for me, like I turned 40 this year and I was like, this is the year Priyanka, I'm talking to myself.

We're gonna be having more fun this year. And like really deciding like, how fun would it be to take bolder action? And to me, bolder action is like in higher stakes things like, yeah, I mean like how fun could that be? But I agree. I think that going small and starting with something that low lower stakes is probably, probably the better bet.

But I'm like, let's go bold.

Megan Ladd: You know what I would suggest if someone is feeling, if they're listening to this and you think, yeah, I wanna go for the bold thing, just notice the first thing that comes to your mind. When you said that, what was the first thing that popped in? Because yeah. Try that thing if you feel called to right. Apply it in that area.

Dr. Priyanka Venugopal: Yeah, absolutely. I'm like, I wanna just like do all the bold things with my business. And it's like, ooh. Like there's a little bit like, Ooh, are we, but are we really? And I'm like, oh, we are Priyanka. I remember we said We're having fun this year. Like I just, I just think it's like so much more fun to talk to ourselves like that.

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And I don't know when this happened, but I forgot to have fun. Like, when did that happen in my life? Like I, I think I used to have fun at some point, like when I was younger and somewhere along the way it's like I forgot to have fun. And so this is, I think the year I turned 40, I was like, we have been forgetting this for decades.

Fun is really important. Let's just like fold that back in. So that's like what I'm trying to do now.

Megan Ladd: I love it. Yeah. And you know, a phrase that has been helpful for me with countering kind of when the pressure comes up, when I'm embracing fun more. This isn't the reason to have fun, but I find that my business brain that's pressure filled really enjoys it is.

The more fun I have, the more money I make, which I have actually found to be very true time and time again, and the more ease I incorporate into my business, the things that I do from a place of ease. Even something as simple as writing a post or I know for you, like Instagram stories come really easily.

Those things are always the best performing, the most generative. Like for sure. There is a correlation between tapping into that ease and following what feels good and the external results too. So that's a fun bonus aspect.

Dr. Priyanka Venugopal: And I'm not even surprised. The same is true of weight loss. Hitting your body goal.

Listen, if you're having fun, if you're having fun and you love the way you're losing weight, I promise you. You're gonna hit your body goal way faster. It's just so fascinating. And yet, I feel like high achievers are depriving themselves of all kinds of fun because, because of pressure, it because it's, it's because of the pressure.

So I'm so glad that we had this conversation, and I hope that this conversation is planted the seed for even one person listening that knows they want to toggle away from pressure and maybe find some more ease, some more joy, even fun into their lived experience. So Megan, thank you so, so, so much for coming on and sharing our experience.

And also just a personal thank you for being my coach and like, like, you know, cause I know I come like, this is my model, Megan, this is my thoughts. I know exactly what I'm feeling. So I appreciate you so much for so much that I've been creating and I love it so much and I love you. So thank you.

Megan Ladd: You're welcome.

Dr. Priyanka Venugopal: And tell us, how can we hear about you? How can people find you and all the things.

Megan Ladd: Yeah, so you can find me online. My website is megan-ladd.com and I'm also on Instagram [@megladd](https://www.instagram.com/megladd), and that's where I tend to hang out.

Dr. Priyanka Venugopal: I love it. Megan, thank you so much for coming on.

Megan Ladd: Thanks for having me.

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Dr. Priyanka Venugopal: Bye. Bye. If you're loving this podcast and you identify as a high achiever, as a busy, professional working mom, I wanna make sure that you know about my free five day email course. It's five days of quick, simple, and really implementable tools that you can have in your back pocket right now.

So you can start feeling better in your body now so you can start hitting your goals with more ease. If you wanna go and grab this free five day email course, you can get it over at theunstoppablenombrain.com/email. I hope you guys have an amazing rest of the week and I'll see you in your email inbox. Bye.