

Ep #99: Righteous Anger



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DR. PRIYANKA VENUGOPAL

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Priyanka Venugopal

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Hey, this is Dr. Priyanka Venugopal. And you're listening to the Unstoppable Mom Brain podcast, the Righteous Anger episode. I cannot wait to share with you today a real life story that happened just a few weeks ago, where if you could have seen me, there would have been steam coming out of my ears. I was so angry and I thought about sharing the story with you in my real life experience and this is not the only time I've ever felt angry in my life but really the real life experience that I had in the anger that I was feeling and how I navigated my experience. I think that anger is an incredibly powerful emotion for us to understand. It doesn't mean that you have to ever let it go if you don't want to, but just to parse out and understand the impact that anger might be having on your life. So I really hope that you enjoyed today's episode where I share my real life story and how we navigated anger and truly some tangible tips and skills that maybe if you want, you can incorporate before we get into today's episode.

I have such a fun announcement. I am doing a live webinar. On Sunday, March 10th at 8pm ET/5pm PT. And you're going to want to come to this webinar live. If you have ever thought, I just want to experience consistency with the scale. I want to see my weight loss results be more consistent. If you have ever felt like I just want to get off of the roller coaster, the up and the down that I'm experiencing. If you've ever experienced Monday through Friday, I'm on it. But then on the weekends, I undo my weight loss wins. If you have ever felt like whenever life feels hard or you're throwing a curve ball, that you need to take a break from your weight loss strategy, this masterclass is going to be for you.

If you want to understand the science of fat loss and how simple small nutritional tweaks is going to recalibrate your fat burning hormones, which truly is such a gift to learn and understand. You're going to want to come to this masterclass. So make sure that you grab your seat, RSVP, or at theunstoppablemombrain.com/webinar. And I will meet you in your email inbox with all of the details once you're signed up. Also, I want to encourage you right after you sign up for this webinar, take an additional minute and actually block the timeout on your calendar. I have coached high achieving professional working moms for hundreds of hours now, and I can see a really common trend in the women that show up and prioritize their goals and actually put themselves on their calendars participating actively in the learning. I can just see such a night and day difference in the results that you start creating. I know because this was me. I used to be the person that signed up for all the webinars and it would just collect dust in my inbox. I would do this because I love learning. However, I don't want my clients and they don't want you ever passively just consuming content. I'm here to help you take active needle moving action. So you hit your weight loss goals this year. So register for the webinar over at theunstoppablemombrain.com/webinar. And right now prepare to come live, get a babysitter.

If you need to ask your partner to watch the kids or put the kids to bed, pause your laundry and really show up live because it is going to be so much fun. And truly you're going to walk away from this webinar with a roadmap in place. We're hitting your goals this year. Okay. Let's get into today's episode, the righteous and angry feelings that I had and how I navigated it. If you want to reach your ideal weight and create lightness for your body, you need to have simplicity, joy, and strategic decisions infused into your life. I'm a physician turned life and weightless coach for ambitious working moms. I've lost over 60 pounds without counting points, calories, or crazy exercise plans. Most importantly, I feel calm and light on the scale and in my life. There's some delicious magic when you learn this work and the skills I'm going to be teaching you. Ready? Let's get to it. A few weeks ago, I was traveling to California for a business conference and I booked a flight from Washington DC. I live in the Washington DC area to LAX. And I probably booked this flight months and months ago. And I, when I initially booked the flight, I didn't really pay attention. I remember booking this

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flight, I was picking my kids up from school and I was doing it on my cell phone. So I just, and this is, this is, listen, this is something I'm going to get into in this episode, but I just did not really pay close attention. I booked the flight because I wanted to grab one of the last few seats on this flight and I booked it and just moved on. I noticed a few weeks before this event, I went on to confirm my reservation before my flight, and I checked and saw that I had actually booked basic economy, which by the way, never again, but with basic economy, you're not allowed to bring on at least with the airline that I was flying, you're not allowed to bring on a carry on. Now, if you know anything about me, if you're a friend or even a client who has known me for a while, I only travel with carry ons. I have had just in the past, some experiences with checking in bags. I don't want my bags to get lost. I don't want to show up in my destination of choice and just like not have underwear. The things that I come up with. So I have just become the person and my whole family, the family of four, me and my husband, my two kids, I can go to any destination for a week with carry on. And I, I want to be honest, I kind of pride myself on this. So I am someone that just does not travel without a carry on. So when I noticed this, this is before my flight, I call the airline and I asked for an upgrade. The agent was very pleasant on the phone. They said, absolutely. You can upgrade your ticket and you will now be in a class of seating where you can actually have a carry on. I paid for the upgrade. I have the reservation. I got the confirmation for this upgrade in my email. And, you know, I just show up to the airport with my carry on and I had. The sneaky suspicion that something felt a little bit awry because I wasn't getting a boarding pass. I checked in online, as we do, and I got a notification that said, you have to go to the gate agent, like the, the gate agent to get your boarding pass.

I should have immediately known something was up, but again, I wasn't really paying attention to that because I had checked in, I had done my upgrade. I, again, as, as working moms, we have a hundred other things going on. So I just checked in and moved on. I go to the gate agent and the gate agent says, you're not allowed to take that carry on. I have a long pause here because. I felt my face get red in an instant. I started arguing with the gate agent, thinking maybe if I argue hard enough, maybe he'd change his mind. And I have to tell you, in my anger in that moment. This is just like the first moment of anger. I almost felt like he was smirking at me. This sounds so silly. As I'm even sharing the story, I felt like he's not even trying to help me. He's not even trying to be helpful. He just sitting there looking at his stupid computer screens. It says no carry on. He's not even going to try to help me. And I remember saying to him, Um, I don't understand. I have paid for this upgrade. I have a confirmation in my email. How is it even possible that this is happening? And the, if I really want to, I just want to kind of walk through, I'm going to just pause in the moment. I felt this righteous indignation and the way that righteous indignation feels if, I mean, I think we're probably all familiar with it, but you just feel right there wrong. I am right, right? That's why it's righteous. It just felt so justified. My anger felt really justified. My desire to blame this person looking at his computer felt really justified. My desire to basically cuss out the airline and call them and complain felt really justified because I felt this righteousness. Righteous indignation in the whole scenario because I called, I had done my due diligence, I had the email confirmation, I just felt so wronged. In that moment. I actively pulled out my cell phone with the intent of calling the airline and giving them a piece of my mind. I, this is, again, if you know me, this is not my typical MO, I don't usually behave like this, but I was at that tipping point where my right, if I'm, when I'm in righteous anger, this is kind of what I'll do. I kind of have this snap back, the snap back feeling. And I wanted to do it. I want to tell you why I wanted to do it. I wanted to dump my anger onto someone else. What I really wanted to do when I called the airline and gave them a piece of my mind is I wanted to get my anger out of me and onto them. I wanted for someone else to feel my anger. And in a sense, that feeling that I was actually having, which was completely powerless and out of control, this person was not going to let me take my carry on bag, no matter how angry I got. And no matter what I said, no matter how much I argued, I was not getting to take this carry on bag onto the airplane. I remember feeling so out of control that my brain very reflexively put me to anger because rather

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than feeling powerless, what felt better for me in the moment was anger, which is actually a really powerful feeling. I want to take a pause in my story and just kind of parse out and talk through why we do this.

Why is it that humans do this? It's really normal to turn what might feel like a powerless feeling or a vulnerability, which maybe makes you feel weak or out of control into something powerful. You'll find yourself turning guilt into self blame or grief into anger or sadness into righteousness. This is something actually that my coach and mentor Bev Aaron taught me that we sometimes have, when we're not aware of it, turn that moment that we're actually feeling vulnerable into something that maybe we can access power. Why does this even matter? What was, what's even the purpose of this whole podcast episode? Why am I telling you about my steam coming out of my ears and this angry, righteous anger that I was experiencing? It's because anger can often create a lot of damage. It can create a lot of damage in your relationships. And I don't mean my relationship with this airline, because I don't really care much about that. But think about how anger might be translating and trickling into other corners of your life. Where might it be chipping away at your relationship with your partner, in your connection, maybe with your kids, in your focus at work, even just in you experiencing satisfaction and fulfillment with yourself.

Now, this isn't a blanket statement. I'm going to get into how sometimes anger can be incredibly important and a very valuable tool to have in your toolbox. But the question to really ask yourself is, is this anger actually getting me more of what I want? So let me tell you back to the story, what I actually did because I have self coached on this before. I have been coached on this concept before around the feeling of righteous indignation and anger. I was able to catch it probably about two or three minutes into me experiencing anger. I've pulled my cell phone out. I'm arguing with this gate agent who's basically saying, ma'am, it's just not going to happen. And I felt the steam coming out of my ears. My face was super red. And before I called the airline, I've made this agreement with myself. I made this agreement with myself probably back in 2021 or 2022. When I am in that heightened state of total anger, that righteous indignation, I will make no major decisions. This is just an agreement I made with myself a couple of years ago. And so when I'm actually able to catch myself, I take a pause. So that's what I did. I told myself we're going to take a pause, we're going to take a beat. The carry on's not coming with us, Priyanka. We're just going to go through security and see how we feel on the other side.

So I went through security and I'm going to be totally honest. Every time I saw a family, I'm talking about even the little kids pulling their little carry ons. I felt expletives running through my mind. Can't believe that that family gets to take their carry on. Look at that kid taking their carry on. I was just still livid for probably 30 minutes or so the anger was just emanating out of me and I kept wanting to blame the airline. Forget the airline. I wanted to blame someone. I wanted to blame the gate agent. I was thinking about what the person on the phone that upgraded my airline, how could I blame her? I was thinking about how the airline in general is just to blame. Like what kind of ridiculous policy is this to begin with? All I wanted to do while I was in this livid state of anger where the steam was coming out of my ears, my face was still red was who can I blame for me feeling this way? That's what I ultimately wanted. Who can I blame for me feeling this way? And because I took this beat, I took the pause, like I just shared. I was able to just sit with that. It was hard to do. I was in a little tram that takes you to your gate, looking at the family with their carry on steam coming out of my ears. And as I worked through this, thinking first with who can I blame? How can I blame them? I also simultaneously started taking a little bit of inventory.

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Let me tell you what I mean by taking inventory. If you want to reflect back on the last time that maybe you felt righteous anger, you just felt like you were wronged and you were in the right and the other person was to blame and you feel yourself with steam coming out of your ears. Let's just take inventory. How did you show up when you felt that way? And I want you to get super detailed. What was the quality of your decision making? Did you really look at. All of the angles that led to the scenario, what was your lived experience of the whole entire circumstance? Right? So here I am with no carry on. What's my lived experience going through the airport boarding this flight when I'm the one experiencing anger? That gate agent has already long forgotten about me, right? So I'm sitting here with all of my angry thoughts about blaming the gate agent. And they, they've already forgotten about me. Ask yourself the last time you felt righteous anger. Did you walk away from that circumstance better off or worse off? What was the tone and tenor of the interactions you had? And I don't just mean the tone and tenor of maybe the way that you talk with the gate agent or with the airline in my scenario, I'm talking about the tone and tenor of the monologue in your brain. Ultimately, what these questions are asking you to do is to take note of how anger, righteous indignation is affecting you.

So in that moment, in my airplane, airport, carry on example, I wanted to hurt the airline. I wanted to hurt the gate agent. I wanted to blame them and criticize them. I wanted them to feel as bad as I was feeling. But let's just look at the honest inventory here. If your anger is about hurting someone else, that's fine. But also answer the other side. How is your anger also possibly hurting you? So let's get back to this agreement that I've made with myself. And I'm going to just be totally honest. This is not a perfect practice. It is simply a practice. I make no decisions and take no immediate action. What do I mean by least valuable player? I talked about this a little bit more in episode 82, where I discussed the emotional boardroom that we all have. But all of the emotions that are available to us from confidence to joy, to accomplishment, to satisfaction, all the way to the other side, doubt, anger, worry, fear, discouragement. These are all just members of a boardroom. They're department heads. And they all do actually play a role in the ecosystem of our life. That being said, I believe that there are certain players in the boardroom that I would label as the most valuable players. They're the players when I'm feeling those emotions, I take the highest quality action. I move the needle the most in my personal life and my professional life. I see the most forward traction in me hitting goals. Consistently, as opposed to the least valuable players in the boardroom, while they're normal and they have a role. When I take action from those emotions, I noticed that I make the least progress. I don't enjoy my lived experience and I find myself really feeling farther and farther from my goal. So my agreement is when I catch myself in a least valuable player emotion, in this example, it's anger. I have made the decision that I'm not going to take any immediate action. And this is not always easy. It's not. Sometimes, in this situation especially, my anger lasted a while. That feeling that you have that you know just feels terrible, it might last a while. So this is not exactly an easy practice, but it can be a simple one when you just get into implementing it. I'm going to borrow a phrase that my friend Sunny shared on the podcast here a couple of weeks ago. She shared that the perspective that you bring to your life's obstacles is kind of like what you enter into a Google search engine. If you Google all of the reasons that you should be angry and have blame and have criticism and have doom and gloom, your Google results will be a fitting plethora of exactly what you type in. The quality of the results you have in your Google search engine are going to match the quality of the questions that you put in, which is so important because it's just one more example of how our perspectives drive the quality of solutions that we have in any and every obstacle. Now, I'm not here to say that anger is bad, right? Like I was sharing, anger has an important role. There's a reason that humans are designed to experience anger. When you experience a righteous indignation and anger, the way that I'm describing, you might experience a flood of adrenaline in your body. It feels incredibly powerful, and not surprisingly, at a physiological level in your body, your body is pumping out adrenaline. Physically, you will feel more powerful. The reason for this is that there's an evolutionary role for it. If you think about being threatened physically or emotionally, or maybe your child or a

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loved one is being threatened, their safety is being threatened, anger plays a pivotal role in you taking strong, decisive, and immediate action quickly as a safety mechanism.

So my intention is not to tell you that it's a bad feeling that you should never feel. Absolutely has a role. My question in this podcast episode is for us to all ask ourselves, where else might anger be trickling into your life and are you actually aware of it? The thing is that most of us are operating from our subconscious biases. These perspectives we have. Thousands and millions of thoughts running through our mind. And when we are not aware, as most of us are not aware of our subconscious thoughts, we are reflexively acting on them. And that's what's creating a lot of our lived experiences. This is why coaching and what we do in the *Unstoppable* group is to help you see your blind spots to help you see, first of all, where your anger is actually coming from. It's not coming from the gate agent. It's not coming from the airline. It's not coming from your boss or the thing that your partner said or what your kids did. It's coming from a perspective you have about a circumstance in your life. Just that awareness, knowing that no life circumstance is actually creating your anger. It's a perspective that you have can in itself be incredibly empowering. And this is hard to do on your own because our subconscious biases are living in our blind spots. One of the things that we do in the *Unstoppable* group is you get to uncover where that feeling is coming from. Maybe it's anger or guilt or worry or nervousness or doubt. And then you get to parse out what's the impact on my actual life for me to keep this emotion. What's the impact for me to keep this guilt, this doubt, this anger, this frustration, this worry, you get to decide, and we get to work together to figure out is this emotion creating more of the lived experience you want or less of it. And the most powerful part of this process is that you start to see how you can decide. Your circumstances don't have to change for you to change how you feel about them. Your partner doesn't have to change. Your boss, your colleagues, your kids don't actually have to change for you to change your thoughts and beliefs to have a different lived experience.

When you get coached on your professional working mom life, you would be surprised how all of a sudden, without any part of your life actually changing, you start feeling so much more powerful. So while nothing in your life changes, all of a sudden, everything in your life feels different. And in my experience, this is truly the ultimate guide for the professional working mom to experience a feeling of unstoppable. This is not a perfect practice. I still yell at my kids. I still experience moments of guilt. I still experience moments of doubt and frustration and worry, because again, as a human, we are going to experience the whole range of emotions. But the difference between how I experience these least valuable player emotions versus how I used to experience them before is I have stopped reacting to them. I've become aware when I'm experiencing them. I've decided to take powerful pauses so that I don't take immediate action when I'm in an experience of them. And I have learned so much more powerfully how to activate my prefrontal cortex, the part of me that has the best highest quality solutions to navigate any challenges that I come up with.

This podcast episode is really an invitation. The next time that you feel a least valuable player emotion, in this situation of righteous indignation and anger, just take a beat. If your safety is not being threatened, give yourself permission to not make any major decisions. Let the initial force of that emotion dissipate and then decide how you want to show up in the circumstance. I promise you this does not make you weak. This does not make you complacent. This does not make you a pushover. Really think about this. When you experience anger and you react and lash out, it's actually an example of being completely out of control. You're not actually driving your actions. Your anger is when we allow that least valuable player, we ride the wave and let the strength of that emotion dissipate. And then we show up. With our brilliant prefrontal cortex, making decisions that are more deliberate and thoughtful, we are getting to feel the ultimate example of empowerment of being truly in control. So let me finish out the story after about 30 minutes, maybe it was a little longer

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when I felt the steam not coming out of my ears. I considered what I would have said if I called the airline. From a place that is totally honest and free of self blame, I was able to have some introspection around what led to the circumstance to begin with. How did I even end up in a circumstance where I had no carry on bag to board the plane? How did I even end up in a scenario where this was even a problem. I was rushing to book this ticket. I did it in a rush. I did it in the carpool line while picking up my kids and I didn't like their policy. I'm not here to say that the airline wasn't completely blame free because I kind of think they were, but I wanted to really step into figuring out, I wonder how I could have possibly done something different to not be in the circumstance to begin with. What are some things that I can do to prevent the situation from arising? I learned unless there's a true emergency, I'm likely not going to book airplane tickets, being in my kid's carpool line. Ultimately, when I really assess what it was that led me to go from zero to a hundred with my anger with the gate agent, that poor gate agent who really had no control, I just didn't like their policy.

It was like me throwing a temper tantrum. With me not getting a lollipop that I wanted. I didn't like their rules. I didn't like their policy. I felt like I wasn't getting my way when I wanted my way. And I felt really out of control. And because I am me, it led to a lot of blamey. This was me basically having an adult sized tantrum. My primitive brain was just looking for something or someone to blame for my feeling of out of control and self preservation one out rather than stepping into me, taking on the blame, the quote unquote blame. I blamed the other guy. I can tell you without a shadow of a doubt, years ago, I could never have done this. I would have stewed in my anger. I would have probably said a lot of words to the gate agent. I would have likely called the airline and complained. I would have lost so many minutes, maybe even longer of my life. Complaining to the airline and the gate agent in a policy that they likely would not have reversed.

I probably would have gotten on the airplane and eaten all the snacks and asked the flight attendant to get me more because I would need a break from my anger and I would have had an experience on this five hour flight that would have likely been terrible. But this is the muscle just becoming aware of the impact that some of the least valuable player emotions have on our life. How just the awareness around that can absolutely change it. These are just habits, small habits that we can unlock and uncover and fundamentally change if you want. And that is truly the power of coaching. Also, can I tell you a secret? So after the anger, I'm rolling onto the flight and I have to say, I kind of liked just having my backpack.

I was telling my friend, Andrea, who never travels without a checked bag. I was like, I kind of see what you mean. This, uh, this checked bag thing is not the worst thing. Just having my backpack. to roll, lug this bag through the little skinny aisle. I didn't have to carry, lift it, put it into an overhead compartment. It felt actually kind of nice to just have this backpack. And the other thing, by the time they got to actually boarding my group for the flight, the flight was full and they weren't accepting carry ons anyway. Which means this whole entire time, even if I had gotten permission from the gate agent to carry on my bag, I would still not have gotten to carry on my bag . I just think it was such a chuckle that I got to have with myself around how much I could have totally changed my entire experience, my whole hour. I just think it is so fascinating because we have. Precious time. Friends, we have a precious amount of time. There's only a limited amount of hours in our day. And if we are spending any of this precious time stewing and dwelling and rooming and marinating in righteous indignation and anger, I'm just so curious around what kind of lived experience it's creating for us. This is just a practice, my friends. And it's just one option to know that if you feel like jumping out of the angry soup, if you want to free yourself of righteous indignation, you don't have to feel powerless or out of control.

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Actually stepping out and deciding on purpose, how you want to show up is an incredibly powerful feeling and truly. Truly, it might change the whole entire experience in any circumstance that you're in. The fact that you're here listening to this episode means that you feel this readiness to have agency and experience more control around your mindset. You're here because you can feel the impact of this skill in your professional working mom life and absolutely with weight loss. Just imagine, I want to just plant the seed. What would happen if you knew how to feel in control of your feelings? Even when you aren't in control of every life circumstance. Imagine this with your kids, your work, your family, your loved ones. You've heard me say this before. A diet might put you temporarily into a smaller body, but without the mindset skills to match, it's not going to last. And truly in my experience, if you want to see consistent results on the scale, you want to experience consistent weight loss results week after week, part of what's going to create consistency is that you don't need breaks from weight loss.

When life gets hard, when you experience an explosive anger, or when you feel guilty or discouraged or worry or nervous or a doubt in some corner of your life, that that's never the reason to take a break from your weight loss strategy. If you want consistent results and you want to hit your dream body goals this year, I want to make sure that you attend my live class on Sunday, March 10. It's called the Three Proven Steps to Consistent Weight Loss Results. It is a physician approved roadmap for professional working moms and truly folds in specific concepts that really apply to the working mom's life. You can RSVP and grab your seat over at theunstoppablemombrain.com/webinar after you drop your information on that page, I will meet you in your email inbox with all of the details. I really want to encourage you right after that to block the time and come live, because I have seen the difference in the results that my clients create when they're passively consuming content versus actively engaging. If you really look at when you are hitting goals, you're hitting goals. When you put yourself on your own calendar. It's going to be so much fun to come live. And if you want to work with me right after the webinar, the *Unstoppable* group is going to be opening for enrollment. This is my intimate six months, small group coaching program, specifically designed for professional working moms who want to lose the weight they want this year.

And when you're registered for the webinar and you join the *Unstoppable* group within 48 hours, there's going to be a really special bonus just for you. It's going to be private one on one strategy call where you and I. Custom create your blueprint to lose the weight you want this year. I cannot wait to see you in this class and it's truly going to be so much fun. Grab your seat over at theunstoppablemombrain.com/webinar, and I will see you there. Have an amazing week, my Unstoppable friends. Bye. Thanks for listening to the Unstoppable Mom Brain Podcast. It's been an honor spending this time with you and your brilliant brain. If you want more resources or information from the show, head on over to theunstoppablemombrain.com.