SESSION TRANSCRIPT · THE MISSING PIECES OF PERIMENOPAUSE

A Lil Better: How Breaking Goals into Bite-Sized Bits Takes You Further

with Mandie Brice · Day 3 · Wednesday, October 28 · The Difficult One

Hello. My name is Mandie Brice, and I'm here to share A Lil Better: How Breaking Goals into Bite-Sized Bits Takes You Further.

As I said, my name is Mandie Brice, and at the bottom of the screen you can see the different places to find me online. MandieBrice.com and @mandiebrice are more of a personal, everything collection of things online, and I'll get more into that in a second. A Lil Better and alilbetter.community are both websites, and @alilbetter.community is where to find more of my new business on Instagram. I'll get more into that as well, because they're both relevant to my topic.

So, how breaking goals down into bite-sized bits takes you further. Let me first tell you a little more about who I am. As you can see, and as I've said, my name is Mandie Brice. I have lived a lot of lives in my 45 years so far on Earth. I used to teach middle and high school. Then I started doing modeling and makeup artistry full time as a freelancer. I wrote a few books. The one that's my pride and joy is called Happiness Habits. I started teaching yoga, got my master's degree in education, started the Good Moms Make Good Trouble summit, and then began A Lil Better.

A Lil Better is one online book club community across two sites, and it helps women turn shelf help into self help. By that I mean, if you love to read personal development books because you think you're doing yourself a favor, but you notice your life isn't actually getting better, you may not be implementing what you read. The idea of A Lil Better is to help people do exactly that, in bite-sized amounts. That's why this presentation has the bite-sized part, because it's important to take things in a sustainable, small dose.

Now, the reason I'm sharing my whole background, and not just the parts relevant to perfectionism, procrastination, and overthinking, is that I'm one of those people who has done all these different things, and I haven't even named them all. People are consistently like, how do you do all that? Plus I have a five-year-old, plus I travel a lot. Or they say, of course you also do that. I've known you for a couple of years and didn't know you'd written books, but I'm not surprised. It's because I have found ways to use my untreated ADHD to work in my favor and get a lot of things done in a little bit of time.

Let me tell you more about that, and give you an example of why you should do it. I just moved into a new house, and I'm learning that this maroon color does nothing for me, especially with this lighting. I'm going to show you a little more of my house, not just to give that illustration, but to help you buy into the fact that this is what you need to change to give yourself a little mental peace.

So let's rotate just a little bit. I've been hiding all of the stuff behind me. This is your brain on procrastination. Look behind me here. I have another bottle of champagne. Is that a purple KitchenAid? Is that a box? You're looking at all of those things. That's the same thing that's happening inside your brain when you have a big to-do list full of unfinished things.

That's how procrastination, perfectionism, and overthinking aren't just little bad habits or things we slip into. They can actually be self-sabotage, even a kind of violence toward yourself. You probably couldn't focus on what I was saying with all those things behind me, and that's the same thing going on in your brain. It's like having 200 tabs open: the kids need this, my husband needs this, my partner needs this, I need this for work, I need this for myself. If you can get those done little by little, it's like taking bricks out of a backpack you're carrying. That's what I'm hoping you'll see, and then be able to implement with some tips I'm going to share now.

As a yoga teacher, I have to take a moment for myself, as well as for you, after the stress of seeing that (really not that bad) picture of the whole situation, to breathe, recenter, and get calm, so the rest of the presentation is easier to digest.

So maybe close your eyes if that's comfortable for you, or take a soft, unfocused gaze. We'll take an inhale, two, three, and exhale, two, three, four. Another inhale, two, three, and exhale, two, three, four. Last time, inhaling, two, three, and exhaling, two, three, four.

That's not directly related to perfectionism or procrastination, but that breathing is something you can keep in your pocket at any time. Having a longer exhale than inhale promotes relaxation. Hopefully you were breathing so that your lungs were full enough to press your belly out, and then let it fall. And hopefully you feel a little better than you did a few seconds ago.

All right, now that that's done. We know that perfectionism, overthinking, and procrastination are hurting our brains. They can leave us unable, sometimes paralyzed, to get the things done that we need to, because we're so overwhelmed by the whole list of other things vying for our attention, and maybe winning. So I'm going to give you a few tips to help you get past that, move more peacefully, and get things done.

They say the hardest thing is getting started. There's another part of my career I didn't mention in my intro: I used to help people get into fitness and stick to workout programs. One thing I used myself, and recommended to my clients at the time, is that the hardest part is starting.

This is not any sort of pro-hustle, power-through-when-you're-exhausted type thing. But if you feel healthy and you have the energy to work out and just don't feel like it, my advice was to do just the first five minutes of the workout. Once you're there, you usually feel empowered and motivated enough. You've got your blood flowing, and you can do the rest.

The same thing applies to pretty much anything else on your to-do list. Really shrink the goal down to basically just starting it, and then use that to keep going.

One of the ADHD tools I recently used recommended just picking up nine items. For example, I have this whole house full of boxes. I could say, all right, I'm going to put my entire life on hold for a week, completely unpack, and get completely organized. I don't know about you, but I don't have the luxury of taking a whole week off to reorganize my house.

This last week, as we were getting our stuff in, a lot of our things that were in storage came over on a truck, and we did most of that over two days, just getting it into the house so the truck could leave. Then for the other stuff, at the place where we've been staying for the last couple of months, I've come over every day with a few bags or boxes in my car. Since I'm coming here anyway, I bring those boxes in. It's super easy, because I'm already making the trip, and it doesn't take hours. Little by little, over the course of the week, all of my stuff will be here instead of where I was staying.

You can apply the same thing to household chores, a side hustle, work, or personal projects. You don't have to clean the whole entire house. Maybe you start with a drawer. Maybe you take nine items off your cluttered counter. Maybe you unpack one box. And you know what? Sometimes once you get that one box unpacked, or that one counter done, you have the momentum to keep going, just like the first five minutes of that workout. You're having fun, you feel good, you see what you've accomplished, and that gives you the momentum to continue. So take that and apply it to whatever you have to do in your life. It can be a lot more sustainable and a lot more impactful.

Another way to think about it is New Year's, when so many people decide they're going to change their whole entire life starting January 1st. They're going to be a brand new person with all these new habits: start running, lift weights, cut out sugar and caffeine. All of it brand new, and this is the year it's going to happen. Or, maybe you start with five minutes of stretching. Maybe you cut out soda. Maybe you add in a vegetable. It's just a little bit of change. Your body

and brain, which are trying to keep you safe, will accept those changes much more easily than a complete lifestyle makeover.

Just like you're not going to stick with a total overhaul unless you have amazing willpower and are in the vast minority of people, you're probably also not going to be able to take a week off to reorganize your life as often as you need to. So figuring out what's most important, breaking it down, and just getting started, even if it's the tiniest bit of progress, can make a huge difference.

So I'm going to show you a little tool I've been using to break things down. If you have an Android, there's probably a cool way to do this. I'm just not familiar with it. I'm an iPhone user, and I use the Notes app, which isn't very fancy, but it works.

Here's my Notes app, and you can see there's a checklist with some things checked and some not. You can probably also see that some of them are related to this Missing Pieces of Perimenopause Summit. At the top it says "October to do / done." At the top are all the things I've identified as things I need to do, and at the bottom are all sorts of checked-off things.

What you can do on your iPhone now is highlight the top part, including all the things that are checked off and scattered in among the rest. Then, if you click on the arrow next to the highlighted area, you can click on Checklist, and then Move Checked to Bottom.

The reason I absolutely love this is that whenever I'm randomly doing something and I remember one of those things running in the background of my mental load, I put it on my list. Then when I have a couple of minutes, I open my list, ideally instead of doomscrolling on Instagram or Facebook, and I think, okay, what's something on my list I have enough time to do right now, or enough time to get started on right now? And then I check it off.

I try to do at least three things a day, and they vary in how much time, effort, and energy they take. I try to put the most important or most pressing things at the top of the list, and then I just scroll through: what do I have the mental energy for? Oh, I can send that person a quick message. I can send a quick text. I can pay that bill. I can order that thing I need. And I check them off. It's so satisfying by the end of the month to see how many things are in the done list at the bottom, because they really start accumulating.

I also put one item at the bottom, before the checked things start moving down. It's just some lines or stars, something to mark where the done section begins, and I never check that one off. So that's one tip that helps.

I also have a chart. I should have grabbed it and had it ready. I started it at the 99-day mark before the end of the year. It's just a bunch of circles, and every time I do three things toward

my goal, I check one off. There's a big champagne bottle at the end. Giving yourself rewards, a little treat, is a perfect way to help keep your momentum going.

Hopefully you're not putting things on your list like "make a list." But that could count, if it's the start of something and it gives you that dopamine hit of the check mark. Absolutely do that.

So you can make starting anything easier by breaking it down into a small task. Get that done, and let that momentum keep pushing you further. Break things down into small parts. Like I said, instead of organizing the whole house, organize one drawer and put that on the list. Instead of "write a new book," write an outline for the book. Write 100 words. Write one page. Break it down into those small pieces, and then look for when you have a free moment. Or even if it's, oh shoot, I'm going to bed in two hours and I haven't done anything today, what can I do to get my three things checked off and done?

Hopefully you've also checked out my website and seen the A Lil Better community. The idea behind it is also breaking down personal development reading into small parts. We do little reading schedules, plus journaling and discussion questions that help people actually stop and think instead of reading straight through, and a yoga flow and a guided meditation, yoga nidra, to help internalize it all, every month. So if you're interested in that, check me out online. I would so love to answer any questions you have.

I hope you found this helpful. I hope you can climb your next mountain by taking little baby steps up to the top, and that it gives you the mental peace and freedom to do what you need to do. Thank you so much for coming virtually to this presentation. I hope you get a lot out of mine, as well as everyone else's, and I hope you have an amazing day. Thank you again.