



Transcript for Episode Six

Hello, I'm your host, Christina Smith and I'm a full-time Life coach for women. The Inviting Shift podcast focuses on how we step through this messy journey of life confidently so we can feel good about how we show up, have more connected relationships and connect to purpose and meaning.

Or in short, how we manifest the lives we crave in practical, tangible ways

Today we're going to talk about the top 3 confidence busters. You know all those blocks that we have when we want to move forward on our goals, dreams, or passions.

These are things that we all do naturally - so if you find yourself feeling familiar with these ways we sabotage ourselves, you are not alone. I've personally been stopped by each of these before and even still experience them coming up. They will still come up every time I want to try something new or learn something new -- like starting a podcast. So I've experienced each in the last three months and I will share with you how I kept them from starting.

Let's just take a moment to ground and set the mood if you will.

If you can safely, close your eyes.

Either way, take a few breaths.

Think of one of the last times you were about to start something new - whether you felt successful in the end or not. It might have been a big transition in your life, a new goal, a new degree, or you had to learn something new for your career or start to date again.

You probably had great visions of what you wanted. Imagine that... what you thought it might look like when you first imagined it. What could love to look like? What would those new skills bring you? What would this transition feel like freedom, accomplishment, joy?

Then we went to get to work on it.

We might have had to learn new ways of doing things. We might have to take that first scary step and face our fears of committing to something and following through.

Even if it didn't stop you, there was probably conflict happening inside. Because scary things can set off alarm bells in our heads. Our ego gets scared and starts explaining why staying small and in the comfort of not growing.



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Then we showed up and it rained on our scheduled beach day, or someone didn't feel like doing that long hike today, or the thing we wanted to do isn't available on the right day.

Boom. Boom. Boom.

Plans would fall apart and I would try my best to control the chaos. And the goal never looked like it should.

I had huge expectations that never felt successful. Vacation began to seem stressful rather than how I wanted it to feel -- like a needed a vacation from the vacation. It certainly didn't turn out the way I wanted it to - and it didn't feel good.

I got to the point that I didn't even want the vacation any more. It was easier just to stay home, but of course that didn't sit well with me either.

But, this all shifted several years ago when I started focusing on I what I truly wanted out of vacation.

Instead of the perfect activities and plans, HOW DO I WANT THIS TO FEEL?

If vacation were successful, what type of memories do I really want out of it?

Sometimes it's adventure, connection and fun -- other times it peace, calm and rest. The point is it no longer is full of scheduled things that have to be done at certain times. Whatever we want out of it -- we need to put in. That's the focus.

I admit that at first it was a bit scary for my controlling self. What if we ended up doing nothing? What if no one could ever agree on what to do? What if we wasted our time together?

And I kept focused on the intentions.

What does it look like? Well if we wanted adventure, connection and fun, we would get together and ask ourselves how we could have adventure, fun and connection that day. What did that feel like? Learning to surf or laying on the beach having conversations or playing games. It is up to us to define it and it's flexible depending on how each person is feeling that day.



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It allows compassion for ourselves and flexibility. If what we thought we would do doesn't feel right, we choose something else.

And it hasn't let us down yet. In fact, I believe that we tend to find the perfect spots at the perfect low-tourist times just by following our intentions. It's just about magical.

And when we come home, we ask ourselves - did we succeed at adventure, fun and connection? Since it was our focus - it's just about a resounding yes every time. Vacation is saved by giving up expectational perfectionism and switching to confident intentions.

So perfection is way over-rated in my opinion.

It's a moving target and based often out of outrageous expectations. It's a losing strategy.

Now you might be listening to this and thinking, I am not a perfectionist.

Let's face it, some of us don't really want to see those controlling qualities for ourselves. So here are some symptoms you may not know about perfectionists:

You crave other people's approval

Everything seems black and white (right or wrong, good or bad)

It's all or nothing - if I can't have exactly what I want, then I won't even participate)

Feedback is hard to take - even from someone who loves you

You are highly critical of others

You procrastinate because you want to get it just right

You feel guilty when you do something less than 100% or have to say no

We all can lean into these qualities sometimes, so be honest. Any of the previous mentioned ring some bells? I bet they do.

Look you aren't alone Our culture says if things aren't perfect, go buy yourself perfect. Hire it. Rent it. Work harder for it.

But we aren't perfect little robots, we're people.

We're not meant to get it all right. Our journey is to get comfortable with life -- which is anything but perfect. It's messy, it's chaotic, it's grief and joy, it's people getting big rewards for not putting anything in and it's people not getting enough even when they've done the work. It's learning instead of winning. It's changes. It's growth .

And so much of that is uncomfortable and very far from perfect.



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Which brings me to another favorite quote:

Our anxiety doesn't come from thinking about the future, but from wanting to control it.

Khalil Gibran

Perfectionism is wanting to control our environment - every little detail. And it's truly impossible.

It is by far easier to adapt to the discomfort of life. To allow and surrender to the details that don't really matter and focus on what really matters - our intentions.

Confidence and perfection can't live in the same worlds.

Remember confidence is the skill of being able to move forward knowing you may not get it right.

Perfectionism demands we get it right or we won't be satisfied.

Two different worlds.

So how do we jump out of the perfectionism and step into more confidence?

We offer ourselves compassion.

Compassion for being human. Compassion for not being the perfect computer.

Compassion for making mistakes. Compassion for judging ourselves so harshly.

We aren't here to be perfect. We are here to accept ourselves and hopefully, gracefully live with the affects that make us human. Our challenge is to take all of this humanness - our thoughts, our amazing brains, our emotions, our ego, our physical limitations and our inner wisdom -- and learn how to travel this journey.

We don't get a prize for perfect.

We do get to live a life we can be confident in with compassion.

Let's talk about the benefits of compassion and perfectionism:



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The benefits of perfectionism: I get to be the person who will get it done and people will think I'm perfect.

Of course I won't think it's perfect and even if I do, I've exhausted myself. I also now have the pressure of this identity that other people expect me to get it perfect so if I don't I feel like I've let everyone down and so I don't feel good about it anyway because there's so many ways I can mess it up.

I mean there just aren't a lot of benefits to getting it right all the time unless you want to take on the work of the world and the identity that now you have to get it right - everyone else is depending on you.

Now the benefits of compassion:

The benefit of good enough:

There's a theory in business that 80% of your profit comes from 20% of the effort. I believe this is pretty close to life too. We can get so caught up in details that we let the 3% of not perfect ruin the 97% success. It reminds me of a time I was in charge of a conference of hundreds of people and dozens of sessions and speakers. I worked so hard to make it perfect. I checked and rechecked every list. I ensured the participants and the speakers had everything they would need. I arranged employees to support the speakers and ensured lunch would be perfect.

I had even thought about future events and planned to do some marketing videos for that purpose. One of the speakers we wanted to record had to dash back to the airport so we recorded them early in the day and before we checked the results to find the audio wasn't good, the speaker was gone and we lost our chance.

At the end of the day, everyone, including my boss was ecstatic and I was still grumpy about that one detail that didn't work out. At the time it was disappointing... but looking back at it just something silly that stole my celebration from me. I worked really hard, but it felt overwhelming to need to have every detail right when most people wouldn't have even noticed anything different anyway. I wasted a lot of worry instead of enjoying the event.

The benefit of letting go of the weight of your projections & others judgment:

When we tell ourselves 'other people might judge me' what we're saying is, I would judge me. If I wouldn't judge myself by other people's standards, then I don't need to mind what they might think but the truth is, we are usually judgmental and so we'll jump in line to be the first one to judge ourselves.



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You are the only one who needs to validate you and your worth. You know why you're doing what you're doing and there is nothing you can do on earth that wouldn't bring judgment. We have to choose what is good for us - what is enough for us. If you feel good about the effort you're putting out, then have the compassion to understand that we're not often going to get it perfect.

It's not your job to avoid other people's judgments. It is your job to feel good about how you show up. You can give yourself compassion and still feel good about how you show up.

The benefit of time of energy

One of the biggest things I got back when I dropped perfect and went with good enough or done was time and energy. I didn't realize how much energy I gave trying to plan every single detail and then control it all.

The benefit of confidence

Remember, confidence is a skill that we hone. We don't hone it with perfection. As we discussed, perfection is not confidence. Perfection is about control. Confidence is about moving forward whether you might get it wrong or not. It's only focusing on what is most important, not trying to make it so we don't have to experience discomfort. Confidence can be really uncomfortable. Any new skill is.

The benefit of modeling compassion

When we model compassion for ourselves and others, we also give others the permission to be compassionate with themselves and others. So if you have kids around, or even family that is harsh on themselves, you could be a breath of fresh air and show them a new way to be.

The only way to do that is to offer ourselves compassion.

It's proven in science that being kind to yourself is better for your confidence, your productivity and your mood when you are kind to yourself rather than being critical. When we are critical, our body goes into fight, flight, freeze or f it all. When we are compassionate, we stay grounded in what we can do. This means we can switch back to our focused space where we can actually work from instead of panic.

So how do we shift into compassion?

I invite you to see that inner child part of you. If she got it wrong or made a mistake, how would you treat that sweet inner child in you?



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Chances are we were all shamed or criticized by someone when we were little. How did it feel as a child... to know it wasn't okay to make mistakes as you were learning? To be criticized when you thought you were doing a good job? To be told it wasn't good enough?

Crappy right? It probably had you doubting whether you were even capable of getting it right.

Criticism isn't always helpful. In fact, it can break down the very parts of us that think we are capable.

You wouldn't talk to a child or a friend that way, so we're going to picture this inner child of ours. I even suggest you get a picture of yourself as a child. I have one on my desk to remind me that she's still me and being overly-critical isn't going to help her shine.

When you feel like you want to get critical or feel that urge of perfectionism coming on, look at this picture. Or even envision your inner child getting it wrong. Look into her eyes.

Look at her and know that she's doing her best. Tell her that she is doing her best and it's okay even if it doesn't work out the way she wants.

Then, most importantly, ask that inner child: what is it you need right now?

Does she need to cry it out? Does she need encouragement? Does she just need to be held? What does she need to move forward with compassion for herself?

Then give it to yourself. Need a break, a sack, a nap or a time-out? Offer it to yourself.

Because you are worthy just like that inner child. You are worthy of kindness and compassion.

There's a bonus visualization for this episode that you can download.