

## Ep #2: Mental Health Myths & Emotional Health for Achieving Your Goals



### Full Episode Transcript

With Your Host

**Nicole Symcox**

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## Ep #2: Mental Health Myths & Emotional Health for Achieving Your Goals

You have to take care of your emotional and mental health just as much as achieving your goals. They are not independent of one another. A lot of us like to try to put this part of ourselves in a box to deal with on another day, or not deal with it at all, but the truth is whatever it is that you're hiding in that box probably has the ability to empower you if it is healed and supported in a good way.

And so let's just think for a second about what emotional health is. It is the lens for how you see, think, feel, and do life. It determines how resilient you are and how well you manage the ups and downs of life. And if you're an ambitious human, then you have to get used to managing your emotions while stepping outside your comfort zone because every time you level up, you're going to take your emotions with you.

Welcome to *Mental Health Remix*, a show for ambitious humans who are ready to feel, think, and be different. If you want to stop struggling with perfectionism, build better relationships, and connect with yourself and your potential, this is the place for you...

Here's your host, educator, coach and licensed psychotherapist, Nicole Symcox...

Hey, hey everyone. Welcome to episode number two. We are going to spend some time today busting some mental health myths and talking about how mental health is super, super important to your success. I'm really excited to get into this topic. It's something I'm super passionate about.

Let's start here. I live in the Bay area of California and for those of you who have no idea what that means, we are the hub for technology here. Like Apple, Google, Microsoft, Facebook, just to name a few are a hop, skip, and a jump from me. So there is a very strong culture here of work and

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achievement. I see it in my practice all the time. People are pushing themselves just to extremes in order to make a lot of money and achieve a lot of success and reach their corporate and career dreams.

But I don't think this message is unique to just us here in the Bay area. I actually think it's a widespread message in just our culture today. There is a message out in the world that we are only worth our last achievement. And because we as humans have innate needs to be seen, heard, and valued for who we are, we easily buy into this message of proving our worth through works and achievements.

And not necessarily on who we truly are as human beings, or for just managing our mental and emotional health. That tends to be a low priority for most people. If you think about going out with your friends and what you brag about, most people don't brag about their emotional health. Most people don't even talk about it, but they will totally brag, oh, my kid got into this fancy school or I just got a promotion, or we're buying a new house.

We tend to do the highlight reel and we definitely do that on social media, but we also do that in person. And it's really interesting because emotional health fuels all of that and as many of my clients have found out, when they come to therapy and they work on their stuff, they actually get more productive. They actually achieve more because they become aligned internally and aware of themselves. And so they're able to support their inner world in healthy ways.

In fact, many clients report to me that they have friends or family members constantly asking them why they're spending money and time in therapy when really, they should be putting their energy into achievements and getting out in the world and making something of themselves, and doing things that add more retail value to their résumé.

And truthfully, that kind of thinking is actually backwards. You are an emotional being as a human, whether you want to admit that or

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acknowledge that or not, it's true. And all your thoughts, behaviors, and relationships flow from your emotional health filter. So if your emotional world isn't healthy, it's going to be hard to create a life that feels good and balanced.

It's like that old saying goes. Happiness is an internal job. It truly is. But this is not usually what is taught in school or by society as a whole. We're constantly in information overload and we're trained to believe that the smarter we are, the more money we make, the more success will follow, and thus we'll be happy.

But let me tell you, I know a lot of people that are wealthy and successful who are not happy. So that formula doesn't work. The more success we have doesn't necessarily mean we're going to feel good about ourselves, although that's not the dream that we're chasing. So while it might make you look successful in the world's eyes, how happy are you actually going to be if you don't feel good emotionally or mentally?

Or every day you're waking up with anxiety and stress and you're worried about your relationships and you're second-guessing yourself. That stuff is real and that stuff is hard. And there is no climbing any corporate ladder that you can climb that's going to fix any of that. You're going to have to, at some point, take the time to heal and learn some skills on how to manage that better so you can be happy.

And the truth is even though society tells us that we need to be the smartest person in the room and we need to learn more, we need to do more, sometimes it's not about learning more, achieving more, or being the smartest person in the room. Sometimes, the best thing you can do for yourself is take a time out and learn to be.

Learn to relate to yourself and others in healthier ways. Learn how to be effective at working without killing yourself with stress and anxiety in the process. Learning how to interpret your past experiences and make

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meaning out of them in a way that empowers you instead of bringing you down. This is all part of emotional health.

Learning how to have healthy relationships and owning your sense of identity, like who are you really? If you lost all the money, all the job, all the success, all the status, who are you? And in the end, that's a big existential question I think a lot of people ask.

So this is emotional health and it's a process that is continually evolving inside you. So you either have to get on board with what's actually happening, or you avoid it and you continue to do life as you've always done. And let me tell you my friends, that will have an expiration date on it. At some point, something inside of you is going to want you to work on your emotions or the way you think or the way you feel in the world.

And I want you to think about it this way; it's not designed really to bring you down, and this is a very holistic viewpoint that I have. I think we are whole beings that want to be whole. I think we actually always want to be healthy and are working towards healing, but with any kind of healing process, usually we have to deal with the negative stuff first before it heals.

Like if you think about when you get an infection or something, you have to deal with the yuck of the whole thing for a few days before the medicine kicks in and you start to feel better. And I think it's just a great metaphor for the healing process. Sometimes it feels worse before it feels better. But you know, if you do nothing, then nothing gets better so at least you're doing something about it.

And this is usually when people start therapy. They've spent so much time avoiding their pain or internal alert system and it gets so loud one day that it feels like their world just crashed around them. And I get it. I mean, if your mind is constantly thinking negative thoughts or your feelings are constantly experiencing negativity, if your thinking, feeling, and being in the

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world feels negative, of course it feels like the world is crashing around you, right?

And I think this is one of the myths out in the world around mental health, that you have to wait until everything has just fallen apart and you have no other option left. Therapy is like, this last resort. And I think that's a myth. I don't think that's actually healthy thinking because the truth if you don't have to wait for the crash. You can take care of your mental health at any point in your life that you are feeling symptoms that are disrupting how you want to be in the world and getting to the bottom of what's creating that.

And in many cases, starting therapy before the crash is very helpful for people. You have stuff to work on and in some ways, you're getting ahead of it before it gets so bad that you're not functioning. Or all your relationships go down, or you don't want to go to work anymore, or whatever it is.

So at any point, you can take the step to make meaning out of your past experiences and allow the healing process to create a new path for you because I see it time and time again. When people address their emotional world, process past pain, and reframe their thinking, they become so much more effective in their lives. And they begin to value themselves and their experiences in a whole new way. Being able to clearly see who they are, what they want to do, and an action plan to get there.

Here's a second myth that I see around mental health. Many of my clients think that healing our emotional health is about getting to a place where you are invincible to pain and fear and all the "bad" emotions that we don't like, that you will all of a sudden become perfect. And because I see a lot of perfectionists, like, this is their goal. They're like, I will finally be this god-like creature in the world who's invincible to pain and makes all the right decisions.

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And that's honestly an unrealistic expectation because as humans, I haven't met one anyway that is perfect. We all have flaws and we can embrace those flaws and still be the best version of who we want to be. But healing and emotional health isn't about becoming perfect. It's not about becoming invincible because you're still going to be a human in the world experiencing life.

And when you experience life, there's going to be ups and downs. It's just part of the process of living. And it doesn't have to destroy you though, and I think that's the biggest mind-turn for a lot of people is realizing that some of these old things that were holding them back or holding them down doesn't have to hold them down anymore. They can see and interact with it in a whole new way, and it's usually really empowering and freeing for them.

So healing really isn't about becoming invincible. It's about becoming your authentic self and fully functioning from a place of internal strength with a healthy perspective. So again, it doesn't make you immune to pain that can come up in your life, but it allows you to do it in a whole new way where you don't feel defeated, anxious, sad, and overwhelmed, burned out. You can truly do it from a place of strength, power, and truth.

And here's the third myth that I see come up a lot just in the world around us around mental health is that seeing a therapist means you're weak. Okay, I almost get lost for words when I hear this one because I don't know where that came from because that has not been my experience as a therapist working with clients, and just healing from my own stuff back in the day.

It takes an enormous amount of courage and strength to deal with yourself. Many people underestimate we are our biggest adversary and there are things out in the world that work against us, but truly, to master the self is probably the hardest thing you're ever going to do. And so to step into

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therapy and really lean into the process, face your fears, and reprocess it, that's not weak, my friends. No freaking way is that weak.

And I just notice as I'm talking about this, I have such a strong body response to it because I think a myth and a statement like that is so demeaning and so grossly wrong for what's actually happening in therapy. I mean, to be able to admit and know that you need support and help in an area so that you can be a better version of yourself, how the hell is that weak?

No, you are strong and I admire you for being willing to take yourself on. I think it takes a lot of wisdom to know when you need to try something new or you need some support, and so there's absolutely no shame in that. In fact, I think we should be doing celebrations for people that are taking that courageous, brave step to dealing with their past, their emotions, their thoughts because it's a really hard thing to do and it takes a lot of perseverance at certain points in the therapy process to keep going because it's hard.

Emotional responses are usually speaking from past experience. And usually, in my case because I work with a lot of PTSD, trauma and anxiety disorders, for my clients, a lot of times they can be very high-functioning in their lives, achieving a lot of great goals, and still have a traumatic past, still have not necessarily processed it, overcome their abusive childhood, or a hurtful relationship, or anything.

So painful memories hold a lot of meaning for people when they have gone unprocessed because they freeze in time with all their messaging, in addition to what you actually remember. So if something bad happened to you that was traumatic and you felt like your life was threatened and you couldn't get out or couldn't get away, most likely a feeling of powerlessness is also going to be frozen in there or some version of that.

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Because when we feel like we almost died and that was out of our control, we need to process the feelings around that because when you process those feelings, they have an opportunity to be reframed, and you all of a sudden realize oh, I survived that experience. I'm actually a survivor. Why? Because they've worked through the painful emotions that have kept them in an unconscious stuck pattern.

I can't tell you how many people have concluded the therapy process with me with tears of gratitude in their eyes over how much the process helped them. And that they are so grateful that they were brave enough to step out and invest in themselves and the healing process because the way they see life has changed. And it's opened up for them in new and empowered ways.

And it's not because of external circumstances necessarily. It's because internally, they have changed. And when you change internally, things change externally because you see, feel, and think about the world in a different way. And that's really the premise of this podcast. You have to take care of your emotional and mental world just as much as achieving your goals so that you can think, feel, and be different, regardless of the circumstances, regardless of what other people are doing, regardless of externals.

When it comes to achieving your goals and being human, you have to take care of your emotional world because they are not independent of one another. You are made up of a mind, body, and soul, and you have to take care of those things in order to be your best self. I know many ambitious people who take care of their mental health and they find achieving their goals become easier because much like a car, we are born with parts and an internal engine that keeps us going and gets us to where we want to go.

But if we don't take care of those parts, it greatly gets in the way of where we want to go and what we want to achieve. But many people like to put this part of themselves in a box to deal with it later, or on another day, or

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when things get really bad. And I really advise against that. Taking care of your mental health is truly the most important aspect of your life because everything flows from it.

I mean, just think about all the things that we've talked about today. And if you think about what emotions are, they're just energy in the body. They're just energy in the body that needs to flow. And if it gets stuck, it can create some symptoms. So emotions start in the body and they flow through the brain and from there, the brain interprets what the body is experiencing. And if you don't have a good handle on what your emotions are or what they mean, the brain is going to interpret it the only way it knows how; through a primal lens of survival.

So you have to learn how to train your brain, how to interpret your emotions so you can experience more peace and alignment with yourself. When clients understand what their emotions are actually telling them, it many times as they process through it, takes the anxiety down because they get it.

Half of, I think, the turmoil or the stress in feeling feelings is you don't understand them, and when you don't understand them, it makes you feel powerless. And when you feel powerless, you feel out of control. When you feel out of control, guess who shows up my friends? Anxiety, panic, stress, overwhelm. Do you see how this is one big loop?

It makes a lot of sense when you're able to put names and understand what's happening for you, and that's why it's so important for you to take care of yourself. And the truth is emotional energy can either drain you or empower you, and I for one would like it to empower you. And so I really encourage you today if you hear nothing else from this podcast, you can make any kind of change that you want to in your life and it is okay, there is nothing wrong with seeking out help from a professional to help get you there.

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I believe managing your mental health is one of the best things that you can do for yourself. So here's one thing that you can do to try to get yourself going. So I would first think about like, just do a little self-assessment of your current mental and emotional state. And maybe answering some of the following questions like how am I doing? How does my body feel on a daily basis? How does my mind feel? Am I constantly thinking negative thoughts? Is it difficult to change those thoughts? Do I feel at war with myself?

And for many of you, I think you're going to be able to answer those questions without writing them down. Those are probably readily available for you. And so this isn't like a mental health exam or assessment or anything like that. These are just some casual questions to ask yourself and I want to empower you that if all of that feels like a mess, or maybe you have some additional things because I mean, those were very short questions, maybe it's time to invest in a course or invest in coaching, or invest in therapy or invest in a support group.

So I want to do a little disclaimer here as a way to empower your sense of wellbeing. If you notice things come up for you when you're listening to this podcast, such as strong emotions, feeling triggered, or feeling stuck, I highly recommend you seek support from a mental health professional in your local state of residence. You have to remember, triggers and emotional responses are just information that something in your emotional world needs support. There is absolutely no shame in seeking out support from a mental health professional in your local state of residence.

And lastly, if you enjoy today's show and you don't want to worry about missing an episode, you can subscribe on Apple Podcasts or wherever you listen to your podcasts. And if you haven't already, I would so appreciate if you could leave a rating and a review to let me know what you think. And it also helps others find this podcast. You can visit my website at [nicolesymcox.com/podcastlaunch](http://nicolesymcox.com/podcastlaunch) for step-by-step instructions on how to subscribe, rate, and review.

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Alright my friends, I will see you next time.

Thanks for listening to this week's episode of Mental Health Remix. If you like what you've heard and want to learn more, go to [nicolesymcox.com](http://nicolesymcox.com).

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