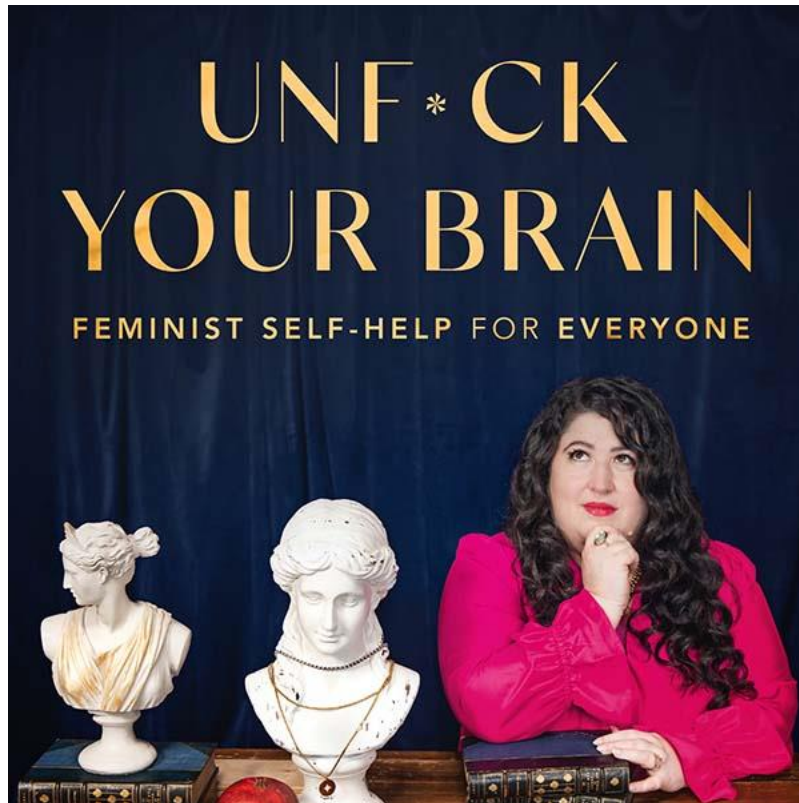


UFYB 344: Mentally Strong Women: An Interview with Amy Morin



Full Episode Transcript

With Your Host

Kara Loewentheil

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Welcome to *UnF*ck Your Brain*. I'm your host, Kara Loewentheil, Master Certified Coach and Founder of the *School of New Feminist Thought*. I'm here to help you turn down your anxiety, turn up your confidence and create a life on your own terms, one that you're truly excited to live. Let's go.

Hello, my friends. So last week, I talked to you about how it's okay if big accomplishments feel anticlimactic, and I stand by that. And it's also okay to feel joyful when exciting things happen. So I am recording this on the day that the book hit the USA Today bestseller list, number 1 for nonfiction releases, and I think number 7 for overall. But the 6 above it were fiction.

So that is super exciting. Still waiting to hear what happens with the New York Times, but I am really feeling joyful and also powerful. And I think that that's so much of what my work is about, is helping women feel powerful in their own lives. I feel like a deep satisfaction at having worked so hard to accomplish this goal. And I would feel deeply satisfied even if I hadn't accomplished this goal because I did that work, and that work stands regardless.

But it's also fun when you do hit a goal, and it's okay to take joy and pleasure in that. I think women are so socialized to downplay our own successes and, you know, god forbid that we seem excited about something we've accomplished. It's as though that is somehow saying that we think we're better than someone else, which is not an affliction that men suffer from.

So I just wanna celebrate that with all of you, and I wanna celebrate you celebrating yourself for whatever you have done that makes you feel proud and joyful. I'm actually thinking a lot about the concept of joy and how it's sometimes an uncommon emotion for those of us who are a little type A, a

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little focused on achievement, a little focused on self-betterment, and are feminists who are in touch with what's happening in the world, which is often very troubling. But joy is also a radical act. I really believe that.

And so I'm actually developing and brainstorming a whole challenge, a whole one week we can spend together working on having a joyful feminist experience. So I'm gonna be sharing more about that coming soon. Probably next week's podcast, I'll be able to talk about it more. So keep your ears open for that. I think it's gonna be a really, really powerful, but fun and pleasurable and joyful experience that we can all have together.

This week, we have an interview with Amy Moran, who is an amazing therapist and author. She has several books out, but we're gonna be talking mostly about her book, *13 Things Mentally Strong Women Don't Do*. So it feels perfect for today because I am feeling like a very mentally strong woman, not just from coaching, but having survived this book process and having produced this incredible return in my model about the book.

And I really love this conversation with Amy, and we really talk about some of the studies and social science that shows why women are socialized the way they are and then the kind of mental habits that we wanna create to be mentally strong. So it's a perfect companion piece for this week, and I can't wait for you all to listen.

Welcome, my friends, my listeners. I'm so excited for today because I am talking to Amy Morin and she is the author of *13 Things Mentally Strong Women Don't Do*. And you guys know, if you listen to the podcast, I don't tend to be super directive. But I think you're going to find that this is really more a conversation about mindset and our thoughts than it is about sort of, it's certainly not to take this supplement and say this specific phrase to yourself.

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So really start to dig into this, but Amy, can you, as we were just talking about, I like to tell women to brag about themselves. So can you tell us a little about you and your accomplishments and your book and kind of how you got here.

Amy: Happy to do so. Thanks for having me by the way. I'm a therapist by trade. And in my 20s I lived a decade I'd never want to relive in my life. I lost my mom pretty soon after I became a therapist and she died of a brain aneurysm. So, she was essentially fine one minute and gone the next. And that started me on my own journey of what does it mean to be mentally strong. It wasn't just about teaching people in my therapy office anymore.

And when I was 26, it was actually three years to the day that my mom died, my 26 year old husband died, he had a heart attack. So, I'm a widow, I don't have my mom and I'm supposed to be a therapist who helps other people deal with their problems. And I still don't really have the language to describe that period of my life other than to say I was in a dark place. Took a long time to dig myself out, and I learned a lot about mental strength from my own journey.

A few years later, I was fortunate enough to kind of get a fresh start in life. I got a new house, got a new job, got remarried and life was starting to look better but my father-in-law was diagnosed with terminal cancer. And on one of the worst days of my life I wrote myself a letter about what mentally strong people don't do. I was in a dark place and I just thought, I don't want to grieve. I can't grieve one more loss. What am I going to do about it? But clearly I didn't have a choice.

So I wrote myself this letter and thought, alright, just read this letter today and if you don't do these certain things you'll be okay. A few days later I thought, well, if this letter helps me, maybe it would help somebody else. I

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put it on the internet and I thought five people would read it, but 15 million people read it. One of those people happened to be a literary agent who said, "You should write a book." And within a month I had a book deal with Harper Collins.

But the issue at the time was there was no context for the article, so nobody knew why I wrote it. They thought, you're a therapist, you mastered these things. But the truth was, I struggled with all 13 of those things so came forward and said, "Yeah, I actually struggle with those things." But after I wrote the book, the book came out the next year. I had a lot of people saying, "What does it look like to be a mentally strong woman?" Because when people talk about mental strength, they often talk about Navy Seals, elite athletes who are predominantly men.

So, I had a lot of women saying, "Okay, but what does it look like to be a strong woman?" And the study that really clinched it for me, that made me decide, yeah, I need to write a book for women was when they asked five year old little boys and little girls, "What does it look like to be brilliant?" And all the little five year old boys pointed to a picture of a man and all the five year old girls pointed to a picture of a woman.

And then they asked them at age seven, "Point to somebody who looks brilliant." And all the kids, all the boys and all the girls all point to men. And you think, well, what happens between five and seven? We go to school. And what do we learn? We learn about all of these presidents and astronauts and scientists and all of these amazing people who historically have been men. So, I thought, yeah, you're right, we need a book for women.

And so that's how 13 Things Mentally Strong Women Don't Do came about. Because I wanted to talk about those societal pressures and the

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things that happen to us that maybe men don't experience and how that can lead to certain bad habits that could keep us stuck in life.

Kara: There's so much in there to unpack. That's such, first of all, what an intense, I mean, I know this is a podcast about how strong people handle things, but I still feel like I need to say I'm sorry that happened. That is quite, especially to have on the same day what a painful kind of experience. That five to seven gap is fascinating, that that's when that starts. To be able to pinpoint it so precisely, that makes me want to run home and make sure that my seven year old stepson has enough books about.

I mean, his mother's a feminist and so am I, so he's pretty well set. But that makes me want to go to every kindergarten in the country and just donate books about famous women. Okay, so there's so much we could talk about and so much we're going to talk about. And I will just preview, people obviously need to go buy the book if you want to learn the 13. We're not going through all 13 on the episode. That's what we call a teaser. Go buy the book. Where can people find the book, by the way? Is it just everywhere books are sold or do you have a particular?

Amy: Yeah, it's pretty much everywhere books are sold.

Kara: Some people have their website they prefer. So can you talk to us a little bit about that piece of, you learn history, it's obviously through the male perspective and the great man theory of the universe still that we hear. But you also talk in your book about some research about how teachers treat children differently based on gender. And I'd love if we could start talking about that because in the coaching work that I do, I just see how early this starts. People's formative memories around when they

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learned that there was a difference based on gender, that they should be a certain way based on gender.

I just was coaching someone earlier today who remembers being a child and getting excited and someone saying to them something she'd accomplished and someone saying, "Don't get too big for your breeches." How early that begins, so can you talk a little bit about that?

Amy: Yeah, there is so much involved in the language that we use with girls compared with boys most of the time. Words like brave, ingenious, cool and innovative are used most often with boys. When it comes to the praise that girls hear, it's usually about their appearance. You're sweet, you're beautiful, you're pretty. And we use the word perfect with girls more often too. When they color a picture, we're likely to say, "Oh, that's perfect." Which we know makes them afraid to make a mistake.

It makes them fearful that they can't be creative or they worry that if they put their ideas out there, they might not be good enough. Instead of being praised for their effort like, "Wow, that's amazing you did all of that hard work and that you tried again when you messed up." So, it's definitely the language that we use that makes an impact, but it's also the approach that we use when little girls are playing with something and maybe it topples over. We know from the research that adults are much quicker to swoop in and fix it for them.

Whereas we let boys struggle a little bit longer because we think, well, they can problem solve. They can handle this. We give them more opportunities to keep practicing to recover from their mistakes. And then we praise them for trying hard. Whereas when a girl makes a mistake or something, doesn't turn out the way she wants, we sweep in, we fix it and we say, "Here's how you do it, honey." And then when it comes to behavior too.

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That girls get praised for being quiet, for being respectful, for following the rules.

Whereas we have the boys will be boys attitude of well, they're just rambunctious. So, they're just going to get up and run around or that's okay, we don't expect them to sit still and play quietly like we do girls. So, all of those things combined certainly take a big impact on how little girls grow up thinking about how you're supposed to be in the world.

Kara: I mean the fact that we use the word 'perfect' more is so striking because so much of the coaching that I do, I feel comes down to women being perfectionists of I have to do it perfectly, I have to do it right. Also, I don't know what that is. My brain never ever tells me that I did do it perfectly or that it's right so I'm just completely paralyzed. So, it's fascinating to hear that it's actually that word is being used more often.

I mean, not that I wouldn't believe the research anyway, but I don't believe that distinction between sometimes I think about it as working hard versus being talented. Obviously, I want everybody to be praised for both things. But I coach so many high-powered women who will tell me that their success is due to working hard, other people liking them, luck, people being nice to them.

It is so rare to hear a woman say, "Yeah, I'm successful because I have the best strategy in the game, because I have brilliant ideas, because I am talented and I come up and I have the best creative vision in my company." It's always like, "I'm a really hard worker. I just work really hard." And it's obviously not all that is happening.

Amy: Right. And we know that that comes right down to the compliments. When we give women compliments of what they say or how they respond

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to a compliment. And so, I love the idea that at the beginning of your show you say brag about yourself because a lot of women don't want to do that. And we know that we downplay our success. LinkedIn, all of those things, we're much less likely to say, "Yeah, I crushed it." We're much more likely to say, "It was a team effort."

And even when somebody gets a compliment, when you watch how women respond to compliments, if I said to you, "Kara, I love your shoes." You might be more likely to be like, "I love your shoes too." Instead of just saying, "Thank you." That it's really tough to accept a compliment when we get it. We either give another compliment back really quickly or we brush it off like, "Oh, it was nothing."

Kara: [Crosstalk] or I got them on sale. I wasn't sure about them.

Amy: And we're quick to give other people credit, even more credit than they might be due. It was a whole team effort. Well, really, you're the one that did 98% of the work.

Kara: Yeah. And I find even somebody, let's say somebody like myself, who teaches and works on this professionally and talk about what I've accomplished all the time. I got some coaching from my coach maybe two or three, I mean, a while ago. I was so uncomfortable with the word 'brilliant'. She was like, "Would you tell someone you were brilliant?" I was like, "Oh my God. No." I'm like, "I can say I'm smart because lots of people can be smart and very smart." I actually have no insecurity or doubts about my intelligence shockingly.

But the idea of going to brilliant, that's like saying you're a genius. And she was like, "Yeah, what if you are a genius?" And I was like, "That's ridiculous." Obviously, I would have gotten a letter from the Institute of

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Universal Geniuses that would have told me that I was. I see this even with women who have done a lot of empowerment work, whatever it is. You can get to a certain level with it. But that last bit of being like, “What if I have a world changing idea? What if I should be a leader of men and women?” That next step is still so hard for people.

Amy: It is, and to then say, when people get into these positions and women will be like, “I think somebody made a mistake.” They overestimated, imposter syndrome comes into play and people thinking, I’m not quite sure if I have the ability to do this. And there’s so much evidence to the contrary.

Kara: Not to mention the evidence shows us much more likely people are underestimating you than overestimating you. We know from the social sciences that it’s sexism, so probably people aren’t overestimating you. So, I mean listeners to this podcast have heard me talk ad nauseam about how to change your thoughts to be more confident. But I’m curious what you sort of recommend from your perspective if somebody wants to stop downplaying their successes. Does it just start with being able to accept a compliment and just say thank you and then shush?

Amy: Yeah, there’s a few things you can do. The first one is just that. Let’s say somebody compliments me. I’m going to say thank you and that’s probably going to feel incredibly uncomfortable because it feels like I’m bragging about myself. If somebody says, “You did an amazing job” and I say, “Thank you”, it somehow feels ...

Kara: We’re just agreeing with someone else’s positive or not even agreeing, just thanking them is somehow like bragging.

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Amy: Right. And then sit with that really uncomfortable feeling, but you start there with practicing that. And then another thing would be, just recognize, okay, if it's true that I am brilliant, what would I be doing today? How do brilliant people act? How do confident people act? And you start to chip away at some of those behaviors and it might be those subtle little things like I don't speak up in a meeting as often as I could because I have a little bit of self-doubt. Or I'm not the first one to walk into a networking meeting and start introducing myself, I wait for people to come up to me.

But just making some small changes can make a huge difference in the way that your brain sees you. You might have to create a list of the top 10 reasons why you are competent and you read it over. And those days that you are filled with self-doubt, you go back to that list and remind yourself. No, actually, I am kind of a cool person. I've done some amazing things and it's not just that people overestimate you because like you said, people probably underestimate you.

But I have this proof and I have this evidence so that on the days when that self-doubt creeps in. If I have this list of now, here's 10 things that prove I'm a pretty amazing person. Sometimes it's helpful to just take that list out and read that over.

Kara: Yeah, I really love using an and statement in that scenario. Also, when you get into that space, I think you're often focusing on one particular element of your job that you feel like you screwed up that day or you don't understand. You're looking at a spreadsheet and your brain freezes and you're like, "I don't understand spreadsheets. I shouldn't be in this role." I find that they're a really useful time for an and of okay, I might be having a hard time with spreadsheets and I'm good at these other three things from my list, these other three elements of the role.

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But I also love, I think I feel I don't spend enough time on the podcast talking about this because there's just so many things to talk about. But the importance of that connection to the future version of you, who is the person you want to be. I used to do this so much and it's just now my own personal self-reflection, I feel like I used to do this.

I used to do this much more when I was first starting, I think thought work in my business because it was such a huge identity shift that I had to be actively spending a lot of time thinking, what is a person with, at that time my goal was \$100,000 business think like? What does a CEO, I've never thought of myself as a business person. What does that person think like? What is that?

Whereas now a lot of my goals feel more in line with the life I have. And so, I haven't been doing as much of that. But that's such a powerful, you will be shocked how much your brain already knows about who that person is and how they think. You have to ask it. You have to try to access it.

Amy: That's just it, our emotions come into play, and sometimes we're like, "I feel kind of scared so this must be risky, so I'm not going to do it. Or I feel kind of insecure, so therefore I must not belong and I don't want to do anything about it." So, then you just have to realize, act like the person you want to become. You start taking those steps first, even though it feels uncomfortable and it will shift the beliefs that you have about yourself.

Kara: Maybe we can just hash this out a little bit because, in my experience, both the way I teach my students and myself, the way I would describe that is you have to have the tiniest bit of belief that you can do it before you're able to do it. I definitely don't believe I can fly and I'm not going to jump out the window and try. Or I don't believe I would make the WNBA playoffs and I'm definitely not even going to try.

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So, the way I would describe that just so people listening to the podcast feel like things makes sense. I'm not saying something different than I normally say, is you have this little seed of maybe it's possible. I have to believe that it's a little bit possible.

Amy: Absolutely. To at least have that door open, because like you say and I'm 100%, mental strength, I'm 100% comfortable with accepting my limitations. I'm not going to make the NFL and if I don't make the NFL, it's not because I didn't try hard enough. It's for many other reasons. And to accept that there are certain things I'm not going to do in life and that's okay. But the things I'm going to put some effort into, I just had to be open to the fact that maybe there's a possibility. If I wanted to become a dentist, could I do it? Maybe. But I wouldn't know until I tried.

So obviously yes, because when people come in and they say to me, "That's not going to work", whether we have a new strategy or it's hey, try this and they say, "That's not going to work." I'm like, "You're right. As long as you are convinced something is not going to work, I guarantee it is not going to work." If you're at least open to the idea that it might work then we can work on that.

Kara: And what you're saying is so important in the sense that people on the podcast might be used to hearing it a little bit differently. But it's really, the way I would describe what you're talking about is you can't be like, "Okay, I'm going to go to therapy or coaching and get perfect absolute confidence. So that when I go forth and do the thing, I don't have to have any uncomfortable emotion or experience any failure." That's just the perfectionism again.

You have to have a little bit of belief, a little bit of openness enough to take that first action that as you're describing, you get the positive feedback. Not

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necessarily positive, it all works out, but you can do it, you survive. Maybe you have some success. You're able to deal with challenges. And then you get to keep building from there. I definitely see this in coaching all the time of people wanting to be like, "Okay, I'm going to get everything mentally and emotionally figured out so that I can just take the action without ever feeling scared." And I'm like, "That's not a thing we're doing."

Amy: Yes. And I see a lot of people that are like, "Well, everybody else is completely confident and I'm not so therefore I don't belong, so I shouldn't try this new thing or I shouldn't put myself out there." Or they think it's intuition too. I had this nagging feeling I just shouldn't do this. So, it's my intuition saying not to. And then they don't do the thing but really it's just a little bit of fear, it's a little bit of anxiety about it. And I guarantee you, the other people aren't completely confident either, they just look it on the outside.

Kara: Yes, 100%, I mean we're like, "Anything I felt in my body, now that's my intuition so I'm going to just listen to that." Totally. So, one of the things you talk about is how we can stop what I call compare and despair, which I feel is such a huge way of how women are socialized. I mean, I remember before I did my body image work, I mean, if I was in any space of women I was cataloging what size is everybody and where am I in the different size of people's bodies?

And I coach women on that. Sometimes they'll be like, "I have to admit this terrible, shameful thing." And I'm like, "We're all doing that. We've been taught to do that. It's not shameful. It's completely normal. Society has taught women to constantly look at their value based on how are you achieving these kind of social status based outcomes and look at all the women around just who's engaged, who's married, who has kids, who, whatever."

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And I know you talk about the idea that men are more likely to look at something as inspiration, even if it's delusional. I could look like the testosterone injected model on the cover of whatever it is, *Men's Health*. Whereas women are much more likely to be like, "I can never." Use against themselves. Can you talk about that, where you think that comes from and how you recommend people work on it?

Amy: The research is right there that says that. When no woman looks at the cover of any women's fitness magazine and says, "I could look like that next month if I wanted to." Instead, we're like, "Oh gosh, look how amazing she is." And we assume she's got an amazing life and everything about it. But men really do that. They look at the cover of a fitness magazine and see this idyllic looking man and the first thing they think is, I could totally be like that, just takes a little bit of effort, if I wanted to, I could do it.

Kara: Right, If I felt like going to the gym [crosstalk].

Amy: And so, I think a lot of that just comes from, again, it goes back to childhood where we feel like we're pitted against each other of who's more valuable based on who got the best invite to the dance or who has the best clothes and the grades and the whole nine yards. And because of that and then social media, the inventions of social media certainly has not helped in that space where people feel like they need to brag about the best things in their life. And we look at it and think, wow, this person's life is better.

And it's just so important to open that idea up into, it's not that somebody's better or worse than you, but the research will show that comparing yourself like that drags you down. It's really bad for your mental health. On the flip side, if you just looked at somebody else and thought, they have knowledge or skills that I could benefit from learning, I could learn

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something from this person. It's not that they're better than me or below me on the hierarchy, they're just different.

And when you create your own definition of success, well then I'm not in competition with this other person about who makes more money, who has more beauty, who's got the best degrees, whatever it is. Maybe my goal in life is to do x, y and z and yours is something completely different, that's okay. If my values are about living in a beautiful house, having a huge family, great. And if yours are about making money and living the single life and traveling the world, that's great but we're not in competition.

And so that's what the research clearly shows, and I believe it wholeheartedly. If we just looked at other people and thought, okay, maybe they have something I could benefit from learning from them. And if I wanted to, I could. Granted, sometimes we don't want to put in all of the effort or energy, if somebody's a supermodel, gee, do I want to go through all of that stuff to become a supermodel? Maybe not. Maybe I would just want to enjoy some of the perks they get in life.

But just knowing that we have that tendency and being aware of it when you're scrolling through social media, that we start to go to those places of, this person has more followers than I do. How come? What makes them better than me? That's not even true that they're better than you.

Kara: Yeah. And it's also, I think, I mean the reason that we get so despondent, I think is that we think if I had that, I call this the exit ramp off the human experience. You think, if I just looked like that, I would always be happy, if I just looked like that I'd never feel bad about my body. If I just made \$1 million a year, I'd never worry about money or feel bad about my spending, if I just whatever. I think men are more socialized to believe that

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their sort of happiness or whatever you want to call it, life satisfaction is going to come from their actions.

And women are socialized to believe that it's going to come from approval from other people and hitting these sort of external things. And so, whenever you're trapped in that compare and despair, I think asking yourself just, wait, why do I want this? What is the emotion I'm trying to get by imagining I have this? It can be such an invitation to learn something about what's going on in yourself. But I also think what you're saying is so true that women will tend to see, I think women are socialized with the scarcity also of only so many women can succeed.

There's a pecking order and only so many people can be at the top. And so, if you see another woman there, you're like, "Well, that's the coach who can do it in body image and there's nothing left for me." As opposed to what you're describing is men being socialized to be like, "Oh, cool, if they can do it, I can do it." [Crosstalk].

Amy: Right. And that whole idea of, there's only so many seats at the table. And if I don't climb the ladder, if I'm not doing all the right things then I'm not going to be one of the few who gets that seat. I still think that creates that mentality where we end up feeling like we're pushing and shoving our way and that you have to grasp every straw that you can to finally feel good enough. And I've never had a woman come into my therapy office and say, "You know, I actually feel really good enough about myself." It never happens.

Kara: [Crosstalk] something else, I feel great about me.

Amy: Right. It's always, and even when we chip away at the layers or somebody says, "Gosh, I'm really struggling with this area of my life." When

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we really peel it back, it's often just because somebody will say, "Yeah, I just don't feel like I'm good enough." And it either manifests as I've been a perfectionist trying to achieve so many things in life because I thought then I would feel good enough or somebody might say, "I figured no matter how much I tried, I wouldn't be good enough so I kind of gave up over the years and I feel I'm not really living up to my potential."

Kara: Right. It's both sides of the same coin. So, let's talk a little bit about something else, kind of the last, well, two last big things I want to touch on that you talk about which is the way that women are socialized to play by the rules. Because one of the things I often feel like I end up coaching on and I've had to coach myself on is because women are socialized so heavily to care what other people think about us that our value is dependent on what other people think.

People will want to go their own way, opt out, do their own thing, but they just want to make sure everybody's going to approve of that the whole time. So, I always talk about how I was running a think tank at Columbia Law School and I left that to become a life coach. And at the time, I was sort of upset if other people thought that that was a bad idea. And in retrospect, I'm like, "Well, obviously that seemed like a bad idea." Why would I expect, first of all, other law professors who like their field that they're doing, which I'm rejecting, to my parents who have supported me and put me through school.

Why would I expect any of those people to be like, "This seems like a great idea, go for it." But I see that coming up all the time, even women who want to be trendsetters, do something different, strike out on their own way. There's still this, but if anybody else thinks that's a bad idea, then it might be wrong and I shouldn't do it.

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Amy: You're so right with that, that it happens all the time, that we're still looking for some kind of approval. And I can see it my own life too, where I'm like, "Yeah, I'm going to go do this thing." But I'm kind of looking over my shoulder, this is okay, right?

Kara: Even if they just don't object, it's okay if I do something totally different than your values and priorities, you're onboard, right?

Amy: Right. And that I think does boil back down to those people pleasing tendencies. And it's natural to want to be liked. None of us want to be ostracized or want to be the one person who's out there on an island and you don't have any social support. Social support is huge. But we want to know that. We're scared to take the leap because what if nobody follows? What if everybody does look at you like you have three heads and then you're isolated? And it's tough to know.

But so many amazing things in life have happened because there was a woman who dared to break the rules at one point or another and proved, actually, we can do these things or we can do things differently. Or we don't have to do all of these things that were designed specifically for men, come on, let's think about it. And then years later, it seems obvious, but yet at the time, people are raising an eyebrow.

In the book I talk about the story of Kathrine Switzer, who ran a marathon. It was in the 1960s. We didn't even think women could finish a marathon. And so, she was the first one to sign up and ran the Boston Marathon and then a light bulb went off. Yeah, women can run a marathon. But until one person broke the rules and said, "I'm going to show you, I'm not going to tell you, I can do it. I'm just going to do it." It really took that to create change.

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Kara: It's so wild that that recently people didn't think a woman could run a marathon, not long ago, so wild. So, will you tell us, what's your favorite or your favorite today of the 13 habits? Just pick one and share one with us.

Amy: I would say maybe just that the women don't downplay their success. I think that one is one of the biggest ones, that if we could just all brag about ourselves and feel confident in saying, "This is actually what I did and it's something kind of cool." I think we could all then have the confidence to cheer each other on and feel comfortable saying, "Okay, maybe I can go out there and create some positive change."

Kara: Yeah, I love that. Okay, everybody's homework is to go look in the mirror and talk about your accomplishments. Just try it just for yourself. Just try talking to yourself in your own house, nobody else has to know about what a badass you are. And just, see how that feels. So good.

Amy: I love it, and it's going to feel awkward and uncomfortable, but do it anyway.

Kara: Yes, exactly. It never feels good at first to change your thinking. That's not really true. Sometimes feels a little bit of relief when you change a negative thought. But these kinds of things we're talking about, developing confidence, developing empowerment. It's such a process and you never fully arrive. I still catch myself, I now run a business. I have employees and I still catch myself being like, "Should I say that to this contract? I don't want to be mean."

I mean, I think there's also the flip side of the perfectionism and the kind of competence is, I think women often struggle. I see this with the very competent women. I see this in myself, struggle to hold other people accountable because it feels like, oh, well, yeah, they're not doing as well

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as I would, but it would be unfair to hold other people to this standard so I'll just do everything myself. And that kind of over, what's the word? What is the word for that? It's over, who knows what that word is?

Amy: I know what you mean.

Kara: Yeah. It's like a boundary list in this direction of overcompensating for other people, or over-enabling, sort of doing everything themselves. What do you think that's about? Why do women sometimes, I mean, some women think they can't do anything and then some women think they can do everything and they shouldn't even expect anyone else to do anything, and they should just do it all?

Amy: I think sometimes that goes back to what we saw our moms do. How many of us had a mom who cooked, cleaned, did everything around the house, never complained? And that was kind of the martyr idea of, I'll get it, I'll get it. And you don't complain. And we've been raised to be polite. So, it wouldn't be polite to say to somebody, "I don't think you're doing your job or I think you're not pulling your weight." And people pleasing, we want other people to be happy so we think alright.

But I only have to do 10% more but it gives you a huge break in life because maybe that would take you this much time and it only takes me five minutes, I'll do that for you. And we end up doing a lot of that. And I think that goes to maybe part of our self-worth comes from thinking that if we're well liked, we don't complain and other people really respect us. And we get praised for it too, you're Wonder Woman. You're doing all these super mom things or you're the superwoman who can balance so many amazing things.

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And I think then our self-worth sometimes is, yeah, I can do everything. And we don't dare ask for help or we think that by not doing everything that somehow that would be showing weakness or proving that we aren't good enough.

Kara: Yeah, I think it's self-doubt too. It's sort of like, well, maybe my expectations, women are so often told that they have unreasonably high expectations or they're too picky. Whereas actually, most women's expectations are on the floor and should be higher but I think we hear that a lot. So, there's just so much internalized self-doubt of our own discernment or judgment. So, I think if I look at my thoughts around this, it's definitely, okay, well, maybe my expectations are unreasonable. Maybe I just want too much.

I had to do that work in my dating life and now maybe I need to do that in my business life also.

Amy: Right, yeah, absolutely, I think so. And it's such an important practice for all of us to make sure that we're doing sometimes, too.

Kara: Yeah, so good. Alright, tell people where they can find you please.

Amy: So, my website is [amymorinlcsw](http://amymorinlcsw.com) as in licensedclinicalsocialworker.com. I have my own podcast called *Mentally Stronger with Therapist Amy Morin*. And you can find info about the show and info about my books and my TEDx talk on my website.

Kara: Awesome. And we'll put that stuff all in our show notes as well too. Thanks for coming on.

Amy: Thank you so much for having me. This has been fun.

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