

PODCAST TRANSCRIPT



EPISODE 19

Majoring in the Minor Activities

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HAPPY EXECUTIVE WOMAN

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### **Majoring in the Minor Activities**

Hey there beautiful. If any of the opening statements sounded familiar to you, you're not alone. I too have majored in the minors for the majority of my life as a recovering people pleaser, overachiever, and a woman who has decided to stop trying to do and be everything for everybody. It's a challenge to stop myself from taking on more just because I can. I have prided myself for years on the ability to juggle 12 spinning plates, while I'm bouncing a ball on my nose. Well, not exactly. But my fellow overachievers will understand precisely what I meant by that statement.

**Let's dive into a few examples of what majoring in the minors may look like in different areas of your life, followed by how you can shift direction.**

At the office as an employee, you take on more so that you can be seen by those in a position to help advance your career. You want to be known as the person that gets things done, and so you keep on doing more things only to see other people getting promoted for doing less. And you have no idea why this keeps happening to you.

At home, you have specific things you want to get done on any day, but other small things get in the way. For example, you have planned to organize your home office, you head to the kitchen to place that morning's coffee mug in the sink, and you notice something that needs to be done in the kitchen. Or you see that the mail has come in and you stop to take a look at it. Something else catches your attention, and then you head off in a different direction. The phone rings, and you decide to start a lot of laundry while you're on the phone to be productive, of course, and you look up and three hours have passed and there is no more energy to organize your office. Or perhaps you have completed the laundry and head to your children's rooms to put their laundry away. While in their room, you notice a few things that are out of order, and after you put the clothes away, you start tidying up their things, fixing this and removing that. You're now feeling rather accomplished and feel that your kids will appreciate what you've done. When they get home from school, they start asking you questions about their room. They seem annoyed that you moved their things, and now you're left feeling unappreciated and feeling as though you've raised ungrateful children.

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In love, you do little things for your significant other that go unnoticed. You do something for them that you think they would love based on previous conversations that you've had. Still, for the life of you, you can't understand why they are not singing your praises to their friends or your family since it took you all afternoon and evening to do it, and you put off doing something for yourself in the process. You then feel unappreciated and possibly a whole host of other feelings based on the emotional state of your relationship.

Since this podcast is about the Happy Executive Woman, I'm going to give a little bit more detailed example for the business in your role as a leader. So in business as a leader, you hire the right people because of their talents, and abilities. You want the best of the best, yet you have no clear direction as to what they should focus on first, clear expectations, and stifle their progress by constantly changing the definition of 'done'. You want to allow your people to do their best work, but your need to micromanage their task, breeds resentment, frustration and does nothing to move your team's objectives forward. You constantly change direction with the wind because you are still a slave to the 'I want everyone to like me' syndrome, versus being known as a manager that focuses on what's most important and empowers her team.

I could go on and on. Instead, I'd like to provide you with a few ways to grow through or overcome wasting time, feelings and talent on the minor activities and help you identify ways to focus on the things that matter most. Let's go back to each example to shift it from majoring in the minors to focusing on what matters most in each situation.

At the office as an employee, it's okay to take on additional projects, but not to the detriment of your primary role to the organization. The last thing you want to do is show up at your review and realize that the job you are rated on doesn't score as high because your attention was diverted to majoring in the minor activities versus those that matter most in your primary role.

Are you concerned about how to turn down minor activities without looking like you're not a team player or you're being insubordinate? Well, there are several books out there to assist in the power of a graceful No, but here are a few examples to get you started:

- The awkward pause, wait three seconds before responding.

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- The soft 'No', or the 'No, But'. So if you can't do something right then or if you can't do that particular thing, but you want to offer up something else, you can do the soft 'no' or the 'no, but'.
- 'Let me check my calendar and get back to you.'
- You could say yes, but then ask 'What should I de-prioritize?'
- You could say something like 'given my other commitments, I wouldn't be able to do a job I was proud of if I took this on', or something like, 'I'm concerned that the level of time needed to do this project in the right way will take away from my primary role and responsibilities. How can we ensure that this does not happen?'

So here's the way to shift directions at home. Recognize that just because we would have done things differently doesn't make the way others do them wrong. If you want to demotivate your family from doing things on their own, criticize them for not doing things and the way you do. Will it hurt you to let the children have their own space and do things a certain way in their own rooms? It doesn't mean that you shouldn't have standards, house rules and the like will work together with your family to determine what is good enough. If you tend to be a perfectionist, or have to have things in a specific order, maybe it's time you stepped back and allowed the personality, ways, and environments to be according to what makes them happy, versus what you would like to see.

In love, do you know your significant other's love language? Knowing their love language will ensure that they recognize your acts of love for what they are meant to be. For example, suppose your significant other knows that you like flowers and continuously buys you flowers when in your mind, you could really use help with the housework or the kids. And in that case, eventually you will start responding positively to the flowers. By learning each other's love languages you can avoid that 'I thought this would be a good idea' moment and speak in a love language that your partner understands and appreciates. If you are not familiar with them, be sure to check the show notes where I will share the link to Gary Chapman's website so that you can learn more.

In business as a leader, the best managers I've ever had allowed me to bring my entrepreneurial spirit to work as a dual-preneur. I see things from both the employee side and the manager side. Building a business while working full time in corporate has allowed me to

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reduce my stress level and business administrative workload by correctly hiring the first time or providing clear direction for my team to follow.

I think I've talked about this in a previous episode, but earlier this year, I hired an independent contractor to serve as my executive personal assistant under a three month contract with the option to extend, as well as a web designer. Our goals were to organize the home office, launch a new website, and launch this podcast. In the middle of that, we then had to shift gears to prepare to move my mom into an assisted living facility. We had a list of major and minor activities that needed to be done, but being clear on the end goal, my team could do what needed to be done without me having to look over their shoulders. Don't get me wrong, I had my preferences, and I made many changes to the website and podcast set up. And of course, a few hiccups along the way with mom's move, but our major projects were completed within the 90 days. We focused on what mattered most and kept a list of the minor things to get to when time permitted.

As a leader, is your team clear on what your main activities and objectives are? Do you set off in one direction and then change course midstream, leaving your team frustrated and confused? Do you consider yourself agile, yet in reality, you're just unclear on what to focus on first based on what matters most? Could you or your team benefit from you backing off and letting them finish one project before moving on to the next without constant shifts in the finished product? As a leader, have you set up your team so that you can step back and focus on the strategic vision of your company or the area at the office that you are in charge of? Can you trust your team to come to you if and when they have questions and to challenge you when you switch lanes in the middle of the project highway?

If not, do what you need to do to make this shift in your leadership style happen.

Specific industries will call for certain types of management styles or recognize that. However, being slow to hire and quick to fire, empowering your team to do and be their best, bringing their best creative or entrepreneurial selves to work every day never hurt anyone. If anything, you as the leader will shine more as your team is more invested in getting it right versus checking the boxes you've put them in.

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### **Majoring in the Minor Activities**

**Are you curious about what you can do to develop as an intuitive manager and empower your team while identifying your blind spots as a leader?** I'd be so happy to support you with this. Bridging the self awareness and communication gap in work, home, and love relationships is my passion. So head on over to [AnitaCharlot.com/Contact](http://AnitaCharlot.com/Contact) and let me know how it can help you or your team stop majoring in the minors.

**See you in the next episode.**