

85. Stop “SHOULDING” all over yourself

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Welcome to the Empowered brain, the only podcast using science, psychology and coaching to help you rewire your brain and create a life you love with your host, Dr. Vanessa Calderon, a Harvard grad physician, master coach, and mother of two.

Hello, my friends, welcome back to the podcast. Okay, so I want to talk to all of you today and introduce this concept of shutting all over ourselves and how to stop doing that. So I had this, one of my students the other day, who is this, like brilliant woman, she's leading this big organization, and she's a huge advocate of women in the workplace and moms in the workplace. So she's hired this incredible staff of women and women of color and creates policies to make sure that she's supportive when they want to take leave, or that they can be moms. All amazing, right?

So, a celebration to her, that's awesome. And she came to one of our coaching calls and was upset and she was like, What are you upset about? And she said I'm upset because I feel really bad that this person has to take time off of work. And I'm not. And I was upset by the fact that I felt that I feel mad about that. I was like, wait, what. And she said, Because I'm, you know, the leader, they have the entire organization, when someone takes time off, I have to think about staffing and all of these other things. And it creates stress for me. And I was upset with myself. And I felt like I shouldn't be thinking about that when this person needed to take time off. That instead, I should just be, you know, in support of them, and I should just be present for them. And I shouldn't be thinking about all this other stuff. And I was like, holy smokes, you just said should like a million different times in this one sentence. And I was just so surprised by that. Because what is shutting, shutting is us essentially judging ourselves judging our choices, judging our circumstances, judging the way we're thinking, instead of allowing that to exist. And guess what, she's not alone. We all do it. Think about you right?

Now, when was the last time you use the sentence, I should dot fill in the blank, I still catch myself doing it. I used to do it all the time. By the way, before I was starting to manage my mind. I used to shoot all over myself all the time. I should get up earlier, I should exercise more. I should work harder, I should be excelling more, I should be saving more, I should be more present for my kids, I should be volunteering in their school more. All these Bs should be all the time. And they sound benign. Like man, no big deal. Maybe it's helping me be motivated. But that is at all not the case. So I'm going to share with you where that comes from and how to stop doing that, my friends.

Okay, so what is shooting? Shooting is literally a noun, okay? It's the cognitive distortion, of making statements of what should be true, as opposed to reality, instead of accepting what is instead of accepting reality. We're making all these statements about what should be true instead. And here's the thing we all have a common playlist of should running through our brains. What is it for you because we all have them? Here are some common ones. I should be more grateful to be alive. I should be more forgiving. I shouldn't be more compassionate. I should meditate more. I should exercise more. I

shouldn't eat so much. I should have straighter hair. I should be thinner. I should be lighter-skinned. I should take more trips. I should spend more time with my kids. I should work less. I should have more sex. I should exercise more. I should drink more water. I should be happier. There's any of that sound familiar? What are your common shoulds? Think about him for yourself come up with your own list or what are the things that your brain offers you all the time because my brain used to offer me so much of this BS all the time.

And before I had thought about work, I used to think that this was all true. And what I do now though because I am able to manage my mind. I can catch my brain when it's offering me these shoulds and I can shift. The shirts are so funny. The shoulds are like this like police. It's like this should police in our thinking brain. Again, we have this like core self of who we are. It's our beautiful intuition. It's our inner divine. It's our inner sage. That's your core self and then you have your thinking self or your thinking brain. And that should police lives in your thinking brain. And what it does is it tilts that brain even more negatively.

So, our brains are already tilted towards negativity. That's how we stave we've stayed alive for centuries and centuries, right, that has been passed down from our cave peoples from our ancestors that were the cave people. Thank you for keeping us alive, negative brain. But the way we live now, we don't need our brain to always tilts toward negativity the way it does. But they should police show up all of the time. And essentially, it's telling us all of these things that we should be doing. And at the bottom line, the bottom thing is trying to tell us behind all of that is that what we're doing and who we are isn't enough that what we're doing and who we are isn't enough to should police thinks it needs to show up every day, multiple times a day throughout our entire day. And remind us that we're not enough. Well, hello, should please No, thank you, you are not necessary in my brain or in any of your brains that are listening right now.

So one of the main reasons that our brains does this, one of the reasons why our brain offer us all of these shoulds is out of fear. One of the biggest fears is that if we stop taking action, that if we stop shooting all over ourselves, we will somehow turn into some giant lazy sloth. Oh, man, I remember that I used to have this huge fear of being lazy. I was so attached to external validation and achievement, that I had this huge fear that if I were to slow down, or that if I stopped listening to my judgmental shooting brain, all of a sudden, I would get lazy, and holy shit, like, whom would I be if I was lazy? Oh, my God, I had so many judgments about that. And I remember once I got coached by this amazing coach, and she said, you're afraid to get lazy? I was like, yeah. And then she called me out. She said, Hold on, you're a physician. You have a side business. You're a physician leader, you do all these things, and you're afraid to get lazy. And I was like, yeah, like, I'm literally afraid, I'm afraid. And she said,

Okay. What does that even mean? What does it even mean to be lazy? That question, boy, did that unlock a bunch of stuff in my brain? Because I knew what it meant. And I knew that that was not that that wasn't a fear that I had to hold on to, because I was never going to be that person. That's not ingrained in my DNA. And the truth is this, for most of you, that's not ingrained in your DNA either. So the fear that you're going to become a lazy sloth is totally unfounded. And if you need rest, sometimes our bodies need rest. And that's okay. You shouldn't think that just because you're going to get rest,

you're now going to become a lazy slob. That is not at all the case. We think that we need should to motivate us, you know, we think that we need a should all over ourselves, because that's how we get motivated.

I had another one of my students tell me this if she stopped shooting at herself, and if she stopped judging herself, she would stop exercising, she'd gained all of this weight, and that was her biggest fear. And again, I'm holding space right now as they think about that story. Because how many of us have thought that how many of you had thought that if you stopped being mean to ourselves, or you stop judging yourself, you'd all of a sudden slow down or that your worst fears would become truth? Whatever that fear was, for me, one of my biggest fears was being lazy. But shutting and guilt, all of that does when you have those thoughts, those thoughts, I should do this, or I should be this what is it? Cause what feeling does it cause in your body? Think about that for yourself right now. It's probably judgment, or it's probably guilt or something along those lines.

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And that thought-feeling combination of shooting and guilt or judgment. That thought feeling combination is a paralyzing combination, and it doesn't lead you to take the action that you want to take. When you do eventually shift into action. It's not because you had some sort of shooting thought. It's because you shifted your brain into a thought that caused a propelling emotion that caused a propelling feeling. So instead of thinking, you know, I should exercise more, you're probably thinking, Oh, it's time for me to go for a run, or I can't wait to get out there. I can't wait to get out there probably causes excitement. It's time for me to go for a run probably causes a feeling of commitment or determination and those thought-feeling combinations.

That's what causes you to go into action. That That's what causes you to create the results you want to create in your life. Not the should guilt, not that paralyzing thought, feeling combination that's just causing you to sit in more judgment. That's just causing you to really sit and waste time judging yourself and looking for all the other proof of how you're not enough. Well, let me tell you right now, I want to flip on that light switch in your brain that you are right now hold and perfect, and you are enough. I did a whole other episode on you believing this a new believing that you are whole and perfect and enough.

So if you haven't listened to that episode, yet, I want to recommend that you go back and listen to it. It's episode number 79, about how you create joyful activities in your life. So go back to that episode. So let's come back to this one, though. So I've already debunked that myth that we need the judgment or the shooting to be more productive. That's absolutely not true. All of those things are all optional. And when you think them, it causes feelings in your body, that doesn't lead you to take the actions that you want to take. Instead, you eventually end up shifting into a thought, that is not a judgmental guilt inducing thought, you end up shifting into a thought that causes a feeling that propels you into the action that you want to take, whether that's commitment, determination, motivation, excitement. And that's what creates intentional results in our life.

That's where we want to be coming from. So what is shooting do so one shooting causes judgment, it causes us to sit in guilt. And the second thing it does, and this is a big one, it causes us to think that if we were left to our own devices, we couldn't be trusted. And this is huge one, this is huge. Because

how many of you out there, especially if you're socialized as a woman, have been taught to never trust yourself, to always outsource your decisions to ask everybody else before you make a choice to always question everything you're doing to make sure you have the latest and you know, best product for makeup, for hair for all of these things because who you are, and what you think isn't enough that you cannot be trusted. And my friends, when we add shooting all over ourselves all of the time. It just strengthens that thought error. It strengthens that limiting belief that who we are and what we think can't be trusted.

And because so much of what we do is driven by shoulds. It's hard for us to distinguish what it is that we actually want. It's hard for us to distinguish what it is that we actually want. And we become disconnected from our actual desires. We become disconnected from our actual desires. And again, this is a process and I want to share my journey with you. Because many years ago before I had this work, and before I was coached on this stuff, I used to shoot all over myself, like I shared earlier. And I remember when that light bulb went off for me, and I was like, whoa, hold on a second, I am disconnected from my actual desires. I am doing things because I think I should the way I dress is the way I think I should dress, what I choose to do for my activities, what I choose to do for my jobs and my careers. It's what I think I should do.

What if I was doing what I wanted instead. And I remember having this light bulb moment with my coach at the time and thinking, oh my gosh, do I even know me? Do I even know myself? And that was one of the most beautiful moments in my life that set off this great chain of events that led me to create the strongest and best relationship with the most important person in my life. Which is me, which she said to me was, yeah, yeah, like you're not alone. We've all gone through this, I went through it. And now that you know that you want to get to know yourself and get to know your desires. Just be curious, be curious. And what I started to actively do is I started to date myself. Like literally I was in relationship with myself, being like if this is if I wanted to do that just because I wanted to what would I wear? What would I eat? But what I choose to do, when would I choose to take breaks? What jobs would I choose for myself. And that has been one of the most beautiful relationships and paths that I've been on, which is getting to know me more and getting to show up as me more because the more me I can be, the more I get to let everybody else know me for me and love me for the real me. And that has been such a powerful experience. And that's what I want for all of you.

I want for all of you to stop Shooting on yourself. And instead and know your wants, know your desires. Because when you come from your true desires, you're coming from your core self, and you're letting other people know and get to know and get to love the real you. And that's all people want anyway. Okay, so how do we do this? Let me walk you through how we do this. Number one, I want you to start noticing how many times your brain is offering you the phrase, I should dot, dot dot throughout the day, how many times is your brain offering you the shirts, if you're totally disconnected with who you have been, it's probably pretty often, it still offers them for me, and I've been doing this work forever. So I want you to just be in tune.

And notice when your brain is offering me that. And when your brain offers that, I want you to create separation from your core self and your thinking brain by just stating, I noticed that I'm thinking I should blah, blah, blah, I noticed that my brain is offering me blah, blah, blah, and insert that thought, I noticed

that I'm thinking I should be and then insert the thought. And I go through why it's important to create that separation in Episode 82. And I walk you through that entire exercise. So if you haven't listened to it, go back to Episode 82. And take a listen. Okay, so first, you're going to notice how often your brain is offering you the shoulds.

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Number two, you're going to create separation, from your core self, to your thinking himself, by stating, I noticed that I'm thinking, and then you insert that statement. And then three, I want you to ask yourself, if I didn't have to do anything, if I didn't have to do anything, what I still want to do this? And why would I still want to do this? And why? And if your answer is yes. And when you answer the why you like your reasons, then go for it, by all means go for it. That means you are coming from a true place of desire. And that is just so beautiful. But if your answer is no, then I want you to ask yourself, what is my brain afraid of? What is my thinking brain? Think is going to happen if I don't do this? And it's really important to insert what is my brain afraid of? Or what is my thinking brain afraid of? What does my brain think is going to happen if I don't, because I want you to create separation from your core self to your thinking self.

Because there's there's those two sorts of things that are always happening in your brain, your core self and your thinking self and your thinking self. That's where your negativity bias comes from. So you want to ask yourself, What am I afraid of? What is my thinking brain afraid of? Because you'll see that sometimes those fears are totally unfounded. Like for me again, I was afraid of being lazy. So what is your thinking brain afraid of? Try that for yourself. Because this is the thing, I want you to imagine this beautiful puzzle piece. It's this beautiful puzzle place with with these beautiful yellows and golds all around it. And at the very center of the puzzle piece is you. It's this beautiful core you at the very center.

And emanating from that center is just your energy, your yellows, and your gold and your reds. Whatever color your energy puts out. That's the beautiful puzzle. That's your life. But for most of us, when you look down, you don't see that side of the puzzle. You're looking at the other side, what's the other side it's that blank cardboard, you know, those cardboard pieces, those puzzle pieces. When we're looking at our life, we're living our life, when we are living it based on the shirts based on these limiting beliefs based on all of these things that's been said to us. We are living our life like this cardboard piece of puzzle. And what we do every day when we do this thought work is we're undoing all those pieces of the puzzle that don't serve us. And we're turning it over and recreating that puzzle. With us in the middle. we're recreating that puzzle with the beautiful tapestry that we actually are that we want to see with us in the center.

That's why this work is so important and why it's so important for you to question your brain when it's offering you these shirts with these judgmental thoughts. Okay, my friends, I hope this exercise helps you start to reconnect with yourself and your true desires in life. Because the more you that you can be, the better this world will be. I'm gonna leave you there, my friends, and I want to remind you that if you want help doing all of this work, then come and find me I want to help you. I have the Life and Leadership accelerator which is a coaching and professional development program where I meet with

you weekly and we get to work getting the stuff done and changing your life. Go check out Vanessa Calderon [md.com](https://www.vanessacalderon.com) backslash join to learn more about the leadership accelerator. Alright my friends go be the best you that you can be

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Hey, sweet friends, if you love what you're learning, then you've got to join us in the journey. It's my all inclusive program and the best community out there giving you the education you never knew you needed to help you create a life you love. Join us at [Vanessa Calderon md.com](https://www.vanessacalderon.com) forward slash join. I'll see you there.