



The 10 Principles of Joyful Movement **#4: Challenge the Gym Police**

The
joyful
Movement
Show



Episode 6

[00:00:00] **Kim:** hello, friends and welcome back. Today we're talking about the fourth principle of joyful movement, challenging the gym police. Hint: they're not real people.

[00:00:10] So we'll get into this week's topic in just a sec, but first I wanna take a minute to read a review that was left on iTunes. Give a shout out to one of our fans. So this review is from Kristy and what she says is so empowering.

[00:00:26] "Striving for the perfect body because of what others might think of you, and because diet culture dictates it, just like you say, it does not equal happiness and needs to change. Your journey and words truly relate, accepting our bodies and moving for joy is so important. With your help and reminders, I'm working past restrictive yo-yo dieting and found joy in movement and have a more positive view on my body and what it allows me to. so thankful to hear your words in this podcast and remind us that we are healthier when we are happy. No diet needed."

[00:00:58] So Kristy, thank you so much for leaving that review. It really means a lot to me to hear that my podcast is impacting others. And also your reviews help this show gets seen by women who need to hear this message. So I really, really do appreciate when you leave a review, it really helps other people. And just so you know, too, I have a little contest going on a review contest. So when you leave a review, if you screenshot that and send it to me on my Instagram DMS or on Facebook, I will enter you to win a scholarship to my 16 week coaching program, right body for me. So. That's pretty cool.

[00:01:36] All right. So raise your hand, maybe just in your mind, if there's people around, if you've ever been told that to get results with fitness, you've gotta work out five days a week for an hour, each day at moderate to vigorous intensity. You've gotta spend about half that time lifting weights and the other half doing cardio.

[00:01:55] Oh. And you've gotta make sure that you split your weights up so that you're doing upper body one day and legs the next. You've gotta progressively add to your workout each week. So you should also change your routine and keep your body guessing. Oh, and you can't just do steady state cardio. You need to do hiit cardio a couple of times a week and you should probably wear a heart rate monitor. Oh. And don't forget to stretch. And burpees. Burpees are king.

[00:02:20] You know, who's saying all of this, the gym police, the gym police are these loud obnoxious voices in our head that scream at us, all the fitness rules of how we should be exercising if we wanna do it right. And I don't know if you've ever found yourself being yelled at, by the gym police. But if you have, where did listening to them get you? I'm gonna guess stuck.

[00:02:47] The gym police are awesome at highlighting everything that you're doing wrong and they make you feel terrible about yourself, which keeps you from doing anything. I mean, if you can't get it right, then why bother- am I right. So let's expose the gym police, these nasty voices in your head for what they really are.

[00:03:08] **Kim (2):** Gym police are just thoughts that aren't even really true. These inaccurate thoughts are usually used to reinforce negative thinking or emotions, telling ourselves things that sound rational and accurate, but really only serve to keep us feeling bad about ourselves. There's about 10 or 15 different types of cognitive distortions out there, depending on the source you look at, but the gym police usually show up in the form of two distinct types: comparing and "should-ing".

[00:03:41] Have you ever compared yourself to others at some point along the way, maybe feeling jealous of the accomplishments of a friend, wishing you had someone else's body envious of how easily everything seems to come to the certain person? Yeah. That's the gym police playing bad cop by using comparison against you. You'll never be able to do what Lisa can do, so why bother. well, Marsha's just a natural athlete, she doesn't even have to work at it. And Jane has always been fit, you'll never be like her. Then the gym police love to add insult injury by reminding you of everything you should be doing, you

already feel like you'll never be as good as everyone else, but then they throw side of guilt on there by shouting at you all the rules you need to follow in order to be healthy and happy and twist the knife of self hatred, just a little more.

[00:04:34] should statements appear in our brain as a list of ironclad rules, about how every person should behave. The gym police say: you should get a gym membership. You should lift weights. You should stay away from carbs. You should learn to run. You should lose weight. Basically. They're saying this is what it takes to have a healthy lifestyle and ideal body and everyone, including you should be doing it this way, no matter what.

[00:05:01] And you know what comparison and shoulding is short for? Whoever I am and whatever I'm doing is not good enough. And I need to do more, do better, do this thing I hate- so maybe I'll feel better about myself. But here's the thing. Inherently, whatever it is we think we should be doing is likely not something we wanna do.

[00:05:25] If we wanted to do it, we'd be doing it and there'd be no need to should on ourselves. And whenever you're telling yourself to do something that you don't wanna do. Guess what happens to motivation? There isn't any, at least not for long. You can employ willpower for a while or rely on someone to hold you accountable. But eventually you're gonna give up, because even though you're doing what you should, you're not having fun and you're not getting results that turn you on.

[00:05:54] a little side note here on accountability, just because it's something I hear all the time in my work as a trainer, and I think it bears talking about. People will always ask me to hold them accountable or to motivate them, so they'll show up and do the thing. Basically, they're asking for me to be their gym police. To keep shouting at them when they can't stand up to the voices in their own head anymore. When their shoulding and comparison defeats them and the willpower runs out, they want me to force them to keep doing the dreaded exercise in hopes that I will be able to get them to stick to it.

[00:06:30] It never works. They still end up quitting and it makes both of us feel like crap. So I don't do it. My goal as a trainer is to get you to quiet the gym police and find out what moves you so that you can feel motivated all on your own. When we compare ourselves to others and should on ourselves, it's a sure sign that we feel bad about where we're at. We feel unworthy not good enough. We feel like everyone else is better than us. That we are a failure and will never figure this thing out. And as a result of those feelings, we don't stick to anything. We avoid. We numb, we stay stuck.

[00:07:12] But Kim, you say, isn't there a right and wrong way to exercise and eat? I didn't just make up all these rules that gym police shout at me. They're everywhere. Every program, every trainer, social media influencers, all I see in here are rules. So yeah, I'm a personal trainer and I'm pretty well read on exercise science. There's definitely some guidelines out there about the best ways to work out for particular goals, but it's not a one size fits all approach.

[00:07:44] and the guidelines aren't much good if buying into them as iron cloud rules or dreading the activities you think you should do, is causing you to avoid exercise together or to work to the point of burnout. If thinking that you've gotta do it perfect is keeping you from doing anything at all, or is killing the joy in movement for you -then all those shoulds aren't a whole lot of good are.

[00:08:10] I've said before that negative feelings cannot create positive action and results. Feeling negatively about yourself is going to keep you stuck in shame, thinking of all the things you should be doing, but paralyzed from doing anything about it. So how do we get out of this?

[00:08:27] Well, it's not by seeking out more knowledge. Surfing Pinterest for a new workout program. Isn't going to get you outta this funk. You can't Google and research your way to a new reality. It's not about trying a new program, getting a new trainer, buying new equipment or cutting out carbs or intermittent fasting or whatever the thing you think you should try.

[00:08:48] It's not about the thing. It's about your thoughts. the only way to silence the gym police to get unstuck and start enjoying movement is to change your thoughts. How we think about exercise and food is much more important than the activity or food itself. I can tell you without a doubt that the struggles you're experiencing with exercise and your body image have zero to do with the exercise itself or the size or shape of your body, but 100% to do with your thoughts about exercise in your body.

[00:09:23] You see our thoughts, create our feelings and as emotional beings, we choose action based on how we feel and therefore lead us to the results we're experiencing. In cognitive behavioral therapy, this is referred to as the self coaching model, and it's the very first thing I teach my coaching clients.

[00:09:40] Let me explain a little more, why it's our thoughts, not our feelings, not other people, not the circumstance itself- that's causing all the struggles we keep having. You see, shoulding and comparison, these are automatic negative

thoughts or ANTs. And I like to picture them as that; pesky little nuisances that do nothing but cause trouble.

[00:10:04] These thoughts are automatic and they just pop into our head as a result of our history, our perspective, previous experiences and everything we've been through or been taught in our life. Like, for example, if your early history was that you were picked on for not being good at sports, like I was, you probably felt rejected, embarrassed and ashamed in that moment. As a result, you likely formed a belief about yourself at a very young age that you didn't fit in. And weren't as good as the other girls.

[00:10:36] Those beliefs followed you through life. And thoughts of comparison became automatic. When you see other women now doing things you wish you could do or having things in life, you wish you had, you compare yourself to them and you should all over yourself because you see them doing things and assume that you should be doing the same thing as them so that you can have the results.

[00:10:57] You see them having a happy life, a great body, success, et cetera. Cetera. Back when you were a child, you would've internalized that rejection and shame you felt when you were experiencing that teasing or that history informed your perspective, the lens through which you see the world. Those thoughts became core beliefs that are now automatic, whenever you're in a similar situation.

[00:11:23] So in the present day, when these automatic comparisons and should thoughts show up that feeling of rejection and shame is right behind it. Now, how does a person act when they're full of shame? well, depends on the person, but there's a number of coping mechanisms we employ in an effort to try to keep ourselves safe and avoid this horrible feeling.

[00:11:47] We either numb with food, alcohol, or any other substance, or we retreat and withdrawal. Like we avoid exercise, isolate ourselves, or we overcompensate in other areas like work, Martha Stewart-ing. That is a verb. I made it up, but it's a real word. Or even over exercising to prove to ourselves that we are as good as those other people, whatever the behavior. Either way we stay stuck.

[00:12:15] The gym police keep screaming at us. We keep comparing and shoulding, but we go nowhere and just feel worse and worse about ourselves. The only way out, the only way to silence the gym police is to change your thoughts. In my program, this is a fundamental pillar that we study. My

coaching students become masters at their thoughts, and it changes everything for them in terms of their body image and how they view movement.

[00:12:42] As they learn the process of changing their thoughts, they are empowered with so much choice, like a whole world of possibility becomes available to them. Now that process is a bit involved for this podcast, but I'm going to give you some steps that you can take today to get you started. Here are four simple ways that you can squish those ants dressed in police uniforms, shouting at you.

[00:13:06] number one, don't get caught in the trap. When you notice yourself comparing and shoulding, recognize that you're having a thought about yourself. The gym- police don't come to inspire you. They come to make you feel bad about yourself. See those thoughts for what they are- a way to keep you stuck.

[00:13:25] Number two. Recognize that you don't have to believe all your thoughts. Our thoughts, even the ones that we've subscribed to for a really long time, don't have to be true. Thoughts are actually neutral. It's just that you've assigned value to certain ones. For example, I hate cheese. I believe that cheese is disgusting, but is that necessarily true?

[00:13:50] You're probably saying no way. Well, it's true for me, but only because of my perspective and opinion, I recognize that it's possible that cheese is delicious for some people. So question your thoughts, ask yourself, is this true? Is there another possibility here that I'm not aware of?

[00:14:11] number three, recognize that all the rules are just arbitrary. There is no one size fits all approach to fitness. The best exercise is the one that you love and that you do. Buying into the rules and feeling that you can never follow them keeps you stuck. Choose to write your own rules, ones that you feel like you can actually follow. I like to say, create a game you can win.

[00:14:39] Number four. Run your own race. Comparison, jealousy competition, all that does is breed shame and feelings of insecurity. I can pretty much guarantee that someone else is wishing they were like you in some way. Nobody is perfect or great at everything, but I know that you are awesome in your own right, and that you have talents that the world needs. Comparing yourself to others deprives the world of the gifts you have to offer. Own your greatness and acknowledge your shortcomings without apology.

[00:15:14] okay. Friends there, you have it. I hope that you have found this helpful and that these tools have got you thinking about things in a different way.

[00:15:22] Next week, we'll be exploring the fifth principle of joyful movement, which is to respect your limitations. I look forward to hanging out with you then. But in the meantime, if you're looking for more non diet inspiration, you can follow me on Instagram or Facebook at radiant vitality wellness, or you can learn more about how to work with me on my website, www.radiantvitality.ca until next week friends be well and go step into radiant vitality.