



Episode 176: Embrace Your Capacity, Not Your Limits

with Dr Sarah Coope

We're only human, and we all have our limits. However, it's a fact that we often disregard, overlook, or forget, especially during our most stressful moments. Even worse is that these exact moments remind us of our limitations all too well. When this happens, we feel guilty, ashamed, and even angry. It's not easy to embrace our limits because we believe they hold us back from performing at our best. But what if we shift this mindset?

In this episode, Dr Sarah Coope joins Rachel to share with us a whole new way of looking at our limits. Because of how limited we are in terms of time, energy, and attention, there is only so much we can do before we stretch ourselves too thin. To prevent burnout from this, we should think about working within our 'capacity.' Knowing what your capacity will go a long way to helping you in the workplace and with your own life.

Podcast links

[Indistractable: How to Control Your Attention and Choose Your Life](#) by Nir Eyal

More episodes of You Are Not a Frog:

- [Episode 99: How to deal with criticism when you've reached your limit with Dr Sarah Coope & Dr Rachel Morris](#)
- [Episode 169: How to Avoid Amygdala Hijack](#)
- [Episode 171: How to Avoid Amygdala Hijack Part 2](#)

Check out our [Permission to Thrive CPD membership](#) for doctors!

Find out more about the [Shapes Toolkit Training programme](#)

[Sign up here](#) for more **free** resources





Guest links

Connect with Sarah:

[LinkedIn](#)

Quote to remember:

‘A big piece of learning for me has been around recognising that I am a human being, not a human doing.’

What You Will Learn

We all reach our limit at some point, and it can really make us lose confidence in ourselves. The thing is, thinking of our limits will always make us want to push too much if it means fulfilling our responsibilities. Thus, it is better to think about how much work we can actually do at the moment: our capacity. After all, finishing everything we should do with a high-stress job is near impossible.

Our capacity is essentially a square with sides that represent time, energy, attention, and money. And we often think of these four aspects of our life as our limits — not anymore. You can put anything you want to do in the square, but it will eventually fill up. To prevent the sides from stretching, you can't put everything inside. Otherwise, you'll only add more stress to the sides.

Deciding on what you should put inside and what you should keep outside is important to acknowledge your capacity. And knowing this will help you to accept and embrace it better, instead of looking at it as your limits. The following activity will give you space to reflect on your capacity to help you live a happier and healthier life.

Activity: Discovering Your Capacity

Q1. When you refuse to stop working despite reaching your limits, what usually happens to you? What do you tell yourself?



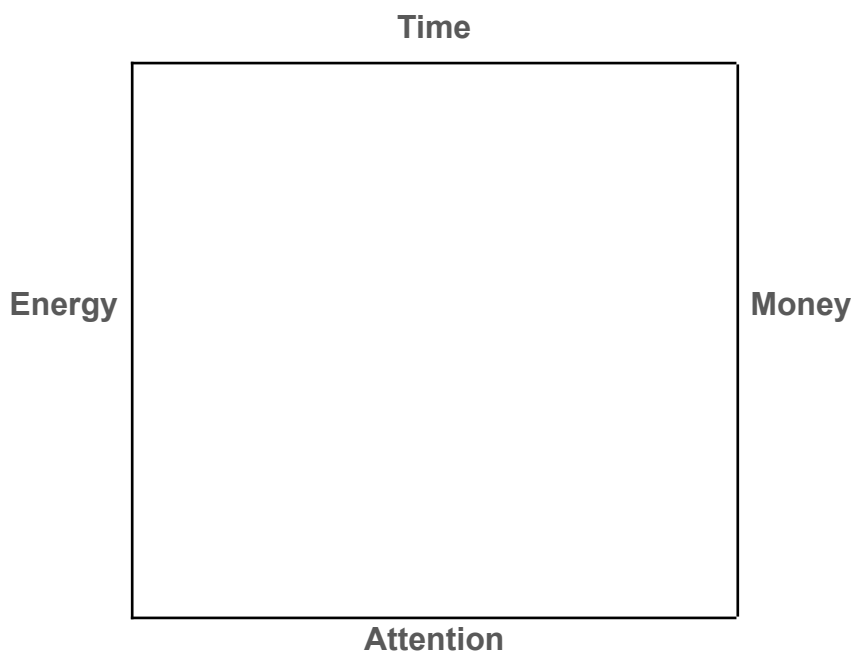


Q2. If your friend was going through the same experience as you, what would you tell them?

Q3. Does it match what you normally tell yourself? Why or why not?

Q4. Below is a square with everyone's limits on each side. To embrace your capacity, we will first determine what it is.

Think about the things you need and want to accomplish this week. Inside this square, write down the tasks, commitments, and goals you can fit inside without 'stretching' its sides. Outside, write the tasks, commitments, and goals that just can't fit within your limits.





Q5. Out of the tasks, commitments, and goals you put inside the square, which ones do you want to focus your time on? What about your energy, attention and money?

Time	Energy	Attention	Money

Q6. When we push our limits, we always “stretch” the sides of the square. Stretch it too much and it snaps. We each have our own ‘optimal stretch’, where the sides of the square don’t snap while we work within our capacity. In your own words, describe what your optimal stretch is like.

Q7. Talk about what it’s like to work within your optimal stretch. What was it like compared to working past your limits?



Q8. Now that you know your capacity, would you tell yourself the same thing you answered in the second question of this activity? Why or why not?

Q9. How can you better embrace and practise working only within your capacity?

CPD time claimed:

For more episodes of You are not a frog, check out our website www.youarenotafrog.co.uk follow Rachel on Twitter @DrRachelMorris and find out more about the [Permission to Thrive](#) CPD membership for doctors and online and face to face courses on surviving and thriving at work at www.shapestoolkit.com

