

# EXPLORE YOUR ENTHUSIASM

## EPISODE 197: THERE IS NO PRESSURE TO BE PERFECT.

Because of Instagram and Pinterest, I feel like I have to have it all together - I need to take prettier pictures, I need to have the perfect house, I need to only be eating organic greens and homemade cupcakes with handmade banners on them!

Do you know that feeling? Are you feeling pressured by Instagram to pretend like your life is perfect? Today we're going to talk about this pressure for perfection and at the end of the episode I'm going to share where I'll be next.

I've been hearing a lot (especially at MWCC) that there is this pressure, from Instagram and Pinterest (and the internet in general) to be perfect, to edit your life perfectly, to have a perfect house and perfect craft and perfect hair.

And when I heard I thought, yeah, that makes sense, I've felt that. There IS that pressure.

Then I was reading an article in New York magazine about Instagram influencers in the fashion industry - how fashion companies are now paying them to wear their goods - which is something going on in every industry and it makes perfect sense - people are paying attention to their phones more than to commercials, so move your commercials to where people pay attention. But what struck me is that the women who follow these fashion influencers, they feel pressure. Pressure to have the newest Gucci shoe, the newest Prada purse. And I reflected that I never feel that pressure. It may be that I live in East TN, but it's also that I don't follow a lot of fashion accounts and I don't demonstrate my own self-identity through high fashion. So it literally never occurs to me to feel any "pressure" to have anything Louis Vuitton.

And I'm betting the same is true for you. From my conversations with you, you're not very likely to feel pressured by these fashion influencers, and like me, you may be aghast and confused that anyone DOES feel that pressure. Like: why does it even matter? Who cares?

But you DO feel pressured by home bloggers or DIY queens or #planneraddicts to have a beautiful clean home or DIY everything or make your planner really pretty.

## Why?

This is going to sound harsh, but bear with me, because I'm saying it with love: We feel pressured by these standards because we choose to.

This is a red pill moment - There is no pressure. There is no real pressure. you are creating the pressure by the things you're choosing to pay attention to AND then the comparison program that runs automatically, comparing what you see to your own life.

I'm not saying you don't FEEL legitimate pressure, I'm saying there is no \*external\* pressure. We are making the pressure inside our own feeds and in our own selves.

If you don't believe me, think of it like this - you are the only person who follows exactly who you follow. NO ONE ELSE follows who you follow. They may follow 4-6 of the same people, and then a bunch of food bloggers. Or internet business dudes who post about taking a private jet to the beach. Or teenagers making duck faces. Or fitness bloggers who post daily workouts. So they are getting a whole bunch of DIFFERENT messages about what Instagram (or a home or a life or a business) "should" be.

And if you still don't believe me - look at people who are successful who you don't follow - do they seem to be following the same rules as the people you've been comparing yourself to? Are they beating themselves up for not looking like Elsie of Emma of [@abeautifulmess](#)? Or Stephan West of [@westknits](#)? Or [@negharfonooni](#)? Or Kristabel of [@lamkristabel](#)? Or Sarah Tasker of [@meandorla](#)? or [@garyvee](#)? or [@galadarling](#)? Or [@yespleaseplanning](#)?

And if you are comparing yourself to one of the ones I just mentioned, go look at the other ones - all big accounts, all successful businesses (as far as i know,) and all reallllly different - in content, lifestyle, point of view.

And I can hear you right now: But Tara, if I'm going to operate in this handmade world, or in this knit design world, or build the biz I want to build, this is the world I'm living in, I have to know what's out there, my customers will be comparing, I have to live up to what the other people are doing.

**NO.**

99% of your customers are NOT following all the other accounts you follow. In fact, they are likely following more people they compare themselves to, like Christian moms with 5 kids who find time to write daily devotionals and have sit-down breakfast, or people who color beautiful coloring book pages, or women who compete in fitness competitions, or lesbians who take beautiful nature photography while hiking with their perfect partner. So no, they're not comparing you to the other people like you, they're comparing themselves to the other people like themselves.

And if you wholesale, then yes, your retailers do know what's happening in your industry, but they care far more that you deliver what you promise, on time and that you're easy to work with, than if your house looks perfect and you posted a beautiful shot of dinner.

Now, let's be honest - some pressure isn't coming from your own internal comparison software, some comparison is coming from people in your lives. Maybe your friends talk about their fat thighs, or your mom comments on your kid's clothes or your neighbor jokes that your lawn could use mowing. There is PLENTY of pressure to conform to outside expectations, in our every day life.

So let's not make more for ourselves, ok? Let's not use social media, which can be a place to connect and learn, as a stick to beat ourselves with, ok?

I know, there is an automatic internal computer program that kicks off this comparison trap - you can't even seem to stop it before it's swept you away. So let's look at how to keep it from even running.

## Who you follow

If who you follow makes you feel bad about yourself, your life, your home, or your business, stop following them. STOP FOLLOWING THEM. Really, even if it's your best friend or your biggest competitor. You can keep the computer program from running if you don't feed it images.

Think of magazines - we all know that reading magazines that only show one kind of beauty, one kind of Ideal Woman, warp our ideas of what's pretty. If all you ever see is skinny 14 year old blonde girls shown in magazines, then that starts to become the "norm" of what beautiful is. And your own internal sense of what's beautiful becomes warped and anyone who doesn't look like that is no longer beautiful.

This points to the STRENGTH of the internet - we can control these images. We can't control what magazines and commercials tell us about beauty or home life or business should look like,

but we CAN control what the internet tells us is the "norm". WE get to decide what's on our internets, by who we follow and what we pay attention to.

So fill up your feed with diversity - diversity of people, of ways of running a handmade business, of content, of ideas. If you're following 50 #planneraddict accounts and you feel bad your planner isn't prettier, STOP. Follow someone like me who writes a scribbled to-do list every day (and gets a lot of stuff done). If you think your house isn't nice enough because you can't afford to buy anything except Target, follow someone who has 10 dogs, follow a food blogger who never shows her house.

### When it kicks in, stop it.

So part of this pressure we create in our heads? It's there because we keep feeding it. Not just with who we follow, but with what we KEEP THINKING about it. If you notice your Comparison Software start to run. STOP IT.

You get to choose your next thought. Do you go deeper down the path of flogging your imperfections? Do you fret and spiral?

Or do you choose another thought? It's HARD to change your thoughts, so change your environment. Stand up. Get off internet, go journal, make a cup of tea. Do something to change something. But don't keep telling yourself: OMG, I have to have blah blah. I have to do blah blah. This isn't as good as so-and-so's. It's totally normal to have those thoughts but what do you do NEXT?

### So this is your prescription:

1. Stop following those you have the hardest time comparing yourself to.
2. Follow a variety of people doing instagram in a different way
3. Choose another thought!

I wanna hear how you handle this, so come to Instagram and tell me!

Or come see me in person! I'll be teaching workshops in Seattle all this weekend - Thursday through Saturday!

## Natural Solutions for knitters (and all crafters!)

March 8

Perfectly Knotty, Arlington, WA

RSVP here: <https://www.facebook.com/events/144490012913953/>

## Rest + Roll: an essential oil Make + Take for moms

March 9th

Bremerton, WA

Details and RSVP: <https://www.facebook.com/events/577730082584678/>

## Essential oils 101

March 9th

Bremerton, WA

Details and RSVP: <https://www.facebook.com/events/179010709384128/>

## Intro to Essential Oils

March 10, 11am

Cherry Street Coffeehouse

Seattle, WA

Details and RSVP: <https://www.facebook.com/events/1619180364856422/>