

I believe the word should is code for people-pleasing.

I'm not talking about "I should take out the trash," I'm talking about well-meaning people shoulding on you. You should ____.

21 years ago, I was starting Menu-Mailer (in a couple of years, it would change into Saving Dinner) and I was struggling with a number of things - an abusive marriage, no money, a child struggling to read, no resources.

Desperate, I turned to our pastor. Anxious to help, this man tells me -

"You **should** drop this business idea at once, become an accountant through H&R Block (they train you!), and get real - it will never work."

At that moment, I experienced a confluence of emotions, thoughts, and anger.

I was confused, questioning myself, and yet deep down I know, this man - this pastor was shoulding on me.

His "emotional investment" was that of a spiritual leader - **not** one of coming from a place of genuine concern over **my** well-being.

I "should" do this for my family. I "should" do this for security. I "should" do this for straight-up cash flow.

The word should is a shame word - it leads to feelings of inadequacy, frustration, self-doubt, and even self-rejection! It belittles.

So as we “should” on others, we may not realize we’re doing harm to that person and telling him or her how they “should” show up in the world to please us and the other imaginary people sitting in this fake audience.

Should is arrogant and disrespectful. It’s saying to someone, “Your decisions about yourself are inadequate: I’m here to fix it.”

When we should on ourselves all day long, there’s a long-running soundtrack that echoes the insecurity and the inadequacy we already perhaps feel - the **shoulds** just keep it on a continual loop of autoplay.

It messes with us - it’s a brain teaser and leads to emotional exhaustion, mental anguish, and a pattern of feeling less than.

How do we dump should from our vocabulary? Two important focuses:

1. **Benefit-centric.** So, for example, working out -“I should work out” opens the door to **but**.

“I should be working out, but I don’t have time.” **Instead**
- “I love how I feel after a good workout - I’ve got 10 minutes, let’s go!”

2. **Value-centric.** Instead of:

“I should, you should...” Start with the **value** first. Back to working out - “I am getting stronger every day - I want to keep that going!”

Let’s remember this important distinction about the word **should**.

When we do something that we think we “should” do, it’s often rooted in other people’s expectations - this is **their** idea, not ours.

If it were your idea, you’d say “**I want to do ____**” not “**I should do ____**”

See the difference?

And btw, that pastor who told me what I “should” do?

I told him what I wanted to do and what I was going to do. And at that moment, 21 years ago, I found my voice.

Don't let anyone should on you!