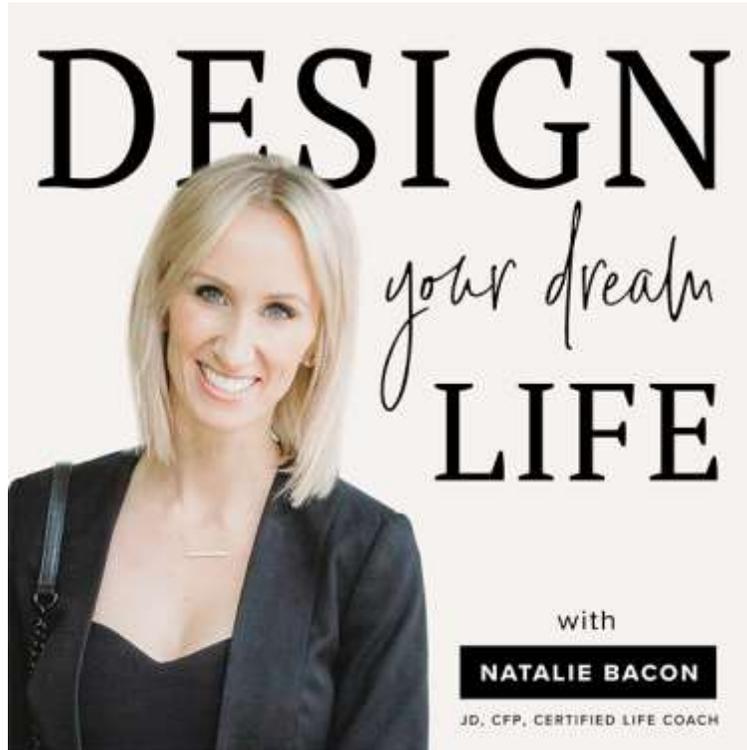


## Mental Chatter



### Full Episode Transcript

With Your Host

**Natalie Bacon**

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Welcome to the *Design Your Dream Life Podcast* where it's all about designing your life on your terms and now your host, Natalie Bacon.

Hey there, I want to jump right into today's content because a little over a week ago, maybe two weeks ago I had an epiphany with my own work and I created this topic and have been kind of researching and tweaking it for you and I am just so ready and excited to deliver it to you because it has had a profound impact on my life in a just a couple of weeks.

I read the book *The Untethered Soul: The Journey Beyond Yourself* by Michael Singer and as the name suggests the book is about untying yourself from the illusion of the ego mind. In the book there are a lot of references to yoga philosophy and how these concepts are not necessarily new, however, the way that this book is written by Michael Singer is so beautiful that if you have not read this book or even if you have I want you to go read it for the first time or read it again because for me as I do personal development work and thought work I'm always looking for ways to sharpen the skills that I have. This book did just that.

I always teach awareness and to pay attention to your thoughts. I believe that true mastery comes from sharpening the tools that you already have. That's how this book feels so before reading this book I felt like I understood thoughts create feelings and I understood that I am not my thoughts and I had a level of awareness. But after reading this book I now have a deeper understanding of awareness that I understand so differently.

That's why I love this work so much. It's never done. It's truly something that we understand differently as we grow and evolve. So, why does this even matter? Because when you increase your awareness you actually get a freedom from the problems that you have right now. With that comes a lot more peace and calm and serenity in your day-to-day life.

What I'm going to do here with this episode is teach my interpretation of some of these concepts and apply it to how I teach and understand thought work. Something that I've never taught before is that in order to watch your thoughts you have to see that there is the watcher and there is the object of

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what you're watching. So, what this requires is that there's a subject-object relationship. Think about this, there's you, the watcher, so you're the subject, and then there is what you are watching which is object.

If you think about anything that you're watching, right now in front of me there is a coffee mug and a notepad, so I am looking at the coffee mug. The coffee mug is the object and I am the subject. Now, in the same way your thoughts and feelings are the object just like the coffee. Your thoughts and feelings are not you, the subject.

So, as the subject you get to watch your thoughts and watch your feelings. Eckhart Tolle talks a lot about being the watcher and watching your thoughts. It's sort of become commonplace in thought work, you've heard me talk about it before, to watch your thoughts, to notice them. But before I read this book I was watching my thoughts more from the perspective of noticing that I was thinking them. So, I still thought that I was my thoughts.

With this exercise you'll see more consciously that there is you and you are the subject, you're the watcher, and then there is the object which is your thoughts which is not you. Hearing it this way and thinking about it this way helped me gain so much more awareness because it created a lot more separation from my thoughts than I've ever experienced before and it happened pretty instantly.

In the book there is a chapter about your roommate. I think this is an analogy that I want to share with you because it helped me so, so, so much. Instead of just thinking the thought, "You are not your thoughts," I want you to create an entirely separate relationship from your thoughts where your thoughts are actually that of your roommate. That is to say there is a roommate living with you in your mind.

I took it a step further and I actually named my roommate. I named my roommate my middle name which is Rene and I did this because as I would personify the thoughts and really look at the thoughts who are not me giving the thoughts a name that is not my name helped me to create more separation. So, I want you to do this and notice the thoughts that your

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roommate is having in your mind. Don't try to change it, don't try to fix it, you just notice it and you notice her talking. You notice that she's always talking. This is mental chatter in your mind.

I think that when you personify your thoughts as if they're completely separate from you as a completely separate person you gain so much awareness that you are not your thoughts. I cannot tell you how many times in Grow You I coach someone and the client will say, "I know it's just my thoughts, but – "

We all do this, right? There's no exception. It's not just clients in Grow You, it's me as a client as well in my coaching programs and it's everyone. We say, "I know it's just my thoughts, but here's the problem." What's really happening there is that we know it intellectually, but we don't feel it. Otherwise, it wouldn't be a problem.

So, don't try to silence your mind when you do this exercise. I want you to actually just open up to it and watch her. Watch your roommate in your mind, watch the mental chatter. You can name her. I love naming her your middle name because it's part of you that you've always known, but it's separate from you, it's not your main identity. Get to know her. Get to know that roommate and befriend her and notice everything about what she's saying. Notice how she jumps from topic to topic endlessly, almost like bursting out.

When I did this for the first time after I read the book I was so amazed just in one day how much mental chatter I have. I'm a coach doing this work all the time and this really brought in a whole another level of awareness for me. That's what I'm hoping to help you with as well and the reason why this is so helpful other than it just being a really interesting mental exercise – and if you're like me I have such a deep interest in life questions and with a minor in philosophy I've sort of always been interested in this work, generally, but even more important than it just being interesting is that it actually will change your perspective on life such that your problems aren't as bad as they seem.

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Think about right now whatever you're struggling with or whatever problems you have. Whether it's COVID, whether it's daycare costs, whether it's your sister-in-law, whether it's the holidays this year, whether it's the election or health or something else, think of those problems now. Those problems aren't your problems. Remember that you're the one watching your thoughts.

You are not your thoughts. Remember, in the beginning I talked about the subject-object relationship? So, just to review, there's the subject who is you, you're the watcher, and then there's also the object that you're watching which is your thoughts.

So, you're the one watching your thoughts. You are not your thoughts. Your roommate is your thoughts for purposes of this exercise. The problem that you have is never you having the problem it's always your roommate who has the problem. Your roommate in your mind always has a problem with the world. She always wants to fix it.

Until now you've lost yourself in your roommate's problems, so you attach to them and you think that if you could just fix this thing that's external to you it would be better. Life would be better. Just think about how this has been the case forever. So, notice how problems are always circumstances that your roommate is chatting endlessly about, but they are not you.

This awareness alone will help you see everything differently and it will probably provide some relief to any negative emotion you're holding on to because you will start to see that the solution to the real problem is not external to you at all. Why? Because your roommate just finds the next problem and she thinks that by changing things outside of her she will be okay.

I've talked a lot about this in Grow You where I teach that your brain is always trying to control everything outside of you and since it can't do that it tries to control everything inside of you and you can live so much in your head as sort of a survival protective mechanism because it feels safer. This is all happening subconsciously, of course. You don't walk around saying,

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“Oh, I’m just going to live in my head all day instead of living in the present moment.” It just happens. It feels safer.

So, this reframe of thinking about it and thinking about the mental chatter as your roommate trying to change things outside of her thinking that that’s what will make her okay will help you see that that’s just her rambling on and on about whatever she feels like in the moment, whatever she’s been conditioned to see problems in.

If you start to think about it, there’s never been a time where this mental chatter hasn’t existed. So, when you start to notice this let the mental chatter go, don’t try to stop it. What you can do is you can start to just notice it. “Oh there goes Rene again. There goes the mental chatter.” Instead of being so attached to it and letting it disturb your peace.

You can see that you are not her. I’m talking about it in terms of the roommate here, again, because it emphasizes the separateness of you versus your thoughts of the subject and the object. Because if you were your thoughts you would not be able to watch your thoughts. I am not a coffee cup. The coffee cup is the object and I am the subject looking at the coffee cup.

Similarly, internally I am not my thoughts because I can observe them, I can watch my thoughts. So, my thoughts are the object and I, my soul, am the subject. To find a deeper peace and flow through life a little bit lighter you can actually use this analogy and just watch your roommate have problems without getting so lost in them and without thinking that you have to change reality or rearrange reality in order to be happy.

This is why people say that the same energy that created the problem cannot be the same energy that solves it. Have you ever heard that? If you’re so lost in your roommate’s problem you can’t solve it. You’re so attached to the problem. So, you want to create some separation and see that you are not the problem and your roommate is the one who has the problem and you are not her. So, you can just notice that mental chatter about the problem.

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If you don't do this what happens is you'll try to control everything outside of you all the time in order to feel better. How exactly can you start doing this? You start to watch your thoughts. You start to watch your roommate. You start paying attention to all the mental chatter in your mind, all the thoughts that your roommate says all the while remembering you are not your roommate. You are the subject watching and your roommate is the object meaning your thoughts and feelings.

Just start off by doing this for a day and pay attention to all the mental chatter that you have in your mind. What is your roommate saying in there? Notice how she just goes on and on and she doesn't ever stop. Notice how she jumps from one topic to the next. Reminders, schedules, to do lists, problems, family, relationships, job, health, what you have going on today, on and on and on.

Pay attention particularly to little things like when you get a text, what does your roommate say? When someone says something to you what is your roommate's first thought? When you're in the shower – this one really helped me. This is from the book, he said to pay attention to it when you're in the shower. I just noticed how much mental chatter I had. Prior to this I would have known that those were thoughts, but I would have thought of them as myself and not seen the watcher versus the thoughts. I wouldn't have separated out the subject and the object.

It's not to say that you want to stop the chatter and have no thoughts, that's not the goal. The goal is just to pay attention so that you can actually see what's going on. So, think about your day. Maybe you want to try this tomorrow or right after you listen to this. When you're getting ready in the morning or when it's time to work or when you're going to lunch, maybe when your husband comes home or when the baby gets up from a nap and just notice what your roommate in your mind says.

If you are anything like me or anyone else you will be amazed and a little bit terrified, maybe shocked at how much mental chatter you have. It goes on and on without stopping, ever. Just notice all of it. Notice the changes

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that your roommate has. Notice how she changes her mind. Notice how in one minute she thinks one thing and the next she's thinking the other.

I love in the book when Michael Singer says the first step to growth he says, "Is to realize you've been locked in there with a maniac." So, rest assured that you don't have to feel bad about the mental chatter or feel any shame about it. Know that it's normal and we all have that mental chatter going on and that the way to get some authority over it even though I hesitate to say that in that way is really just about being aware that it's there.

So, if you are like me, when you start to do this, before you know it you will be trying to silence your roommate. You might say something like, "Can you just be quiet?" Followed by, "Oh, but that's Rene saying 'Be quiet', so that doesn't work. There's no turning off." That was the mental chatter and it was fascinating to watch.

First, it was different and then it was followed by so much contentment and peace and groundedness. I've been doing this for a couple weeks and just noticing it, taking my coaching, as I would call this, to a much deeper level and just being aware of my separateness from my thoughts. It's not to say I'm always 100% of the time doing this or that I don't choose my thoughts intentionally. I don't think that these thoughts and the mind and the ego is a problem. I just think that there's power in living such a more extraordinary life if you have the awareness that this is happening.

A couple other things to notice when you do this work is that you will tend to listen to whatever your roommate says. You will take it seriously and believe it even when she gets it all wrong and you will likely not hold her accountable. You won't notice that it's her fault and you will continue to just believe whatever she says. So, she becomes the boss of you.

I love thinking about it with the roommate analogy because it's such a personification that if this person actually existed outside of you like a real roommate would you would never put that much trust in the roommate. You

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would never stay with them 24/7 and believe and listen to and follow everything that the roommate says.

But yet we do this with our unmanaged mind. We do this with the thoughts that we've been programmed to think over all of our life experiences. Some of those thoughts actually really serve us, others don't. So, your job as the watcher, your soul, is to watch over the roommate and see what it's actually saying and getting you into.

What you can do is you can break the habit of listening to your roommate's latest whim and believing or doing whatever she says in the moment. The way that you do this is you get a very clear mind and heart and you decide what it is you want to think, feel, and do in your life. By doing so you will decide who you will want to be.

When you set that intention for your life you uncover your purpose and you live it deliberately. Then, you – you as the watcher, are in charge instead of your roommate being in charge. Your life is yours to live expansively in your body not your roommate's. It doesn't mean that you don't experience or want to experience problems. It means that you have the awareness that those problems are problems of the mind and you don't have to try to control or change reality to feel whatever you want to feel.

I think the more you practice this the more contentment you feel and the less reactive you are. So, you're still going to feel negative emotion and you're still going to feel positive emotion, but they won't be such extremes and you won't be so attached to the world that you cannot change.

Ultimately, you won't be so tied to your roommate's will. You can commit to your own will knowing that this is your life and that you have the power to reignite it and live it in the most extraordinary way possible. All right, I know this was a different episode today. I'm so moved by this work. Please go read that book it was fantastic. I'm going to continue to reread it and practice this work as well as doing it in Grow You. I will talk with you soon.

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