

How to Relax



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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.

Hello my amazing friend. Welcome to the podcast. I am delighted to be here and bring you today's episode, which is about how to relax. So this episode is near and dear to my heart because I am someone who struggled with relaxing and calming down and just not being productive for so long. I have to say that I am so good at it now. What I've realized in the last six months to a year is that I'm coaching on this topic a lot more than I ever have before. So I wanted to bring it to you here.

So if you are a high achiever, if you are a woman who identifies as doing it all or being busy or being spread too thin. Or if you just find that you're someone who takes a lot of action, but you struggle to rest this is for you. This will help you. So I'm a big fan of being productive and goal setting and accomplishing and achieving. I think that that's half of it. I think the other half is the present living, the mindfulness, the slowing down, the resting. For myself, I know that I just enjoy my life so much more now that I have that internal balance within me.

So I used to only focus on the productive side. I wouldn't have told you that I was exhausted. I wouldn't have said that I was even particularly stressed because I've always really enjoyed working and accomplishing and achieving. I've never been one to typically complain about it. My capacity for producing and for working is really high. So I really loved it. It was never a challenge to get me off the couch. Instead it's the challenge to get me to take a nap. I know a lot of you listening will probably be able to relate to that statement.

But what I realized was that I was always sort of in a hurry. When I say in a hurry, I mean like the energy, the feeling, the emotion driving it. So just notice that about yourself. Are you feeling rushed? Are you feeling in a hurry?

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So when I thought about the long term vision of my life, I didn't want to be someone who was always focused on work. Who was always in a hurry. I didn't want that to be my identity. I wanted to have a leisurely balance of work and play in my life. So that's why I sort of came to the decision that I wanted to incorporate so much more present living and rust into my life.

So it doesn't necessarily have to be that you're burned out and you're exhausted and you can't take your current life anymore. The rock bottom so to speak. Instead it can just be you realizing that you spend a lot of your hours in a state of hurry or rushing or just productive, that harder energy work mode. And you want to now balance that because you just want to. So I decided to make this change probably two-ish years ago, and it's been a journey. So I've become really good at the skill of relaxing.

If you haven't listened to the episode on stopping procrastinating, listen to that. Because what I teach in there is that you are not a procrastinator. You are not either a procrastinator or a perfectionist. We give ourselves these identities. The same is true for relaxing. You are not someone who either is high strung or able to relax. You're just in the habit of doing these actions. So you may be really skilled and in the habit of being a perfectionist or being a procrastinator. The same is true for someone being in a hurry.

So I was really practiced and skilled at being in a hurry. Now I'm really practiced and skilled at relaxing. So that's what I want to encourage you to think about it in that way and think about if you want to get really good at the skill of relaxing.

So I'm going to go through some of the changes that I've made and what I recommend that you do. Before that, I want you to be keeping in mind that some of these are going to be changing your circumstances. So it's the outer. It's your environment. Some of them are going to be focused on your inner work, which is your thoughts and your feelings. Then some of them are going to be specifically focused on your body and kind of releasing the tension in your body.

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I like to start with that because if you go to Google and you google how to relax or something like that. Most likely what comes up is always actions to take. While that's helpful and part of it, what's most important is that you change your identity as someone who struggles with relaxing. As someone who can't quiet down that mental chatter. Because if you have all that mental chatter going on and you don't know how to change it or you don't have a life coach or you're not in Grow You or something like that. And you just try to take the actions, you're going to be met with so much resistance because you haven't learned how to focus your mind on this.

Okay. That said, the first sort of tip that I have for you to learn how to relax is to stop using a to do list. So I stopped using a to do list years ago. What I teach instead and what I use myself is called results planning. You put your results in time blocks on your calendar. Again, I teach you this in Grow You. The gist of it is you take everything on your to do list, and you put it in time blocks on your calendar. You make this a habit so that you never have a to do list.

The reason that this relates to relaxing and why I'm bringing it up here is because if you're constantly looking at a long list of things to do, your brain has trouble staying out of scarcity because it feels like you're never done. So you never give yourself permission to relax because there's always "more to do".

It's really not a problem. You don't need to do everything right now, but your brain doesn't really comprehend that in the moment. So when you start using your calendar and you stop using your to do list, you calm down. You release this sense of I need to get more done right now. You can trust yourself. You can trust your calendar. You just follow what's on your calendar instead of a to do list.

The next tip is to schedule down time. I had a Grow You member say to me recently that she realized that she understood how to plan results. What she didn't understand until this moment when I was coaching her was that

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you don't actually need to fill your calendar and all of the time slots with results.

That is one of the most important parts of planning. It's actually scheduling time to do nothing. It's scheduling time for self-care. I don't mean self-care that's going to keep you busying like errands to run or more to dos. I mean genuinely scheduling time where you either do nothing or you're doing something that you feel relaxed when you're doing it. Like going on a walk outside.

If you're someone who doesn't schedule any downtime and you are constantly on the go, you will struggle with this at first. You will want to know what to do when you're supposed to do nothing. The answer is just to delight in your life. It's to relax your mind and your body. It's to let your mind, body, and soul to kind of catch up with each other. To just be. At first, you might need to remind your brain that nothing has gone wrong. You are okay. You can simply relax and just be. I promise you this is a skill that you can get really good at.

I think back to when I first started doing this. I sort of would look around and wonder what to do. Now I am someone who rests, who sleeps in, who hangs out on the couch, who takes naps on the weekends. Who just enjoys being with myself whether that's by myself or whether that's with Penny or my family. It's more about the state of being than it is the actual activity of doing something.

So you might find that going on a walk is really relaxing. Or you might find that just hanging out on the couch connecting with yourself or your spouse is really relaxing. Again, it's less about what you're doing. It's more about how you're feeling. Are you pausing and getting out of that state of hurry? That's the key. So you can ask yourself okay. Do I feel relaxed, or do I feel hurried?" Again, at first when you do this, you might feel like something is wrong and feel a little hurried. The more you practice this, the better you'll get at stepping into that state of being relaxed.

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The next tip is to quiet your mind. So, again, not using a to do list and scheduling down time. Those are actions that focus on really changing how you do things in your life. So the first two tips, not using a to do list and scheduling down time, are related to outer peace. You want to make sure that you are taking action to set up your environment and your circumstances so you're most likely to succeed with relaxing.

This next tip is about your inner work. It's about your mind. What I want you to do is sit in silence for ten minutes a day and just do nothing. This is going to help you with quieting your mental chatter. You can focus on your breath. You can focus on maybe one small white noise in the environment. Basically what you want to do is you just want to focus on one thing so that you stop the scattered sort of feeling you might have if you're feeling hurried.

You definitely want to do this sitting down. I don't really recommend sitting at a desk or laying down because your body associates that with sleep and/or work. So you just want to sit somewhere different and new. Stop moving. Stop running. Close your eyes for ten minutes and quiet your mind.

This practice is something I've only been doing for about half a year, and I have to say that it has made such a big difference in my life in such a short amount of time. I look forward to it. It helps me get centered in a very quick way. I just do ten minutes and that's what I recommend. Because I find that if I plan for more, I won't do it. I think ten minutes is plenty for you to get started with.

Along the same lines, I want you to focus on relaxing. It's kind of counterintuitive, but it's true. You have to have the intent to relax. Find something to focus on, and you can wind your mind down actually very quickly. The reason is because this is you focusing on one thing instead of 100 things. So it's totally okay, and I definitely recommend that you actually have the focus and the intent to relax.

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You might even find some thoughts that you want to repeat or write down or remind yourself of as you're doing this. So here are a few that you can borrow if they feel good to you. I'm doing a good job. I'm doing fine. There's nothing serious going on here. No matter what it is. This is one I learned from Abraham Hicks. There's nothing serious going on here. My life is working out perfectly. I'm so supported and loved. Borrow those. See how they feel. Come up with your own thoughts that you might want to practice to help you focus and get into a state of feeling relaxed.

So, remember. If we have the emotions of hurry and relaxed, they're both feelings. They're coming from what we're thinking. So you want to find thoughts that feel really good to you naturally. Like my life's working out. I'm going to be fine. There's nothing serious going on here. There's no reason to hurry. Hurry is not required. It's safe to take a break and have fun.

Also, I often like to ask myself what's the rush? There's no rush. There's no reason to be in a rush. Because if you don't ask yourself this and you don't focus on not rushing, you may find that you've been hurried and in a rush for the last decade of your life. I know, for me, that was a top emotion. So just be mindful. Is this a top emotion for you? If so, you're just really practiced at that emotion. It doesn't mean anything is wrong with you. It just means that if you want to no longer be so good at that emotion, you want to bring in a new emotion. Like that feeling of rest and relaxation.

The last tip that I want to give you relates to your body. So the first tips, again, were about your environment and kind of changing how you do things outside of you. Setting up your environment so that you win. The next tip that I had for you was focusing on your mind. Quietening the inner works. We want to quiet the outer, getting rid of the to do list, scheduling the down time. Then we want to quiet the inner. We want to sit in silence for ten minutes a day. We want to focus on thoughts that produce the feeling of being relaxed.

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Kind of the third overarching big tip that I have for you is focusing on releasing any tension that you have. So tension is something that you're actively doing. So you are not tense. You are not tension. You, just like practicing hurry, may be practiced in tension. So you want to just notice that subtle difference because it will help you see that it's an action that you can stop doing and stop being so good at.

Some of the ways that I found when I was preparing for this episode are to just notice your forehead, your jaw, your shoulders, and your breathing and relax all of it. So soften your forehead, unclench your jaw, relax your shoulders, and breathe. Even as I just said that I did all of those things, and I could feel the release. So you might want to write that down. Practice it a couple of times a day. It just takes five seconds. Soften the forehead, unclench the jaw, relax the shoulders, that's a big one for me, and breathe.

The next tip for releasing any tension that you have in your body is to take two deep breaths in through the nose and one deep breath out through the mouth. I will spare you the example, but I will repeat it. So you do two deep breaths in through the nose and one breath out through the mouth. This will calm your nervous system down.

I used to take a breathing class when it was available outside last summer, and I absolutely loved it. A lot of the work that we did was focused on prana breathing and releasing sort of the stuck emotions that we carry around as tension. So just kind of offering that if you've never thought of it and you're someone who struggles with this. Highly recommend something like that.

One tip that I recommend is looking for a class that's specifically about breath and breathing. It can include some meditation, but not doing it alongside yoga. At least not in the Americanized sense where it's focused on exercise. You just want to make sure the class is specifically focused on breath. That's where you're going to get the most bang for your buck when it comes to that tension you're creating from your thoughts.

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I want to wrap up here with the purpose of relaxing. So as you think about how you can sort of quiet your outer world, quiet your inner mental chatter and connect your mind with your body and focus on really releasing any tension. Remember that the purpose of relaxing is to rest and give yourself permission to feel joy and delight in your life.

I recently read a book called *The Ruthless Elimination of Hurry* by Josh Mark Comer. In the book, he quoted Dan Allender who said, “A full day of delight and joy is more than most people can bear in a lifetime, let alone a week.”

So as you think about resting and relaxing, I want you to think about kind of the fear that may be pushing you forward into a state of hurry. Like the fear that if you don't get it done or if you don't hit the goal or if you don't do X, Y, and Z. So if that's always motivating you and you never give yourself permission to just delight, enjoy, and experience your life, your life will actually just pass you by. You can do this for years and decades.

I have to say that it's been such a delight to do this myself for the last few years, and to help my Grow You women do the same. So think about the purpose of relaxing as to be present and to be content with exactly where you are.

This doesn't mean that you don't want to make progress. It doesn't mean that you give up on your goals and that you're not productive. It simply means that you drop the resistance of what is not. That you should be somewhere else. That you should be further along. That things should be different. You drop all of that. You make peace with where you are. You love your life. Then from there you can move in the direction you want to go. It's accepting and loving all of what is and deciding that you can move forward.

As I've sort of been on this quest to eliminate hurry myself and incorporate so much more rest into my life, one of the pillars and values that I'm

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constantly reminding myself of is that there's no correlation between hurrying and productivity.

So this is just good to know if you're someone who likes to produce. So you're not more productive when you hurry. Isn't that fascinating? Hurry feels really important, but it's not. You can produce the exact same amount, maybe more, and just drop the hurry.

You can also become someone who is highly productive and who is relaxed. We typically don't associate those two together. We think if you're really productive, you must be working all the time and exhausted. But what if that's not true? What if you can be highly productive, work less, and be really good at rest, relaxation, play, and enjoying your life?

I actually think it's harder to do both because I think once you're on a particular emotional path, it's easier to keep going. So if you're someone who runs on hurry, it's a lot easier to continue to run on hurry. If you're someone who runs on the present living sort of advice, it's a lot easier to just keep doing that and never produce anything. What's harder and what I think is better, at least how I want to live my life, is to do both.

So I want to be highly productive, have an amazing business, and I want to be relaxed and be present. So I've been doing both. And I have to say I enjoy all of it so much more. I have so much more time for life. I have so much more time for play. I enjoy my life and my time off just as much, if not more, than I enjoy my business. Which in the past I was never able to say really confidently.

It's simply because I've been able to do these things in my life and just become someone who's really good at resting, at relaxing, at that present living part. A huge part of it for me was shifting into there's never a rush. There's no rush. I can enjoy it. Because if I'm enjoying it now, I'm going to enjoy it later.

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So as I sort of wrap up here, I want you to think about that quote that Dan Allender said. “A full day of delight and joy is more than most people can bear in a lifetime, let alone a week.” Are you someone who gives yourself permission to delight and have joy and to let go of the hurry? Even if it’s just for ten minutes a day. If not, that’s okay too.

You can use these tips. In a year from now, you can be someone who is so good at the skill of relaxing. That is my hope for you because on the other side of it is a lot more calm and a lot more enjoyment of your life. That’s what I have for you today. I will talk with you next week.

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