

Your Inner Coach And Inner Critic



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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.

Hey there. Welcome to the podcast. It is the end of May, and I just have to say that I am finally caught up with everything after the wedding. I want to talk with you all about it. Steve and I got married at the end of April, and had the most amazing, stunning, perfect, loving, intimate wedding that I ever could have imagined. We were surrounded by under 25 of our family members. We did it at the Four Seasons in Palm Beach. It was just gorgeous and relaxing and all of the things.

Kind of why I wanted to bring it up here is I really had a vision for both my wedding and my bachelorette. Now I'm not talking about the vision that I had when I was a child. I am talking about the new vision that I really created after we got engaged. It was COVID. Coming up with a way for us to have our dream COVID friendly micro-wedding and how to do that and knowing that it could be everything and more than we ever dreamed of. And that down the road if we ever want to have a vow renewal and a really big party, we can absolutely do that. I think we probably will.

So I'm back. I'm a Mrs. I am ready to get to work. Just feeling so appreciative of all of you and all of your kind words on Instagram and Facebook and emails and all of it. So thank you so much. We are just in the honeymoon phase. Very, very happy.

All right. Now let's talk about your inner critic and your inner coach. This is something that I'm teaching this month. The time that this podcast comes out, it is still May 2021. So you can still get the full version of this in Grow You. In Grow You this month, we are doing self-confidence. So I taught a self-confidence course. There's a self-confidence workbook, self-confidence coaching, all of that.

What I want to talk with you about today is just a touch of what I am teaching this month. It's a different tool. It is your inner coach and your inner critic. So I think that we have each of these going, and we don't really

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know it. It's the voice inside your head. It's that mental chatter. If you haven't listened to that episode, go back, and listen to it. But this is sort of a different angle on it.

I heard there was once a physician. I don't remember who it was, but he said talk to yourself more than you listen to yourself. Or he said, "I talk to myself more than I listen to myself." That really is another way of saying use your inner coach more than you listen to your inner critic.

So what I'm talking about here when I talk about your inner coach and your inner critic is the voice in your head and the type of sentences, the type of language, the type of thoughts that take up most of the day. So your inner critic is going to sound like I'm not enough. I don't have enough. I can't lose the weight. I don't have enough time for that. I wish I could create that business, but I know I can't. It's just not possible for me. Your inner critic goes into avoidance and it goes into judgement.

So it might avoid looking at a challenge or looking at a struggle, and instead just wants to ignore the problem. Or when you make a mistake, your inner critic goes into harsh judgement and beats yourself up. So it's, "I can't believe I did that. How could I have acted that way?" Sort of shaming yourself. Thinking that you should know better.

Your inner critic is likely running on default without you even knowing it. It's talking negatively about yourself. It's thinking that whatever you want isn't possible for you, and that you aren't worthy of having and creating whatever it is that you want. Your inner critic is often a lot louder than your inner coach until you've done this work and really noticed that you have one of each.

So your inner coach is something that you can really cultivate and build up. Your inner coach is going to support you and love you unconditionally, and really have an openness. Where your inner critic has that judgement, your inner coach leans in and you'll feel curiosity. Like it wants to know how you're feeling. Your inner coach isn't trying to push away your negative

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emotions. Your inner coach is really curious how you're feeling, how you're doing. It might say, "Hey, what's wrong?" Like with this real gentleness that you would say to your child versus, "What's wrong with you? How could you do that?" Which would be your inner critic.

I think that just personifying this inner critic and this inner coach that we all have as the voice in our head, it's a really easy way to see who's in charge. To see who the boss is. When I think of the inner coach, I think of a willingness to feel negative emotion without judgement. It's saying, "Oh, this is pain. I can feel pain." It's knowing I was made for this. There's a sense of feeling empowered when you have your inner critic in charge.

Versus your inner coach, which is really just like that strict mean parent that sort of doesn't want to listen to what you have to say. Doesn't really respect you. Sort of ignores you or bosses you around and doesn't really get to know you.

So I want to go through a few examples of when you might use this tool. Let's say you have a disagreement with your mother-in-law about summer family vacation plans. Ask yourself how does your inner critic show up in this situation? How does your inner coach show up?

So your inner critic may blame her. Then you may blame yourself. So you go and you feel embarrassed, or you feel shame. You might avoid your mother-in-law all together, and you might avoid even thinking about this. Or you may think about it incessantly from a really critical harsh place. That's going to be your inner critic.

Your inner coach is going to have a much more open energy around it. Your inner coach is going to lean in and open up to you yourself, but also to your mother-in-law even when she has different opinions or different desires. Your inner coach is going to allow room for both while still respecting yourself and respecting mother-in-law. Even if that means you have different opinions.

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Okay. So it's not such black and white thinking. Your inner critic is going to have that black and white thinking. Your inner coach is going to allow for the gray. Going to see both sides and going to prioritize connection even if it means that you do have different opinions and knows that that's okay.

Another example would be let's say that you get some health news that is bad. You want to interpret it as bad. It's not the best. So ask yourself there. Okay, how does my inner critic show up in the situation and how does my inner coach show up? So your inner critic might say, "How could this happen to me? This isn't fair. I knew my body would fail me and not be good enough. I'm never going to be able to do the things I want to do." Really sort of going into like a self-pity woe is me and also judgment and beating yourself up. Really spiraling.

The inner coach, conversely, is going to say things like, "This is hard right now. We can do this. I can feel disappointment or even some frustration. I can still love my body. I don't know why this is happening, but I know my body is always healing. I'm going to do what it takes to support my body on this journey. It might be a long road ahead, but I'm here for it. I was made for this."

So it's not that your inner coach is looking for silver linings or sort of going to toxic positivity and wanting everything to be rainbows and daisies. And thinking this is the best thing ever. Instead, it's leaning in and saying, "Yeah, this is something I want to kind of interpret as bad. I don't yet know how it's happening for me, but I'm sure in some way it is. It's going to be a challenge, but I'm here for it. I'm here to figure it out."

Okay. So there's this intimacy that I think you get when you let your inner coach lead, but it takes slowing down and having the awareness of seeing who's in charge. So often it's our inner critic in charge, and we don't even slow down. We just want to fix the health problem really quickly.

So it's not just that you can use your inner critic and your inner coach for challenges that kind of arise whether it's with people or something

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happening in the world or bad health news. You can also use it for goal setting or anything with your future.

So let's say that you set a new weight loss goal. You want to lose 50 pounds. It's been ten weeks since you've set this goal, and you've lost five pounds. Now your inner critic is going to say something like, "This isn't enough. It should be happening faster. I doubt I'll get to my goal weight. I'm so disgusted with my body. I can't believe I do this. It's just never going to work."

Sort of creating this yoyo mental chatter where you actually end up yooyoing probably more with your weight because of what's going on in your mind. And how much you're either avoiding the goal or judging yourself for not being further along with the goal and kind of going back and forth.

Now contrast that with the inner coach who is going to look at the result of losing five pounds in the best possible light. Your inner coach is going to say, "This is amazing. I am five pounds down from where I was. Maybe I thought I was going to be more, but I know that this is the way for me. It's hard. It's harder than I thought, but I'm loving my body along the way. I know that there are going to be even more challenges, but I got this. I got the next five pounds. The next five pounds are going to be a little bit easier I bet. I love my body no matter what."

So it's not that the inner coach sort of ignores reality or tries to be positive about something you want to be negative. It just looks at it in a way that moves you back to feeling empowered to take action and live the life that you actually want. It's leaning in intimately and deciding, "I deserve to talk to myself with the utmost respect and gentleness and kindness and give myself that unconditional love that I crave so much. Like that can come from me. It doesn't need to come from anyone else. I'm sort of worthy of receiving it."

So the first sort of step to using this tool of your inner coach and your inner critic isn't necessarily to start talking from your inner coach. I would say the

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first step is to just start listening. See who's in charge. So look at little scenarios that come up in your life. Whether it's a conversation you have with your husband, whether it's a conversation you have with your daughter's daycare, or anything else that kind of presents as a mini challenge. It doesn't have to be a big thing.

Just start to watch your brain. Like what thoughts do you have after that conversation is over? What thoughts do you have about you? What thoughts do you have about the other person? What thoughts do you have about the actual conversation that happened? Start to pay attention. It requires slowing down.

So most of us kind of rush around and our thoughts match that. So using your inner coach doesn't mean you just start kind of saying positive things to yourself and expecting a change. It's actually slowing down to see who's in charge right now.

So when something's hard or you make a mistake or you're starting a new goal or project or something at work, and it doesn't go the way that you had planned or wanted, or you missed the mark. You have a challenge. Can you pause and ask yourself, "Okay. What am I saying to myself here? What are my thoughts about this on default?"

Obviously with the name's inner critic and inner coach, we all sort of want the inner coach to be in charge. As you're doing this step one from awareness, I really want to encourage you not to hurry to the part where you practice being the inner coach. Like really be honest with yourself. What does your inner critic say?

Start to bring those thoughts into your awareness instead of sort of avoiding them and rushing them away. They're just thoughts. So you don't have to deem them as morally right or wrong or good or bad. You can kind of just be curious about them. Like, "Oh, that's interesting. My brain just thought it was a good idea to beat myself up about not losing more weight. Or not going on more dates." Fill in the blank.

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That's going to be more useful for you to see the thought that your brain goes to and to write it down versus saying, "Okay. Well I don't want to think that thought because it's a bad thought. That's my inner critic. I need my inner coach to be in charge."

So there's this sort of rush that I don't want you to do because it misses the point. It avoids you looking at your brain and what your brain is actually doing. So whenever I'm teaching or helping with a journey of transformation, I always want you to think about the GPS. The starting point and the destination. So often we want to rush to the destination without looking at that starting point. So the same is true here.

I know we want our inner coach to be in charge, but really look at where you're starting from and pay attention. What thoughts do you have whenever a challenge arises? Or it might even not be a specific challenge, but it's getting up early. What thoughts do you have when you get up early? What thoughts do you have when you start the day? Notice is it your inner critic who is in charge or is it your inner coach?

I would spend at least a couple weeks just sort of watching and seeing who's in charge so that you can get to know yourself more intimately. So that you can really sit from the position of the watcher instead of thinking that you are your thoughts, and you are that voice in your head. Oftentimes when the inner critic is in charge, we want more motivation in order to be better and do better in an effort to please that inner critic who is so harsh.

If your inner critic is always in charge like that, you will never be satisfied, and you will never be present in experiencing joy and loving your life because your inner critic is the one in charge. So you don't need motivation to be better and do better. You already are whole and worthy and complete. It's okay if your inner critic is in charge right now. You just want to watch her.

Then start to answer her back. Start to answer. Like, "I see you inner critic. That's what you have to say. Well, the inner coach has to say this." Start to

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bring that into balance where your inner coach is the one leading. It's, "Yes this was hard or yes we made a mistake, but I'm going to try again. Or I know that I was made for this. I don't know why this is happening right now, but I know I'm going to figure it out. I know this is possible."

This is something that is a skill. So often we want to have this inner coach happen to us. We want to insert a disc and all of a sudden, the hard drive is changed. There's a new software uploaded. All of a sudden, we don't have to do the work. The truth is rewiring your brain does take some effort on your part. It's like conditioning for a race or conditioning for a dance routine or something like that. It's not like you just see the dance routine and can get up and do it. You actually have to practice and practice and fail and practice and again and again. You can make it really fun. It can be fun.

I just want to encourage you, and to make sure that you know that nothing's gone wrong if this doesn't come naturally. You are going to be doing yourself such service by sharpening this skill of awareness, the inner coach or the inner critic. Then cultivating that inner coach so that you know when there's a thought from your inner critic that it's simply just a thought and you can let it go. Your inner coach can reply.

It's you can talk to yourself more than you listen to yourself. Meaning you can have your inner coach respond to your inner critic. When your inner critic says, "I can't believe you do that. That is awful. Or you should know better. Or that wasn't your best." Your inner coach can reply and say, "You know, maybe it wasn't my best. But I showed up. Let's see where we want to go from here. Let's lean in, and let's go to that place of feeling empowered instead of going to a place of like avoidance or judgement."

All right my friend. If you want to get the confidence class and materials, you have a few days left to do it in May. We will be coaching a lot on your inner coach and your inner critic in Grow You. I will see you there.

If you loved this podcast, you're going to love Grow You. Grow You is my virtual life coaching program where I take everything on the podcast to the

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