

Being Gentle With Yourself



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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 friends. Welcome to the podcast. How are you doing? It is July when this comes out. The Creator Program is open. So I won't say too much about it other than if you want to grow your business and make more money online. I would say if you're making between 2K and 5K a month and you want to scale your business to that 100K, 200K, up to 500K annually, this is perfect for you.

It is a very advanced program and mastermind all in one. You get to work with me for a year very closely. I give you all of my secrets and the path to make more money in your online business. It's the exact path that I used and that I've helped so many women make more money in their businesses as well. That's how I know it works.

I just want to make sure that if this is you and you're listening to this podcast because you love what I teach about business that you don't miss out on this. It's not open all the time. So head on over to nataliebacon.com/creator-program. You will be able to find the application there.

All right. What else is going on? Today I want to talk with you about being gentle with yourself. So I've been listening to lots of parenting resources and really diving into what will be the next chapter for me as a mom. As I grow, I love that you grow with me. So if you're a mom or a mom to be or you have little ones, stick around. There's going to be a lot more life coaching material on motherhood and parenthood and kids and all of that.

I would say about half of our Grow You members already are moms. So it's always been a part of our community. But now it will even be more of a part of it as I bring more specific content as I learn, as I grow, as I sort of embark on the next chapter whenever that starts for me.

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So anyways. I've been listening to podcasts and sort of reading books and learning. Something I notice a lot from most experts is the advice to listen to, respect, and nurture your kids. This isn't necessarily breaking news. Probably isn't that surprising to you. Although it may be very different than how you were raised.

I think just with the internet and the spread of information, it's just so wonderful how much more accessible information like this is. Which is great. So this wasn't super surprising to me, but it is really relevant in our relationship with ourselves. That's sort of what I want to talk with you about today.

So I'm going to give you this example. Let's say that you have a five year old daughter. She is upset. She's upset about something that happened in her kindergarten class. How you approach her and how you communicate with her will determine your experience of the conversation, and also how you two connect. So I want you to consider three different ways of approaching this scenario.

So let's say that you're pretty avoidant about it. You may try to cover up her emotions with positive emotions. So you may say something like, "Oh honey. That's so horrible. Let's just go get some ice cream and forget about that so you can feel better."

So in this specific example, it's let's ignore that you feel bad. Let's make sure you feel good. So it's all about feeling good. So you're sort of like avoiding the negative emotion. I think a lot of us were raised like this. I think it's because it's so hard for parents to see kids in their own negative emotion. I think the literature is getting so much better with allowing negative emotion.

Gosh there's an Instagram account I follow. I think it's Big Little Feelings. Something like that. It's amazing. It's all about this, right. How we don't want to cover it up with false pleasures like ice cream. Instead we want to really allow it. Okay. So that's one scenario.

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So the next scenario is you're really a stern parent. In that scenario where a little girl, five years old, says something bad happened in kindergarten. She's really upset. If you're pretty stern all the time, you may try telling her she's wrong or just to ignore the girl or she was part of the problem. You may say something like, "Well, I'm sure that's not actually how it happened. You need to be together and stronger not to let these things bother you. You should know better." Because that's sort of another road to go. Of course, no parent is one way all of the time. But these examples are going to be really useful for what we're talking about today.

The third option is you're really gentle with her. You lean in and you see her and hear her point of view. You're doing this from a really safe space without necessarily coddling her. So she's obviously five. So you're going to use five year old language, but it might sound something like, "Tell me what happened. Tell me what you're thinking. Tell me how you're feeling. Those are some big feelings. They may even feel really uncomfortable. Mommy feels that way sometimes too. It's okay to feel any uncomfortable emotion. Tell me more about it."

You're basically respecting her even though you, as the adult, know that she's five years old. She's upset about some little thing that happened at school where you know it's not going to be a big deal, but it's a big deal to her. So you're either avoiding it totally and saying, "Ignore your feelings. Let's go feel better. Cover them up." Or you're saying, "Your feelings are wrong. You should know better." Or you're leaning in and saying, "Your feelings are valid. Let's explore them. Let's allow them."

Now, I think that this example works so well because it's really easy to see how we would want to be gentle with our five year old daughter. What about though when you turn it around and apply it to you? So when you're upset about something whether it's at home, at work, with a friend, how do you treat you?

I think that most of us as adults we either avoid it, avoid our own feelings. Avoid the problem. By avoiding it I mean trying to escape with those false

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pleasures. That ice cream. Whatever that is for us as adults. It might be actual ice cream or it might be a glass of wine or it might be Netflix. Something external to sort of mask the negative emotion we're feeling. Or we'll beat ourselves up and be hard on ourselves and think, "I did something wrong. I caused this. It shouldn't have happened." You're sort of like being the 'you should know better' to yourself.

So let's take an example. Let's say that you're offended by something your sister-in-law did. It's very common or what I see the most really with my clients is you're going to do one of two things. You're going to avoid your feelings, you're going to avoid sister-in-law, you're going to avoid all of it. Kind of pretend it didn't happen. Maybe complain a bit about it, but then try to console yourself.

So you have that glass of wine. You might binge some Netflix. Whatever your sort of method of escaping is to avoid feeling bad. Your brain's like, "I don't like feeling this negative emotion. Let's fix it. Let's go find some pleasure." Okay. That's one option you might do.

Alternatively, you may think about it and think about how you were wrong and how what you did was bad, but then you also may go back and forth and blame her. So you end up looping in this shame/blame cycle where one of you is either always wrong and the other is to blame. Neither of these options solves your problem nor does it help you grow or evolve in your relationship with sister-in-law.

So the third option I want to offer here to you is to really be gentle with yourself. This is an example of having a disagreement with someone or not getting along with someone, being on a different page. Anytime where you're sort of in the messy middle where you're overcoming a challenge, I want you to be gentle with yourself. Now, remember, gentle doesn't mean avoidant. So gentle doesn't mean, "Let's go get the Red Vines." That would be my pleasure of choice. The licorice, right? It doesn't mean go get that and go sulk in a bubble bath.

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It means being very present with yourself and kind and compassionate, but also vulnerable and honest. So it's asking yourself, "How am I feeling? What am I thinking that's creating this feeling? Is this how I want to think and feel about it?" The answer the day that something happens might be, "Yeah, this is how I want to feel about it."

One of the podcasts that I was listening to, there was a child psychiatrist on. She was talking about how tantrums are like storms, and you want to sort of weather the storm before you go in and talk with the toddler or child. Because talking to them while they're in the middle of the storm is pointless. It doesn't work. It's not going to be effective. They need to be able to express their feelings.

I think that this can be applied to adults as well. If you get laid off. I was coaching a lot of women at the beginning of COVID last year when everything started to shut down and there were a lot of layoffs. A lot of women would come on, and it would be like the day they got laid off. So you're still in the storm the day of. Maybe the week of. So you want to allow yourself to process those emotions that are really intense without trying to explain them away. Just allow yourself to have that space.

Then being gentle with yourself is going to look very different a few days later, a week later, a month later depending on the gravity of it, right? Is it a death? Is it a job loss? Is it just a disagreement that you could coach yourself on the next day? The magnitude that it takes up sort of in your mind is going to determine how much space you need to sort of process that raw emotion and then go into, "Okay. What's the next thing I can do in this sort of messy challenge that's from a place of being really gentle with myself?"

So in the example of being offended by something your sister-in-law did, it might be that on the day of you want to just feel disappointment or frustration or offense. But then the next day you might say to yourself, "All right. How am I thinking about this? What thoughts do I have about her, about me, about the action that she took? Do I want to think this way?"

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Then if I do want to think that way, having my own back that we both may be right and we both may be wrong.

So I don't know if I've mentioned this yet, but I am in advanced certification for coaching right now. One of the concepts that I am loving from getting this certification is the idea that you both can be right and you both can be wrong. So this is a way to be really gentle with yourself without going into that shame/blame and being really hard on yourself. It's maybe I'm right and maybe sister-in-law's right, and maybe we're both a little bit wrong. So you keep that connection when you think it can be both and versus or has to be a winner and a loser. Someone's right. Someone's wrong.

So gentleness will feel different. Being gentle is a feeling. It's not necessarily about what you do. You will take action though that's very different when you feel gentle with yourself. It's not just about being gentle when you're going through a challenge. It's also about being gentle in your day to day life when there are no challenges. Even something as little as looking at yourself in the mirror. What do you look for when you look in the mirror?

I know I've talked about this and suggested giving yourself a compliment in the morning when you see yourself in the mirror. But what about those normal times when you're finishing up in the restroom and you catch a glimpse of yourself. Or you sort of look, maybe you're looking at your makeup or just seeing how your face looks in that moment. Making sure you don't have anything in your teeth. What else are you thinking?

I just noticed this. I've been doing this work for a while on my relationship with my body. I just noticed that for me in those moments where I'm just pausing work and using the restroom or I'm out and I go to the bathroom and I come back. When I have those moments in the mirror, I'm really looking to see if anything is wrong. I've noticed I don't really want to do that. I don't want every time I look in the mirror just when I'm done with the bathroom, washing my hands, looking at my face. I don't want it to be that I'm always looking for what's wrong.

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I want there to be a balance because sure. Do I want to see if I have anything in my teeth? I do. But do I want it all to be about that? Can I add in some gentleness where I'm having a moment of intimacy and connection with myself? I want to tell myself, "I love you. I got you. You're doing hard things." Right? Having that moment of having my own back and looking beyond what's in my teeth or how's my makeup right now. Going deeper and looking in my eyes and just having that moment of connection.

It doesn't have to be long. It can be very quick. But I think it's a habit that you would need to really start because I don't really know anyone who just does this on default. We're sort of always looking for what's wrong.

So think about for you how gentleness feels in your body. I think if you can think about another area of your life where you really feel gentle, this will be helpful. So I remember when I first sort of cleaned up my relationship with money and started to do so well with money and business. My relationship with money took such a different turn than I ever expected.

It happened after years of doing this work, but it really sort of had the transformation in a moment. Where I just started to really love my money from a non-attached place. So not from a greedy place. Not from a hoarding place. Not from sort of this power over place. But instead from a really clean, love sort of place where I want to take really good care of my money. I want to be generous with my money. Sort of all the things that come with working on your money mindset.

One of the main emotions that I always feel towards my money is gentle. I'm bringing this up here because it's pretty obvious to most people that you would want to be gentle with your five year old who comes to you, and she's really upset. That's really easy to see that there's this gentleness that you can bring to your relationship with another human. But it's not just with other humans. It's your relationship with anything. For me, I really first experienced it with money.

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Even if that sounds weird, I want you to know that it feels amazing because it makes me take better care of it. It makes me save it. It makes me take action from this place of genuinely wanting to protect my money and care for it. So for you it may not be your money, but is there any other area in your life where you feel gentle?

I think for many of you it will be your kids, but it may be something else. Maybe your puppies. Think about that area, whatever it is, and then feel that gentleness. It will probably require you to close your eyes and really get into the feeling of feeling gentle. Then apply it to yourself. Then apply that feeling to the relationship you have with yourself.

So you want to see if you can get into the emotion of that gentle feeling. Then think about you and your relationship with you, and how you would act towards yourself if you were really gentle with you. It wouldn't mean that you wouldn't do hard things. It wouldn't mean that you would coddle yourself, right?

If you were genuinely gentle with yourself, you would be so vulnerable with yourself. You would say, "Yeah, you made a mistake there. Or you know, you're right. It didn't work out the way you thought, but here's what I know about you. You can do hard things. You can feel these emotions. You have what it takes."

That's what gentleness is. It's really not soft at all. It's interesting because the emotion you might describe as soft, but it's not soft in terms of the action you'll take from that feeling. I think it's so strong. I think that when you feel gentle, you take care of whatever is the focus of that gentleness.

You may want to apply this to your romantic relationships as well. Maybe you're married. Are you gentle with your spouse? Again, I don't mean it as an action. I mean do you have gentleness in your heart? Are you present and slowing down and holding space to allow for your relationships with others and with yourself to grow?

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So I don't hear people talk a lot about the emotion or the feeling of gentle. I think it is one of the most profound, powerful, important emotions that you can use. So think about how you treat you. I think for most of us we're pretty hard on ourselves. Whether it's when we make a mistake, we miss the mark, we don't get it right, we yell at our kids, whatever it is. We're all sort of messy humans. If we can layer in this self-love that comes from being really gentle and feeling gentleness towards ourselves, we're going to have such better relationships with ourselves and also with each other.

Because if you yell at your five year old and you realize after the fact that you didn't show up as your best, you can be gentle towards yourself and towards her and repair it in a way that's really authentic and genuine. Instead of what you might do to try to "fix" it if you weren't coming from this gentleness and instead were coming from guilt, let's say.

Even though a five year old isn't going to be able to articulate the difference, as humans we're just so smart. We pick up on that. We pick up on the authenticity. We like when people say, "Yeah, you know what? I made a mistake. I shouldn't have yelled there. I'm going to try my best not to do it again. I love you." Like there is that gentleness, that care that comes through in a way that's very different than trying to cover it up or blaming or fill in the blank. Anything else we try to do to try to hide our true selves.

This is something that I have been working on and continue to work on. I am fascinated with how much deeper I can continue to take this concept. So if this is your first time sort of considering it, spend some time really thinking about what gentleness feels like for you. What thoughts you need to think to feel gentle. Just choose an area.

I think being gentle with yourself is sort of the ultimate at of self-love, but I also think it's one of the hardest areas to start with. So if it's easier for you to start with a different area, you absolutely can do that. The more you practice it, the better you get at being gentle and caring for yourself and

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others. And really the more you're able to grow into that next version of yourself from a place of love, not from a place of beating yourself up.

All right my friends. I love you. Have an amazing week. I will talk with you next week.

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