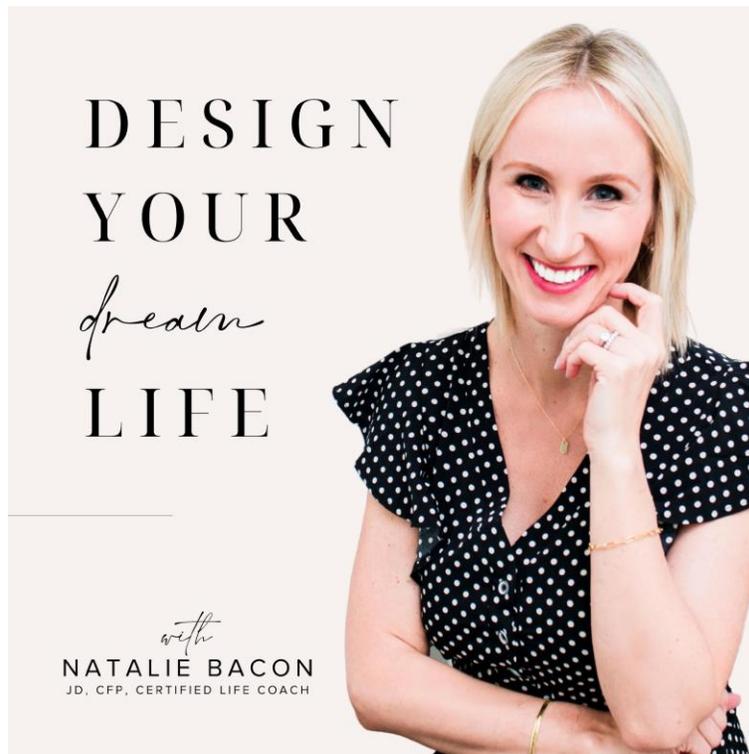


# Reducing Overwhelm



## Full Episode Transcript

With Your Host

**Natalie Bacon**

[Design Your Dream Life](#) with Natalie Bacon

# Reducing Overwhelm

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. I hope you are doing well. I'm so happy to be talking with you. I want to invite you to something really fun that I am so excited to bring you. It is called Holidays on Purpose. It's happening Monday November 22<sup>nd</sup>. It's a live class that's completely free.

You'll learn how to handle difficult relationships with family, juggle the demands of the season, have a supportive mindset, balance gifts and the meaning of the season when you have little ones. Practice self-care during all of that busyness that tends to come up, and overall just have a much more mindful and purpose driven holiday season.

So you can join us over at [nataliebacon.com/holidays](http://nataliebacon.com/holidays) and reserve your seat there. We're going to have a lot of fun. I really want to encourage you to come and join me for that class.

Today I'm going to talk with you about reducing overwhelm. Overwhelm is something that I have been studying and I have experienced, and I have coached on for years. It's something that keeps coming up. So I want to make sure that you have some ways to really reduce feeling overwhelmed in your daily life.

So I want to start off with just talking about what overwhelm is because I find that so often we just say, "I'm so overwhelmed." It's useful to pause and notice what is overwhelm? Overwhelm is a feeling that you experience in your body. So you feel it throughout your body. Maybe in your chest, maybe in your stomach, maybe in your head. It's always something that you're experiencing internally. It's not something that is caused externally.

So overwhelm is always caused by what you're thinking. It's really the best news because it means that nothing in your life can create your inner experience. But the brain loves to go to overwhelm because it really thinks that it's the only and best option given whatever your day to day demands

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are. So it seems really helpful and useful to get more done and keep everyone in your life happy and healthy and surviving.

It comes a little bit from scarcity. So your brain goes into this fight, flight, or freeze mode where it wants to go, go, go and do more. Really that's just a survival mechanism that is coming into play with the demands of a to-do list when our survival is actually not at risk at all. You might just have 10 things on your to-do list that you want to get done, and your brain thinks that kind of hurrying about it will be useful when that's really not the case.

So remembering that overwhelm is just an emotion. It's something that you experience in your body. It's always caused by what your thinking can be really, really powerful and transformational. Because it allows you to do some of this inner work to separate out what you're thinking from what you're feeling from kind of the facts and circumstances of what's going on in your life.

No matter what is going on and whatever quantity of things that are kind of consuming your life right now, you can always handle any emotion, including overwhelm. So you can always process that feeling. This is the work we do inside Grow You. You learn how to feel the feeling, process it, and then learn how to create new thoughts so that you don't experience it as often in the future.

So understanding that overwhelm is gonna be this feeling that you experience that's created by your thoughts, I think, is part one. It's the most important part, and we're going to come back to it at the end.

Now I want to talk about circumstances. So as I've talked overwhelm over the years, my teachings have evolved as I've gotten to coach more women on this. I think that it's important to talk about setting up your circumstances for success. So I believe that you can make it either easier or harder to manage your thoughts.

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So it's not ever that something outside of you, something in your life creates the feeling. We know that it's your thoughts that create the feeling. You can make it a lot easier to manage your mind and therefore your emotions if you set your environment and your circumstances up for success.

So I love the example of social media. If you scroll social media all day long, it is going to make it a lot harder to manage your brain and maybe stay out of the comparison trap. So you might find yourself feeling a little bit down after you've scrolled for hours. You can scroll for hours and then manage your mind, and you could do this every day. It would take a lot of thought work and a lot of self-coaching to manage your feelings. Or you could just limit the amount of exposure you have to social media.

This is going to vary based on whatever circumstance you have in your life. For social media, for example, this is an easy one. That for me, I don't want to be on it all day and then have to manage my mind around it. I'm aware that it's not the actual social media that's causing me to feel anything. It's always my thoughts causing my feelings. Why not set up my environment, my circumstances, for success? Why not make it easy for me to manage my mind?

Another example, and this relates a little bit more to overwhelm, is to-do lists. If you use a to-do list instead of a calendar, it's a lot harder to manage your mind and live from this calm, mindful place. Because your brain has to work twice as hard, at least, to decide when to do what's on the list. So it's much more likely to go into that fight, flight, or freeze mode and go into overwhelm or stress or anxiety or worry if you're just looking at a to-do list.

So you can help your brain out and make it easier on your brain by using a calendar. That's the calendaring method that I teach. This is just going to make it easier for you to manage your mind. It's not the calendar that causes you to feel more peace. It just makes it easier for you to manage those thoughts that create overwhelm.

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So I think it's a lot harder to stay out of feeling overwhelmed if you are always going, going, and going all of the time. If you don't give yourself breaks and prioritize self-care, it's so much harder to manage your brain. In fact, managing your brain is a form of self-care. So in that sense if you're not prioritizing self-care then you can't manage your brain at all. You're much more likely to go into overwhelm.

Because, again, your brain thinks that it's useful and it's helpful to create this feeling of overwhelm because it thinks that you'll get more done this way and keep other people happy. It seems like the only option given everything that you have to do.

Added on to this for women in particular, I think that we've been taught this idea that it's best to do everything for everyone always. We've sort of been conditioned to think that the superwoman is the one who does it all. That's the most aspirational way to live.

We tend to look at women who relax and who play and have fun and simply are just enjoying themselves, their families, and their lives either as women who are privileged or rich or spoiled. Or on the other side of that spectrum it's they're immature or they're not responsible enough. Basically they are outliers, and that is not practical. That is also not even desirable, right? We kind of look down upon that.

In turn, what we do is we make all of the activities we're doing be a measure of our worth. So then our worth and our confidence is tied to what we do. So if we want to be a good mom or a good wife or a good woman, we need to do more to show and to prove that we are good enough. If we start to let things go or do less, somehow that means that we are not good enough woman, mom, wife, person in our lives.

So if we operate from this idea that what we do and how much we do is tied to our worth then the result is we do way too much. We feel terribly busy and like we have so much going on. We people please. We prioritize ourselves last. We prioritize everyone else first. We think that on the other

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side of this season, maybe it will get better. Wouldn't it be nice? I hope that over there somehow things slow down.

So, again, it's never the things that are happening in our lives that are creating this experience. It's always our thoughts. Until you do this inner work and become more mindful, you're unlikely to see that it is your thoughts, right? Because we're not taught this growing up. So then your thoughts end up making it worse.

So maybe you do all of the things on your to-do list and then you are feeling tired. But instead of just feeling tired and taking a break or going outside or taking a nap or telling your husband that you need a break, you sort of go into self-pity. Self-pity is feeling bad about your own problems and feeling sort of sorry for yourself. I used to go to self-pity so, so, so much. I've done a lot of work on self-pity. I continue to do a little work on self-pity here and there.

It basically sounds like I shouldn't have this much to do. It shouldn't be this hard. So now it's not that we just feel tired, but now we have gone into self-pity and feeling really bad about our own problems and our own challenges. When you're in self-pity, it sort of seems like the problem is outside of you. It seems like it's your circumstances and something that you can't fix. It's so disempowering.

Typically we don't go around talking about being in self-pity. We go around and we talk about, "Oh this is just a really busy season for me. Or yeah, I'm just so overwhelmed right now." Those are sort of the words that we use. If we pause and we notice what's going on, we start to see oh this is self-pity. This is overwhelm. It's caused by my thoughts. And on top of that, I have set up my circumstances sort of against myself.

So I want to give you a few things that you can do to really reduce your overwhelm. Some of the things are going to be based on setting up your circumstances for success, and then some of them are going to be on

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managing your mind so that combined you actually do make it easier for you to really reduce that daily overwhelm.

Number one is to use a calendar and create more white space on it. So I want you to stop using a to-do list because that makes it so much harder for your brain to stay out of that rushed, hurried, busied feeling state. If you use a calendar, it reduces that urgency. So your brain can visually see the calendar, and it can see, "Okay this is when I am going to do that thing. I don't need to worry about it." Then you have the 50 things in time slots on your calendar. So you know you'll just do it when it's on your calendar.

Conversely if you have 50 things on your to-do list, your brain has to figure out when that's all going to be done. We sort of operate from this place of oh my goodness. This is too much to do. Of course those are all thoughts, but when you have a to-do list it's so much harder to manage those thoughts. So you really reduce that brain chatter if you use a calendar.

The second part of that is to put more white space on it. What that means is to give yourself downtime. Calendaring and planning is not about doing, doing, doing and going, going, going. It's about being intentional with your time. It's about living purposefully and using your time in the way that you want to use it.

So one of the best ways to reduce overwhelm is to make sure that you have some extra white space on your calendar where there's nothing planned, and you can relax. You can take a break. You don't have to be going, going, going and in that sort of stress response state all day every day.

Number two is to stop people pleasing. This means saying no more often. Because when you say no to someone else, you're really saying yes to more of that white space to you. This can be with respect to work. It could be with respect to kid's activities. It could be with respect to events. It could be with respect to your girlfriends and going out more.

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There's this sense that we want to be invited and we want to do more, and we want to do it all. We do that at our own emotional expense. We do that and we fill our lives so full thinking that we have to do everything for everyone always. It's so hard to manage our mind to stay out of overwhelm.

So if you kind of start to practice saying no, particularly when you really want to say no instead of what we often do is saying yes and then go into people pleasing. This is going to be one of the best ways to reduce feeling overwhelmed.

Number three is to prioritize self-care. I know that that can seem luxurious or something that you'll do over there at the next season, but it's really about taking care of your needs. So if you think of a phone that needs to be recharged every night so that the next day you can use it, this is what it means to recharge yourself. So what do you need more of? How are you taking care of you?

Some ideas would be to do the work we do inside Grow You and manage your mind. Getting outside or moving your body. Practicing 10 minutes of silence every day or even sleeping more if that's what you need. It really is going to be personal. It's not about everyone listening to this doing the specific exact things that I mention. It's about you specifically asking yourself what do I need more of? How am I taking care of myself?

The fourth and most important way to reduce overwhelm is to start redirecting your brain. What this means is you take responsibility for what you're thinking and what you're feeling. You start watching your thoughts and noticing the separation between okay, these are the facts and my circumstances. Then there's my feeling. Then what's in between is what I'm thinking.

So you start to notice and pay attention to that inner self-talk that you have. You start to coach yourself and practice more mindful living. You give yourself permission to rest and do less. You decide that you are not going

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to glorify busy and overwhelm anymore. Instead you want to prioritize feeling good and enjoying your life.

Finally I want to give you three really fun questions to ask that you can use on a daily basis that I think will help with overwhelm. Question number one that you can ask yourself is what does my future self-want me to do? This question will help you kind of separate out the short term discomfort vs the short term pleasure from the long term satisfaction and the long term consequence. So yes, we want to make it fun and easy and more enjoyable, but we also want to honor our future self. So ask the question, "What does my future self-want me to do here?"

Question number two. What would make this easier? So often we think that everything has to be hard. Some things are hard and other things are not hard. It depends on who is doing the thing because it depends on your thoughts about the thing. That's what makes something hard. I've found that as this sort of recovering type A achiever, my brain tends to think that it's all going to be hard no matter what. Asking the question what would make this easier has helped me stay out of overwhelm.

The last question that you can ask yourself is what would make this more fun? So even if you're doing a hard thing, you're doing the invisible load at home with your family, and you have all of these things that you want to be doing. Maybe you're moving or who knows what else is going on in your life. Sometimes we're doing hard things and we want to be doing hard things.

What you can always choose to do is bring a little lightness and fun to the thing that you're doing even if it's really a hard thing. So what would make this more fun is an excellent question to ask. I've found that it's been so helpful for myself as someone who doesn't naturally default to making everything light and fun. This has been so transformational for me.

As you do this work, start to notice how much overwhelm has become this societal norm. Know also too that you have agency to think, feel, and do

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anything that you want. Because of that, you can stop feeling overwhelmed. You can reduce feeling overwhelmed. You can give up overwhelm like you're giving up a hobby that you no longer are interested in. It starts with doing what I introduced you to here on this episode.

All right my friends. I will talk with you next week. Take care.

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 next level. I invite you to join our amazing community of women and moms and deepen your own personal development. Head on over to [nataliebacon.com/coaching](https://nataliebacon.com/coaching) to learn more.

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