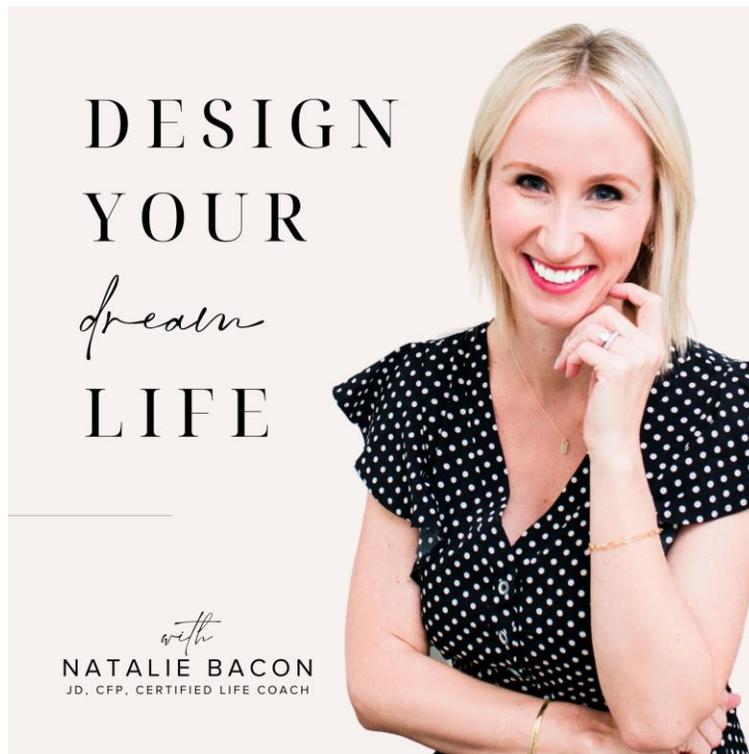


What Is Mindfulness?



Full Episode Transcript

With Your Host

Natalie Bacon

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What Is Mindfulness?

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 friend. Welcome to the podcast. I hope you're doing well. I am so happy to be here with you. We are getting ready to have baby boy here definitely within the next month. That is so crazy. So wonderful. We are so overjoyed. I've really seen my identity shift with this pregnancy and all the highs and lows that I've experienced.

I am just so appreciative of it and also just blown away with every single aspect of it from the health changes to my body changes to experiencing having a baby grow inside me to how it's impacted my attitude and mindset around work and family and what's my priority and how much I've wanted this, really for my whole life to grow my family. To be doing it has been such a blessing and something that I am just so beyond words thankful for.

Today we're going to talk about what mindfulness is. So if you haven't yet, listen to the episode called mindfulness. I recorded it a couple weeks ago. This episode is going to be about what mindfulness is. That episode was about why it's important to practice mindfulness and how it's helpful, and also how to get started doing it.

Why I want to talk about this today is because I've noticed that there's some confusion that I'm seeing about what mindfulness really is. So I want to make sure that you're not using mindfulness against yourself and that you really understand what mindfulness is so that you can use it in a way that is so very helpful for you.

Before I get into the definition, I want to invite you to get the Grow You holiday annual pass for yourself. This is a gift that will keep on giving to you throughout the entire year. When you gift yourself this gift, you get the inner work bundle, which includes several bonuses. You can check it out at nataliebacon.com/gift. If you don't want to gift it to yourself, you can encourage someone in your life to make that gift for you.

What Is Mindfulness?

We've made it really easy this year. I'm so passionate about getting this work out to as many women as possible because of the tools and how much it's changed my life. I really want to make sure that you have that experience and that support that you are here for.

Okay. Let's talk about what mindfulness is. So I have two definitions here for you that are different from what I've shared before. So John Kabat-Zinn says, "That mindfulness is awareness that arises through paying attention on purpose in the present moment nonjudgmentally." Then he says, "I sometimes add in the service of self-understanding and wisdom."

I absolutely love this definition. Let me give you one more, and I'll talk about why these are so good. So Judson Brewer says, "Mindfulness helps build awareness so that we can observe our caveman brains in action." Love this so much.

So what I am finding is that people are confusing mindfulness with meditation. They are not the same. Meditation is a tool that you can use to become more mindful, but mindfulness is about paying attention to your thoughts. It's about doing the thought work. Doing that inner work so that you can increase your awareness, as Judson Brewer says, of your caveman brain in action.

So every time I'm talking about your toddler brain or your primitive brain, that is what mindfulness is about. It's using our humanness to observe what our animal brains do on default. So it's not trying to eliminate your negative thoughts. It's not trying to push away any negative emotion.

So sometimes I think that people think that mindfulness is all about meditating and sitting there and dumping out everything that's in your mind so that you're not even thinking. That is not the case. In fact, you probably have lots and lots of thoughts that you love. I think back to all of my education. I have so much in my brain that I'm so proud of that I want to keep in there.

What Is Mindfulness?

If the goal is to get rid of all of it then what is the point of learning? Why don't we just all sit still all day long and try to rid our minds of any thoughts? Second to that, if you've ever tried to do this, it doesn't work. You will find yourself frustrated. I think this is why people often get confused with the practice of meditation. They get frustrated by it and confused thinking that the whole point is to not think anything and to not have negative thoughts. So you might find yourself thinking you're doing it wrong, but that is not the case.

So mindfulness, if you think of a circle. You can go over to Instagram @natalierbacon, and you can see a visual of this. There's a circle of mindfulness. Within that circle there are tools that you can use to help you become more mindful. So, again, to become more mindful means that you have an awareness of what you're thinking and what you're feeling in the present moment, and you're not judging it.

This means that when your caveman brain, when that primitive brain is doing some crazy things, you're still not judging it. So you can use different tools to get to this, to increase your awareness.

Some of the tools that it each are thought work and self-coaching. If you're in Grow You, you know I teach you the self-coaching model, which was created by Brooke Castillo of the Life Coach School. So I'm an LCS trained life coach. So I use that tool. There is an amazing processing feelings bonus course that's another tool that will help you become more mindful. This is in Grow You.

Journaling can help you become more mindful as well. Now, you have to make sure that you get journal prompts that actually are designed for increasing your awareness and becoming more mindful. Because if you answer the journal prompt "how did she hurt your feelings", that is not going to increase your awareness. In fact, that's going to make it worse. So journal prompts can be a great tool as long as they're designed for increasing that awareness.

What Is Mindfulness?

Breathwork is another one. This is something I don't really teach, but I do it. I love it. It's definitely a tool that can help you process those feelings as well. Again, I touched on meditation. This is definitely a way for you to become more mindful as a tool, but it's not the same. They're not the exact same thing, mindfulness and meditation.

Meditation there's lots of other benefits to it. When we're talking about mindfulness, meditation is simply a tool that you can use to help you increase your awareness of what you're thinking and what you're feeling in the present moment without judgement. So as I'm giving you all these tools and you're thinking about mindfulness for yourself, think about what tools you like the most. What I always encourage you to do is test out different tools and see what works for you. '

For me, practicing 10 minutes of silence works better than doing a lot of meditations because I feel like the word meditation can be loaded for me. I don't consider myself an expert in it. When I practice sitting in 10 minutes of silence every day, I love that. It helps me so much. It's really doing the same exact thing as meditating. It is a form of meditation.

I bring this up because some of these tools will be easier for you to practice and you'll gravitate towards more, and that's the point of it. Do whatever works for you. Try different methods of increasing your awareness. Notice yourself if you are judging yourself for having negative thoughts and negative emotion.

I was just coaching someone in Grow You about becoming a conscious drinker. So I've taught this before, and it's a tool I teach inside Grow You where you plan your drinks ahead of time. So you don't kind of give into the primitive brain, you come up with a plan and you say, "This is how much I want to drink on this day." If you go off plan, you want to be curious about it and observe yourself.

What she was doing is she was beating herself up about going off plan. She wants in shame about it. She had worked through her shame in the

What Is Mindfulness?

past, but now she was going into guilt and thinking that something had really gone wrong. This is something that we worked on so I could show her that her judging herself for what she had done was actually her having a lot of resistance and negative self-talk, that inner critic, in the present moment.

That is very different than wanting to change and analyze what happened and look at why you would go off plan or something like that from a place of love, openness, and curiosity. That's where we want to make change from.

We don't want to make change from I fell short. I did something bad. I am bad. I am wrong. Because then what happens is we have this standard of perfectionism that we're always trying to reach. We will not put ourselves out there unless we think we can be perfect at something. Then if we do put ourselves out there and we fall short, we end up beating ourselves up.

So it's about changing your relationship with yourself. Mindfulness helps you be helping you change your relationship to your thoughts and changing your relationship to your feelings so that you're aware that you are not your thoughts and you are not your feelings.

So it's the difference in saying I'm anxious versus I'm having an anxious thought that's creating the feeling of anxiety. Most of us on default, myself included, will go around thinking, "I'm anxious." We don't pause and notice I am not anxious. I'm having an anxious thought. I'm feeling the emotion of anxiety.

This is why I still do this work everyday in my own life. My default brain and my wiring and my socialization and how I was raised. I think this is true for most of us is we are attached to our circumstances. We think that we are our feelings. We think that we are the certain state that we are in. We are worried. We are anxious. That worry or anxiety was caused from something outside of us. So it's just like physical fitness that is never done. The inner work is never done. That's okay, right. We have the rest of our lives.

What Is Mindfulness?

So I was coaching someone in Grow You about her mother-in-law. Her mother-in-law said to her, “You need to start disciplining your kids or they're going to run all over you when you're older.” The client was really worried about this. She pointed out that she was worried not only was she parenting wrong, but also, she was worried about her relationship with mother-in-law and all the thoughts and drama that she was having there. Also her relationship with her son.

Mother-in-law had said this in response to son throwing blankets. They were all over mother-in-law's house, son's throwing blankets, then mother-in-law says, “You need to start disciplining kids or they're going to run all over you.”

Mindfulness helped her see that worry is a feeling. She was experiencing this feeling because of the thought she was thinking. We pinpointed the thought, which was I'm concerned how I'm parenting and disciplining my son. So she could see she wasn't experiencing worry because she was doing something wrong or because of her parenting style or because of her mother-in-law or anything else. Worry came from her thoughts.

So sometimes I think that it's fun to think about concepts and theories and just think about thought work. When I coach you inside Grow You, we actually apply these tools to your life. It has profound change. All from just seeing how one example in your life that happened this week that is creating a challenge for you can be worked through one of these mindfulness tools. On the other side of it, you end up seeing that it's something that you can 100% solve and resolve in a way that's really simple.

Someone was just saying, “Oh my gosh. Before I came on the call, I was so confused. It seemed like there were so many moving parts. You just simplified it so much.” It's not because there's anything special or amazing about me or my coaching. It's because of the tools. It's because there is actually a way for you to apply this work to your own life.

What Is Mindfulness?

So if you find yourself regretting the past or worrying about the future, mindfulness is a way for you to see that these are present moment thoughts and feelings about either the past or the future. When you use these tools to see that, you loosen your grip on those problems. So there's no problem that you can't apply a mindfulness tool to and not see improvement with it. That's why I get so passionate about this because it's so powerful.

Mindfulness will have a positive effect on your brain because it helps you separate yourself from thinking that you are your thoughts and from thinking that you are your feelings. From there, you can actually pause and notice your thinking and feeling patterns that you've been repeating over and over. You can stop them because you'll have this pause. You'll increase your awareness. Then you'll be able to stop these habits. You'll be able to create new thoughts on purpose using that prefrontal part of your brain. From there, you can change your life.

I'm not talking about results, although results are amazing. If you want to lose weight, if you want to make more money, if you want to change your marriage or change your relationship with your kids, you can absolutely do that. A lot of times what we are seeking with results is the feeling.

So I think that one of the best uses of mindfulness is to see how it's going to help you reduce your worry, reduce anxiety, reduce overwhelm, reduce stress. Those feelings that you find yourself in the habit of, you can change that. I just think that is so lifechanging. Simply observing your thoughts and feelings and actions will positively affect your life. That is what mindfulness is about.

It's so necessary kind of in the day and age that we live in because we have these primitive caveman brains. When we act on default, we don't even know that our primitive brains are working against us. Our primitive brains think that going to anxiety and worry and stress are so useful and helpful.

What Is Mindfulness?

What we can do is we can use mindfulness to increase our awareness and pay attention to exactly what we're thinking and feeling in the moment so that we see that we are not our thoughts and we are not our feelings. We can then from there approach ourselves with curiosity and love and kindness.

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