

Doing The Inner Work



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With Your Host

Natalie Bacon

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Doing The Inner Work

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 am so happy to be here with you today. I have a really fun episode for you. We're going to talk about doing the inner work and what that really means. So, I talk a lot about doing the inner work, and it's sort of the language that I hear other people talk about with doing this work as well. But I find that is only the case if you have experience with it.

So, I wanted to take a step back and talk about what that really means. And I think whether you are new here and if you are welcome. Or whether you have been around for a while, I think this is going to help all of us deepen our understanding of what the inner work is.

So, I am going to break down what it is, why it is so important, and how to know if it's really working for you, or how to know if it's not. So, when I'm talking about doing the inner work, I'm talking about what's happening within you: the mind and the body. So, your mind is your thoughts. It is your mindset. It's your self-talk. It's what is happening in your brain; that's part of it.

The other part is what is happening in your heart. It's what's happening with your feelings and your energy. I so love and adore this quote from Dr. Joe Dispenza. He says, "Thoughts are the language of the mind, and feelings are the language of the body." So, when I'm talking about doing the inner work, I'm talking about understanding that language of the mind and the language of the body, which are your thoughts and your feelings.

But it is so much more than that, right? It's not just what am I thinking? What am I feeling? It's who are you being every single day. What's your identity? What's your personality? Do you like that personality? What challenges are you facing, and how can we use the inner work to solve those challenges? You know, how do you show up when it's really hard in your marriage or in your parenting, or just in your life.

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

Doing The Inner Work

What types of reactions do you have, and what types of actions are you taking and not taking? All of this stems from what's happening in your mind and your body. So, what we do with the inner work is we look at your default mindset and your default emotions. So, mindfulness is all about bringing awareness to what's happening within you. What's happening in your mind and your body in the present moment? And when you have this increased awareness of your thoughts and your feelings, and you know what's going on, then you can decide if you want to change them.

But it's a journey to get there. We have to first look at what's going on within us, without shame and without judgment. And that sounds so easy, but it's actually pretty hard to do. We are a society of moral people, and typically we want to do good and be well. And what we find when we examine what's happening internally is that our brains are kind of crazy. We feel some things that we don't always want to feel.

So, it's being willing to be brave and look at that without shame and without judgment. It's definitely a skill that I have worked so much on. But it's made possible so much more contentment in myself and in my life. So, it's so worth doing. From that place of awareness of where you are right now with who you are being in your mind and in your body. Then it is deciding who you want to be in the future.

So, when you do this inner work, it's not so much based on the past and what happened in the past, which is what a lot of therapy teaches. This is very different. This is mindfulness coaching, which is about the present and into the future. So, who do you want to be in the future? What do you want in your life in the future? What do you want to create, and what do you want to do? This requires a lot of prefrontal-cortex thinking. You are thinking on purpose, creating a lot of space in your life to think on purpose.

Which I know is a challenge for some many of my clients, and myself included, as I grow my family. My life is fuller in the best way. But then it's carving out that space for the most important work because it's taking care

Doing The Inner Work

of myself when I do this work. Otherwise, I show up in the world, and my inside thoughts and feelings, mind, and body are kind of a hot mess.

It's sort of like having company over to your house, and you didn't clean it. You're like, oh, it's fine, but it's not my best. Please don't go in that room, or look over there, or look in the sink, right? That's what happens when we show up in the world and haven't done the inner work. We're not showing up intentionally. I think that it's important to mention that it's not just about your thoughts and your feelings separately.

It's about both together and how that creates our entire experience. So, you can't change your thoughts without changing your feelings. And you can't change your feelings without changing your thoughts. So, it really is both, and it's a lifetime of doing this work, right? It's kind of like talking about working out, and you're like, oh, all I have to do is move my body? And you're like, yeah, that's all you have to do to move your body to exercise.

But, right, we all know it's so much more than that. And the same is true with doing the inner work. It's so much more than looking at your thoughts and feelings. I want to point out, though, what the inner work is not. It's not taking action without looking at your thoughts and feelings. The best example I have for this is weight loss. So, it's going on a diet, following the steps, and just taking action without doing any thought and emotion work.

The problem with this is that you try to make a big change from your actions and don't change who you're being. So, you don't do that inner work. You don't change your thoughts and feelings. It doesn't work long-term because you will have to use willpower. So, if you think of any fad diet you've ever tried. This is exactly what I am talking about here, where it works for a little while, maybe. But you sort of yo-yo, and you go back, and it doesn't work. And then you just quit cause' it's, you know, didn't work for you.

But the truth is it didn't work because you didn't change who you were being first. It's trying to shortcut doing the transformation. Because if you

Doing The Inner Work

are someone who, let's say, wants to lose 100 pounds. You have to become a completely different person to do that than who you are right now. And that is terrifying to your brain. And that is why doing the inner work is so amazing. Because it requires so much of you in the best possible way, it's like doing a really hard workout, and your muscles are so sore afterward, but you know that it was the best thing for you.

The same is true for doing the inner work. It doesn't always feel amazing, but it is exactly what your mind and body need. So, I'm often asked why do this? Why do the inner work? And it's a good question to ask, but it's kind of like asking why exercise, like, why do we exercise? Well, it's really good for your body in the long term. It helps you have more energy. It decreases many health risks, including heart problems, stress problems, and it really helps you take care of this best body that you have.

The same is true for doing the inner work. It's taking care of what's happening on the inside: your mind and your emotions. And just like exercising, just like cleaning your house, it's not something you do once, and then you are so happy that it's done. It's not something that you get from reading self-help books and then listening to podcasts—and then consuming and having all of this input.

Like, input is part of it. So, you can learn some new things, which is what you are doing here. But then it's actually having a practice for it. It's, you know, a few times a week or once a week, or every day. Just like you would if you were working out. It's doing this inner work. Specifically, there are so many benefits to doing this work. You can solve any challenge that you are having. And I mean any challenge. It's so amazing.

You can see how you're feeling and why. So, you know that what I teach is that your thoughts create your feelings. Which is the truth. So, there's nothing outside of you that creates how you feel. Yet, we are taught that from a very young age. Our circumstances create our feelings. So, we think that what's happening in the world, what's happening with our kids, what's happening with our marriage, is what creates how we feel. And doing the

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

Doing The Inner Work

inner work actually allows you to pause and see that it's your thoughts that are always creating your feelings.

But that doesn't mean that you always want to change your feelings. Or you always want to change your thoughts. And that's when you take your thought work to a deeper level, and you make sure you're not into, you know, what I would call toxic positivity, where you just want to be happy all of the time. That's not the point at all. The point is just to see, oh, I feel this way because I think my kids should never fight. And if I think that thought, I feel tense and frustrated. And is that a thought I that I want to keep? Is it a realistic thought for me to feel good in? Do I want to stay frustrated and tense?

So, it's less about having someone tell you what to think. I never want to tell you what to think. I just want to show you your mind. It's like, I am going to hold up a mirror to your mind and to your body to show you what's in your heart. To show you what's in your mind. So, that you can decide is this way of showing up, is this way of thinking, is this the way of being really serving me? And then you get to decide.

You can change how you're feeling. You can change how you are thinking. Or you can keep it. It's totally up to you. Just knowing that is so empowering. And then, taking it a step further, you can create a completely different future from your past. And this is where doing the inner work can get really fun because you realize that you're always creating your life. And if there are parts of your life that you don't like right now, you can change them in the future.

It's more about changing who you are being than it is about taking different action. Because once you change who you are being, the action will change. So, I have done this over and over, and I just have to say that it has made such a difference in my own life. I went from being someone who was really stressed and Type A, and high strung and go, go, go really into that masculine achievement-oriented energy.

Doing The Inner Work

I identified as that person, and it took doing the inner work to really have a huge shift to get internally balanced. So, I have so much more flow. So much more feminine energy. So much more calm, and it's helped me balance out that achievement side. I like achieving still, but not in a way that is at my own internal expense. Instead, I feel so much more grounded, connected, and truly in love with my life, the good and the bad.

This is something that I didn't even know was available to me on the path that I was on previously. As like a lawyer and a financial planner and really just career-oriented and doing this work has just opened up my mind to what is possible for me in the future. And for what is possible for you in the future. That's just why I believe in this work so much. Is because these tools have made such an impact on my life, and I am so passionate about sharing them because I know they can have the same effect on your life as well.

So, question also comes up often to me about when to do the inner work. I think that it's kind of like asking how often do you want to exercise and how often do you want to clean your house? I am really into both of these analogies right now because I think they work. We can all relate to both of them. So, for some of you, you like to exercise every single day. For others of you, you're happy to walk three days a week. And for some of you, it's once a week.

The same is true for cleaning your house. Some of you clean your house every couple of days. Some of you clean your house once a week, and some of you stretch it, you know, maybe once every two weeks, okay? There is no right answer, but there needs to be a regular practice. We can't just exercise once and say, okay, now I am healthy and fit, and I exercised. The same is true for cleaning the house. We can't just clean the house once and say, my house is clean forever.

Because in a couple of weeks, the dust will be on the countertops, and the toys will be everywhere, and it will be chaos. Right? That is probably true within a couple of days. But the same is true with exercising, and it's an

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

Doing The Inner Work

ongoing practice. So, sometimes my clients in Grow You will be disappointed that the same issue will come up again.

But that's like being disappointed that your house got messy one week after you cleaned it. Of course, it got messy again. People are living there. That's what happens when you live in your brain and your body. You have the same issues come up, and you want to do the inner work on them, and nothing has gone wrong. There's never a point where we are problem-free, and we don't have any challenges. Because we live in a dynamic and interesting world, we all have different brains and bodies. So, we're all collectively trying to figure it out together. And it's just the best opportunity to do the inner work is being alive.

Which is so awesome for all of us because, myself included, can continue to do this work, and if you make it fun, you can make exercising fun, you can even make cleaning fun, and you can certainly make doing the inner work fun. I know I love it so much. I firmly believe that you need to be inside a program to do the inner work. I don't think that I am the right coach for everyone, actually. Right now, my work is very focused on moms in their 30s, 40s, 50s, most commonly. There are some women in the program outside of that, which is fine. But that's who I am best suited to help. If that is you, come on it to Grow You, and this can be your space to do your inner work.

If that's not you, find another space where you can regularly do the inner work. Again, it's kind of like exercising here. It's just really hard to do on your own if you don't have a space to do it in, or some sort of structure. So, even if you are exercising at home, maybe you have a peloton or the mirror, which works great. Because there's some sort of structure. It is just like having Grow You, that's a virtual, mindfulness program at home that you can log into, and there's some structure, and you can get support, coaching, classes, worksheets, and tools, which show you how to do it.

If you're doing it on your own, most commonly, what I see is not doing it. Right? It's thinking that you are doing it, but you're not really doing it. So,

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

Doing The Inner Work

instead, you're just listening to personal development podcasts and probably some self-help books. And, I get it, I was there probably a decade ago, and it wasn't until about five years ago, when I started actually investing in programs and doing this work seriously, that my life changed. That's just the truth. And I invest a lot of money. I am so proud of Grow You and how affordable I have made it for so many women. Right?

It is really accessible, and that is something I believe in. But it still needs to be something that you sort of think about, right? Because when we get something for free, we don't really think about it. So, we don't value it. So, Grow You is absolutely an amazing place if you are a mom to come and do the inner work. But again, if that's not you, find a space that you can go to and do this work. Because it's not enough to think about doing the work. You actually have to do the work. It's kind of like reading a book about recipes. You're like, oh, I think I can make that dish.

But it's a totally different thing to get in the kitchen and actually make it. You probably have to make it several time, several times, before you move on to the next dish. That's what doing the inner work is like. You can do the inner work on one area of your life and really solve that problem, and then maybe it comes up again, and you do more work on it. Maybe it doesn't. But there's always another area or challenge in your life to do the inner work on.

That brings me to talking with you about what topics should you do the inner work on? Generally, I think any challenge that you are having that you want to solve. Also, this is kind of like a challenge, but a little bit different. It's creating your future. What do you want to do with your future? What kind of goals do you want to set? Who do you want to become? How do you want to live more purposely?

Some of the challenges that are brought to Grow You, most often, I would say, is, you know, it's just a really hard season right now. That's one I help with a lot. Mom's struggling with the hard season, and I can relate to that. Again, what happens here, is we attribute what is happening outside of us

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

Doing The Inner Work

to what's going on inside. The problem with this is that it doesn't work. So, the next season comes, and then we feel the same, and we wonder why because we haven't looked at what's going on in our brains and in our bodies.

Some other topics that come up a lot for doing the inner work on that I think are great topics to do it on, you know, feeling disconnected in any of your relationships. Most often, I coach on the marital relationship. You are having disagreements there. Lacking purpose or direction and not really knowing what you want to do next. Feeling down or some what fine with life, almost like this low-grade apathy and not really knowing how to experience joy and really have fun in life and giving yourself permission to feel that good.

This is all stuff that comes up inside Grow You. So more specifically, I just want to give you an example, if you find yourself yelling at your kids or snapping at your husband, that is a challenge that you can take a look at and see what's going on internally for you. So, you will become aware of what you're thinking and feeling that's creating the action of yelling and snapping. Then, you can decide intentionally if you want to change that or not. I say that because it is important to know that the goal is not to just change as fast as possible. The goal is to slow down and be really mindful about what's going on internally so that you can live more purposefully.

We don't want to be in a rush to change. We want to slow down and have this mindfulness practice where we can change on purpose. I don't think that you want to do the work on everything. So, for example, let's say that you have a boss that treats you in a way you don't want to be treated. I don't think it's worth it for you to change your thoughts and feelings about that. Because you know you don't want to be treated in that way.

So, boss says words that can never create how you feel. But if you feel disrespect, it's because of what you are thinking. You're thinking she speaks to me in a way that's disrespectful. Now, you could do the inner work on that, and you could come to a place where you decide that no

Doing The Inner Work

one's that powerful and you want to think differently about it. But I would challenge you to even think if you would want to do the inner work on something like that.

I want to have boundaries and have standards for my life where I don't accept, and I don't tolerate being treated in certain ways. So, I don't want to do the inner work. I don't want to change my thoughts and feelings around that type of treatment. That's just one example. But there are so many. So, when we feel sad, heartbroken, or devastated, there might be times where we have negative emotion that we want to stay in and be in. Particularly with loss and grief. That part of the inner work is processing those feelings. It's not about changing how you're thinking so you can move this grief along faster. That can be so freeing just to know that feeling how you are feeling is valid, and you can still decide how you want to take action from there.

So, I think knowing what topics to do the inner work on and what topics not to do the inner work on is a skill that you get good at as you do the inner work and as you're inside a program doing this work. Because at first, it can be tempting to just change your thoughts all of the time. That takes us into sometimes this toxic positivity, which we want to stay out of. We don't want to think that life is just supposed to be happy all of the time. Like when boss speaks to us in a way that we don't like, we don't want to be happy.

I was most recently coaching on husband speaks to me in a way that I don't like. I don't think you want to be happy about that. So, how do you want to think, and how do you want to feel? And these are the questions that you can ask yourself as you get started really applying this practice and becoming more mindful. You will know if it is working based on how you feel and the changes that you see in your life.

I had someone ask me once inside Grow You, so that's it, you just change your mindset. And my answer is yes and no. Again, it's sort of like asking how to exercise and saying, oh, so you just move your body? That's it? Yeah, that's it. That's all you do to exercise is move your body. But, again,

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

Doing The Inner Work

there's so much more to it. Just like with doing the inner work, yes, it's about changing your mindset. But there's so much more to it. Becoming aware of who you are being, of how you're showing up in the world, of your thoughts, and your feelings, and how your brain has been programmed that way on default and knowing that the default programming isn't the programming that you have to keep.

You can change it. You can literally change your personality. You can change how you are showing up in the world. You can change your results, and you have so much more control over your life than you probably even realize. I say that myself included. Because you know at every sort of reinvention, let's call it, right? Possibilities open up. That we can't even see, like, when I think about my 22-year-old self or 25-year-old self, all I wanted to do was get out of student loan debt. I thought that would be like, making it. That was it from law school. That was all I wanted.

Of course, when I did that, it was, oh my goodness, this is amazing, and now what, there's so much more I can create. There is this freedom and this energy that comes from knowing that you can constantly grow and expand from a place of abundance. Not from a place of lack. Not from a place that anything has gone wrong. But from a true place of abundance that feels so amazing to grow from.

When we grow from lack, it's force, its urgency, and it's exhausting. But when we grow from abundance, it's so, so, so much fun. You will know if doing the inner work is working because you will have new and different results in your life. It may just be that you feel so much better. That can be a result. Or it can be more of the traditional results like, you've lost weight, you've left that bad job, you did XYZ, right? You made more money, those concrete results when we think of results.

But again, for me, the biggest transformations have been in how I am feeling and how I am showing up every day in ways that other people might not necessarily notice. But to me, they've had, like, the biggest impact on my life. It's only because I've been willing to go there with myself, to apply

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

Doing The Inner Work

this work in a way that I didn't even know was available to me. Because it's hard to see your own brain. And this is why getting coached and having someone to help you see your own brain can be so powerful. To see what's going on inside your body as well. You're always going to have blind spots.

This is why we say you can't read the label from inside the bottle. So, if you think of a bottle and you're inside it, you can't read the label from the inside. It's very hard. You might be able to, but it's slower. It's just not easy. But someone on the outside looking at the bottle can read it so quick. This is what it's like to have a coach, to have someone support you. This is what I do in Grow You. This is also what I look for in my own coaches. I always have coaches. I always have mentors and teachers. I can't imagine going through life without them.

It's kind of like can you go through life without exercising? Yeah. But you're not going to feel that great. Same is true with doing the inner work. Like you can, but you're not going to feel that great. There's so much that you're leaving untouched in terms of your own potential. Which I think is again part of the fun of doing the inner work.

The most incredible changes that have happened in my life have come from doing the inner work. Again, I mentioned going from this Type A perfectionist to a very career-focused lawyer to a much more grounded present living woman. I have created relationships in ways that I used to dream of. I wanted to build this family and grow a family so much, and I didn't do it until my mid-30s. But it was a result of doing the inner work. It took years, but it was so worth it.

I'm in the most amazing marriage with Steve; I couldn't be happier in that marriage. And that doesn't mean that there aren't challenges. Of course, we are human beings, but there's so much love and peace and happiness in it that I didn't experience in other relationships. I certainly didn't have in my family upbringing. I love just creating this home with our puppies and baby boy and growing this family from a really steady, solid place that I

Doing The Inner Work

didn't have growing up. And I have always wanted that and to do it in a way that feels so natural.

It's so interesting to look back on who I used to be because it's unrecognizable. It took shredding so much of my identity to get there. The same is true for other areas of my life as well. I used to drink, didn't have a drinking problem, but I think my life is better without drinking. So, I don't drink. I built a business without entrepreneurs in my family and, knowing anything about entrepreneurship, became a coach, no coaches in my family. No experience with that. So, I really believe in this works so much. Right, I have invested \$100,000 in it probably. I think that's the right number actually, I tallied it up.

That's because it's what I value. It's taking care of me from the inside out because I know that I show up in a way that's so much better for myself, my family, my community, and the world. That's why doing the inner work on yourself is the biggest gift and blessing you can give to your family and the world. It's selfish in the very best way. We have this thing in coaching where selfish is a good thing, right? This is what we are talking about. It's taking care of you.

So, that you show up in a way where you are your best self. That's what doing the inner work is all about. So, my specific method of doing inner work combines mindfulness with understanding your brain, with self-coaching, with processing emotions, with accessing your intuition, and with thinking from your future. I think everyone who is a teacher and coach of this inner work does it in a little bit of a different way, this is how I do it. If this is for you and you're a mom who wants a little more support, I really encourage you to join us in Grow You. You know, just like cleaning out that house, it's not something you can do once and expect it to be clean forever. You want to have a space where you can come to practice it regularly.

Just like you're going to clean your house coming up, that's what you are going to do with the inner work, cleaning up your mind and your emotion.

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

Doing The Inner Work

There is nothing wrong with you for wanting this support. It's like wanting to exercise. It's taking care of your body. It's taking care of what's going on inside. I think every single person, who is otherwise health and has a human brain and a body needs to be doing this work. That's how much I believe in it because I know the benefits are unparalleled. There's no other way to feel better, to feel more confident, to create new results in your life, to work through challenges, to uncover your purpose. There's just no other way to do it, and that's why I am so passionate about it. Because I know that these tools work. That's what I have for you this week, my friend, have an amazing week. I will talk with you next time. Take care.

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