

Your Future Self



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Hi there, welcome to the *Design Your Dream Life Podcast*. My name is Natalie Bacon and I'm an Advanced Certified Mindfulness Life Coach as well as a wife and mom. If you're here to do the inner work and grow, I can help. Let's get started.

Hey there. Welcome to the podcast. Today I have a really fun episode. We are going to be talking about your future self. This is a tool that is foundational to personal growth. So I think that you are going to absolutely love it if you are anything like me. Before I give you some specific steps that you can take to practice creating and becoming your future self, I want to talk first about what I'm even talking about when I say your future self.

So you only have the present moment that you're in right now. We all only have the present moment. Yet when we talk about our future and we talk about our past, we are always in the present moment talking about it. So the past that we were referring to is actually just the story in our minds that we're telling about the past.

So right now if I talk about how I met Steve and our courtship and how we got married and I tell that story, I'm in the present moment talking about something that happened in the past. So the past is always available to you to retell in a different way. The same is true about the future, which is what we're going to talk mostly about today.

This is true whether we're talking about five minutes from now, five years from now, 25 years from now. We all already do this in a social way. So think about planning for a vacation or spring break with the family, right? That is us in the present moment thinking about the future and planning it. The same is true when we talk about retirement or maybe we want to move or live somewhere else once someone finishes out their military term or something like that.

So we do this all the time. We're in the present moment and we're talking about the future. On default, your brain is always, always, always trying to keep you alive. It has that survival mechanism that you've heard me talk

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about before. So your brain is always trying to do things really quickly. This is why habits are so powerful and also so amazing if you optimize from them.

What can happen is that because your brain is always going to prioritize that efficiency, you can end up repeating parts of your past that you don't even necessarily want to. That's where creating a future self and accessing that future self from your prefrontal cortex can be so powerful.

So practically in a very real way what this looks like is say you have a habit that you've been in. I know for myself I have been in the habit of eating sweets more than ever. I think it had to do a lot with pregnancy and when I was so nauseous in the beginning of my pregnancy. Once the nausea started to go away, really anything that sounded good I was just putting down. I even lost weight in the beginning and was on medicine and all of these things.

So I really let go of any of the normal sort of standards that I had for food. It was kind of fun to experiment with this and see my brain and my body change and adapt. Now I'm at a place where I don't want to eat the amount of sugar that I have really eaten in the last year. And notice even my story about eating the sugar in the past year is kind of all related to things almost outside my control it sounds like. Okay well, the pregnancy and all of these things. I'm sort of justifying it.

That's okay. I don't feel bad about it. I'm totally fine with it. We just want to notice that the story we're telling about the past is always something that we can change. I could tell a totally different story if I want, but I kind of like this story. So I'm going to keep it and I'm going to think about okay what do I want my future to be like with sugar?

On default, what my brain's going to do is what I created the habit for in the last year, which is continue to eat the sweets. The reason is because my brain thinks that okay if we just keep doing what we've always done then

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we're going to be safe and we're going to stay alive. That's the main function of that primitive brain.

What we can do instead is we can pause and think more deliberately instead of going off of those subconscious habits that we've created whether it's intentional or unintentional. We can decide on purpose from that higher self, do we want to keep doing what we've always done?

It will typically be easier to continue doing what you've always done. So it would be a lot easier for me to just continue to eat the sweets than it would for me to stop eating the sweets and create this identity where I'm just someone who doesn't eat sweets. If I think about my long term future and who I want to be from this future self, then it's worth it to me. It's hard, but it's worth it. It's giving up that short term pleasure for the long term pleasure.

I think when we slow down and pause and make space for accessing our future selves, the shift that we can create for ourselves, that mindset shift, can actually make it a little bit easier for us to become that person. So if I just tried to resist eating a piece of chocolate that day, that resistance would feel pretty terrible. Maybe I could use some willpower to overcome it. Eventually, maybe not today, but eventually when I'm having a bad day or who knows what the reason is, I will give into that desire and that urge and I will have the chocolate or the sweet, whatever it is.

Instead if I use the future self-tool and I really manage my mind around who I want to become in the future, what I can do is I can at the very least meet myself halfway and say, "Okay, I know my primitive brain acts like a toddler and wants the sweets right now, but maybe what I do is I put some guidelines in place and I say okay I can have one little sweet thing after lunch and one little sweet thing after dinner." That's going to help me step into my future self.

That is going to feel so much better than trying to use will power all the time. Will I still have some resistance and some urges? Yes, but I will be

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focusing on becoming my future self, who is very different than who I've been in the past.

But what you're doing is you're bringing your attention in that present moment to the intentional woman that you want to become for your future. Instead of, again, what we do on default is oh well I've always liked sugar. I've always been someone who enjoys sweets. We tell this story and we retrain our brains to validate what we've always done. It's an option to not do that.

This is something that I just thought of, but I used to do this as well with being like a very alpha type A woman. I used to tell this story about being someone who was high achieving and alpha. I really made that a part of why it was hard for me to date at the time. I had so much evidence for it.

On the other side of that, which would be now married, becoming a mom, not relating to that label at all anymore as being super type A or alpha. It's so fascinating because I can clearly see that it was a story. Because it was a story that I wanted to let go of, I did a ton of work on it.

I don't think there's anything wrong with being alpha or type A at all. But for me when I accessed my desires, I knew that I wanted to let go of some of that story and get into more of what I would call my feminine energy and really become a little bit more grounded and relaxed and easy going.

It has been the growth of my lifetime, that's how it feels, to see this transformation because I had identified as that person for so long. It's only because I was doing this work. If I had kept on the path that I was on, I would have continued to have more of that rigidity, inflexibility, very list oriented and kind of stressed and anxious. Now I can tap into both whenever I want. I can set goals and still be a high achiever, and I can relax and settle into myself and practice self-care and not feel like I should always be producing. That is work that is worth doing.

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So you might be on the other end of the spectrum. I've coached a lot of women who find themselves being too much in flow and too much into that feminine energy and they're not achieving their goals. They're not creating their dreams. In that case, you might want to go more to the other side.

Now the point is for you to be able to see that you can choose whatever future you want for yourself. So now I want to talk with you about how to use this future self tool.

Step one is to pick a timeframe in the future. I've broken this up just into three different timeframes. Short term, medium term, long term. Short term is the end of the day. So the end of the day today, the end of the day tomorrow, the end of the next day. So we're really talking about a very short term. Medium term might be a year from now, three years from now, five years from now. Long term is going to be 25, 50 years from now, and the end of your life.

I think that doing this exercise and creating your future self in each of those categories, the short term, the medium term, and the long term, can be really helpful in different ways. So if you think about how do you want to feel at the end of the day today? How do you want to feel at the end of the day tomorrow? How do you want to feel at the end of the day the next day?

Those are very different questions, and you're going to get different answers than okay. What kind of mom do I want to be in the next five years? You can ask the same questions for each time frame, but I think sometimes you might find that there are particular challenges that you want to address in each of these timeframes.

So if you're in a season right now where you have infants or toddlers and you're not getting as much sleep, that can be a way for you to access your future self in that short term. That's going to look very different than in the medium term where you're comparing it to that short term. So in the medium term, you might say, "Okay well, how am I going to want to look

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back on how I was as a mom? What kind of mom do I want to be five years from now?" Right?

So think of those categories when you do this exercise. I would just pick one at a time. The short term, the medium term, and the long term. That's step one. Then step two is to create your future self purposefully. Then step three is to visualize being her right now.

So step one, pick the timeframe. Step two, create your future self purposefully. Step three, visualize being her now. So let's go into step two because this is really where you can have some fun and do this work in a really meaningful way that is going to help you.

So I want you to picture your future self specifically. What does she look like? What does she wear? What routines does she have? This is something that I think naturally we just don't do. We're like I don't know. We're just going to blow with the wind. This isn't a way for you to be more rigid. This is just a way for you to create the exact life that you want and allow for that flexibility and allow for that play while still thinking about who you want to become.

You can ask yourself what do you want to be different in the future and what do you want to be the same? So maybe your future self doesn't worry so much. You think you know what? In the next five years, my future self, she's just not a worrier. She's not so overwhelmed.

But you might want something to be the same as well. You love that you have family dinners on Sunday and your in laws come over and you all get together and you want to keep that. So it's not necessarily about taking nothing from your past with you. It's about being mindful about what you do take with you and seeing that you have the choice to take with you what you want and leave behind what you don't.

I love asking the question how do you want to feel? So this can be tricky because if you go into the future for longer periods of time, like in that

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medium term, a year from now and let's say you accomplish a goal. How do you want to feel about accomplishing that goal? That's really fun. Just remember that you are still human. So you're going to still be someone who experiences negative emotion.

So we don't want to say okay, in the future I am someone who is happy 100% of the time. It might sound something like okay, I'm someone who is content and loving and peaceful and confident and proud of herself and her family. I'm also someone who knows how to process negative emotions. I accept and allow any anxiety and disappointment and fear that comes up. That's the type of intention and purpose that we want to set when we're talking about feelings.

Now if you find that you indulge in a lot of emotions that aren't serving you like worry or overwhelm or you just think about your day to day life and how you feel apathetic towards it. That might be something that you genuinely want to say, "You know what? My future self is kind of done with that apathy. I did this for self-pity. Like I'm just done with self-pity. This is not serving me. I still feel other negative emotions, but those other negative emotions do serve me. When I am feeling disappointed, that's a cue for me to check in with myself and see what is going on internally."

So you can ask yourself at the end of everyday how do I want to feel? You can ask yourself how do I want to think about my life five years from now? Then you can ask yourself other questions like what type of friend do I want to be? How often do I want to travel? Where do I want to be living? So this might be for the five years from now. What type of marriage do I want to have? What type of mom do I want to be?

Again, we don't want to go to the place where everything is perfect. So imagine that your child isn't doing what you want him to be doing. He's making choices that you don't agree with or he's being someone that you expect him to be. Who do you want to be as a mom? I think this is such an important question because I think we all just deep down want to control everyone in our family and in the world. We think that we'll be a good mom

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if our kids are good, right? I'm just generalizing here with the word good, but you get what I mean hopefully.

Imagine that your child is doing something that you would not choose for him. Then what? Who do you want to be? How do you want to show up when that happens? I love this question for myself. It gets me out of being a crazy attached mom and it gets me into remembering that I have my own agency. I want to be present. I want to be loving. I want to be compassionate. I want to be available.

So when I think about that and when I think about me kind of witnessing my children's lives and watching their movies play out instead of me being the director and conductor of everything that they do, it puts me into a much more centered loving connected place instead of that controlling mom place that my brain naturally wants to go to.

So you can ask yourself any of these questions and see what comes up for you. So for me, I realized that in the next few years, I want to prioritize space. So much of life I think is about filling the space. I want to flip that on it's head and value space more.

So my future self has a very full life. My marriage is amazing. I had kiddos and puppies and we're a very close family. I also have a thriving multimillion dollar business where I'm serving moms and women who want help with doing this inner work. I'm also healthy and I practice self-care and I'm in the best shape of my life.

And I have a lot of extra space. What I mean by space is literally space in my closet, space on my calendar, space to lollygag at Starbucks talking with a stranger. Space to sign up for things and volunteer for things, space to give, space with my money, space to enjoy those small most insignificant moments.

So that's just something that's a little bit different that came up for me that I think I want to value and I think my future self does value that. So do this

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for yourself and see what comes up for you because your future self will have the best insights. It's your highest self. It's the space in your brain where you're out of that fight, flight, or freeze mode and you can access truly what you deeply desire from this totally blank canvas.

I think your future self also will help you relax and stop worrying about the small stuff. When I go to my future self, she never says that you should be worried. She never says that whatever you're worrying about right now, it's really good you're worrying about it. My future self always tells me, "Oh yeah. You're going to work through it. It's not even going to be that hard." It immediately has this calming effect.

So try that out. Notice how your future self will give you advice and have such clarity around decisions. So if you are struggling with whether to join your sister-in-law on a girls trip, go to your future self for advice and ask her what the answer is for you. If it turned out amazing that you went and it turned out amazing that you didn't go, which would you rather do? Your future self will give you the answer.

Your future self will also show you if you are focusing too much on one area of your life that is not as important as maybe you're making it seem in the moment. So for me, I learned that my future self was so desiring to settle down and get married and become a mom and focus so much more on family than on my career. This was a huge shift for me.

It was only through doing this work that I was really able to have that shift because I was a lawyer, a financial planner, an entrepreneur. My whole life was career and business. For me personally, I didn't want that to be the case. I wanted my life to be very centered and very dynamic. I still love my business and I still believe in helping women, but I'm doing it from this much more grounded purposeful mindful place.

My mission had shifted. I want to help 10,000 moms do the inner work inside Grow You. That shift happened from realizing who I want to be very intentionally in the future. If I hadn't done that work, I would have stayed on

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the path that I was on. Very career, money, work focused. That took up almost all of my life.

I can't tell you how much I absolutely love having career and business be a part of it, but having family be my number one priority. Having that be really the heart of my life. It came from doing this work. It wasn't something that I naturally had from my upbringing. I just love, love, love that I was able to do it with using the future self tool.

You can do this too. If there's anything that you want to change in your future. You may have to be willing to go through some discomfort to get it, but if you are willing to go there in your mind, that's the first step right. So we're talking about the steps here. We pick a time for the future, that's step one. Then we create that future self purposefully. If you're willing to create your future self purposefully, then you will be able to create it. That is step number three, which is visualizing being your future self right now.

I say the easiest way to do this is set aside five minutes in the morning every single morning. Close your eyes and just imagine being that future self person.

So if you notice that you're pretty apathetic everyday and you want to focus on becoming someone different in your day to day based on how you feel. So you don't want to feel apathetic every single day about your life. You want to feel content and loving and connected or some other emotion. Proud, whatever it is at the end of the day.

For five minutes in the morning, imagine that you go through the day and at the end of the day you feel that competence and that pride and that love or that contentment, whatever the emotion is. That's setting the intention in the morning and visualizing ahead of time to get your brain and body into that space. Your brain is going to want to close that gap. It's going to want to become that person because that's what you're focusing it on.

Remember on default it's going to focus on the past, but you can train it to focus on your future.

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Joe Dispenza calls this creating future memories. I just love that term. So you can do this for how you want to feel at the end of the day. You can also do this for the one year goal you have or the three year vision you have or for how you want to show up as a mom regardless of how kids and husband are acting.

For five minutes in the morning, close your eyes. Imagine being that future self person. Activate your senses. Get into the details. What does she wear? Where is she living? What does she smell in her environment? Piece together the visuals so you can see it in your brain. What does it feel like? Get into that state of being her just for five minutes. This is going to help you create your future from your future instead of from your past. It's just those three steps. Choose a timeframe, create your future self purposefully, and visualize you being her now.

I want to end with talking about how it can kind of seem like a luxury to do this. As I have grown my family, my life has become so full in the best ways but also in ways where I'm a real person with day to day challenges of managing a household and a family. We have pets. All the things that come with growing a family and prioritizing a family.

So it can seem like, "Okay yeah, this future self work sounds great, but it's kind of a luxury. I don't have the space to do that in my life." I want to challenge that. I want you to think about it not as a luxury but as a necessity. This work matters because you matter. Your life matters. Your future matters. If for nothing else because it's going to impact how you show up with your family as a woman, as a wife, as a mother, as a person in society, in the world. How you show up is determined by how you think and feel every single day.

So by prioritizing your inner self, you're prioritizing your family, your community, and the world. Just imagine if we all did this work daily. Can you even imagine what the world would be like? It would be incredible. So at least for me as someone who wants to show up in my family, run the

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household, take care of others. The way that I find space to prioritize this is first, I make it doable. So that's step three.

I intentionally put just for five minutes. I'm not going to do it for 50 minutes or hours every day. It's going to be for five minutes. When I prioritize myself, my future self, for those five minutes, I'm taking it on as my responsibility to do my part to show up to my business, to my clients, to you, to my husband, to my family, to the world where I have a managed mind. This doesn't mean that I show up perfectly, but it means that I'm showing up purposefully.

So whenever your brain tells you that you don't have time for this or it's not something that is worthwhile in this season, just remind your brain that that's not true. This is the more important work. We can spend five minutes every morning visualizing our future self intentionally. That can make all the difference in the world one year from now.

All right my friends. That's what I have for you today. I will take with you all next week. Take care.

If you loved this podcast, I invite you to check out Grow You, my mindfulness community for moms where we do the inner work together. Head on over to nataliebacon.com/coaching to learn more.