

Time Management Tips for Moms



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With Your Host

Natalie Bacon

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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.

What's happening my friend. Welcome to the podcast. I'm so happy to be here with you today. Steve and I recently have decided to stay in Charleston for at least another year. How fun is that? We were going back and forth between whether we want to go back to Chicago. Steve's jobs out of Chicago. It looks like at least for the next year, we will be in the south in the sun, and I am not mad about it. Although, we will miss our Midwest family and friends as we do throughout the year. All the more reason for them to come visit.

I hope that you are able to move around and travel and get out as much as you want. I actually have a little tangent I want to go on with you right now. I was just thinking about moving and the housing market. Something I did not anticipate with my own coaching was that I coach a lot on real estate and how much scarcity there is around real estate.

So if you are in the market right now for a home and you're trying to buy a home, or you want to move across the country or in some capacity you are moving, be careful what you're thinking. So it's a really hot market. It's a hard time to be a buyer. It's a terrible time to be a seller. You know, this house isn't gonna sell. Any of those types of statements, they sound like facts, and people talk about them like they're facts. But they're really thoughts.

What you want to do is make sure that you are thinking the best thoughts possible for the outcome that you want. So I do this really well. I've just practiced it a lot. Whenever we are looking for a house whenever we want to move, I always think thoughts that I want to be true. So I just think that we are going to find the most perfect house. I think there's never been a time in the history of the world that you haven't been able to buy a house or find a place to live, right? Like, I'm not going to be out on the street. So there's no upside to getting into scarcity and worrying about it.

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You just have to be careful because the more that you watch what's happening in the market, the more that you can be persuaded to think thoughts that don't serve you. So, again, whatever you want the outcome to be for you for moving and real estate, think thoughts that support that, that you actually believe. I know I'm going to find the exact house for me and my family. I know that other people have found it hard to buy right now, but that's not going to be our experience. We're gonna find the exact house at the exact right time. So just make sure that you keep your mind out of scarcity when it's not serving you.

All right, that is not what today is about. I did not even plan on talking about that. We are going to talk about time management today because I have had some experience now as a mom with time management. As you've kind of heard me talk about before, I plan in a certain way. I plan in a calendaring method. I'm really good at staying organized and following my calendar. It allows me so much freedom. I had been asked in the past about how to kind of do my method when you have little ones or you have a really flexible schedule.

So before kids I could predict my calendar and time almost with 100% accuracy. I mean, barring short of a car accident or you know I'm really sick, everything pretty much went according to my plan and how I planned it on my calendar. But now my days are much more fluid and dependent on what's going on with RJ. When he's napping, when he's awake, when he's fussy, when he's not. I have childcare for a few of the days, but a lot of the time when I don't have childcare or when something is changed with the childcare, I want to be able to plan in a way that is very flexible.

So I have an updated process for you. This would work not just for moms with kids who are home, but also for anyone who really has a very flexible schedule that for some reason or other can't be more structured. So at first I want to give you the process. Then I want to talk with you about the mindset because the mindset is how I came up with a process, and I think it will really help you to kind of make this your own.

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So first, let's talk about the actions. The actions to take. I'm a huge proponent of using a digital calendar. I love G-Calendar. If you have a calendar that works for you use that. I just like to have one to offer to you.

So use the digital calendar and put it in the week view. This is really important so you can see visually like what's coming up ahead. So you have the week view up. So you should see, you know, depending on your calendar, either five or seven columns. The work week or all seven days of the week.

Then at the top of each day, put a few items that you want to get done each day, and list them in order of priority. So you could put a one or a two or three in front of the title. Then anytime that free moments come up throughout the day, some of which you might know ahead of time, others of which you might not, you're going to do one of those priorities.

If you don't get it done that day, you move it to the next day. At any given time, I say you have three to five priorities for that day. So you're not putting them in time slots, which is what I normally teach and what I do when I can predict my calendar more concretely.

What happens when you move something to the next day is that you want to not keep adding so that you get six, seven, eight, nine, 10 things. You want to make sure that every day you only have three to five things. Then at the end of the week, check in with yourself and evaluate how it went. Did you have too much time? Did you have not enough time? Did you find yourself moving every single thing? You're the one in charge. So it's really important that you don't keep doing a process that isn't working.

So what you want to include in each of these items are things that are a priority to you that you need a reminder to do. So there are certain things for my self-care that I need a reminder to do so I'll put on my calendar. There are other things, like showering and getting ready, I don't ever need to put that on my calendar because it's ingrained in me so much. I don't need a reminder to do it.

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So if there are things for you as part of your self-care that you need reminded to do, you do want to put these on your calendar on that day and include it as a priority. So if you need a reminder to meditate, to do your self-coaching, to shower and get ready, to go on a walk or exercise, whatever that self-care is that you need to get in, you want to put that as a line item on the day at the top and make it a priority.

One of the things that I think is most important here is that you don't over plan and you don't under plan. People really miss interpret my work around calendaring thinking that it's really rigid. The intent is not to fill all of your time. The intent is simply to be purposeful with the time that you have. So it's not I need to fill every single second of my day deliberately. It's okay. I know that I have 24 hours coming up. How do I want to use that time? So it's being really conscious and mindful of the time that you have and how you're planning and using it.

So as you evaluate weekly, notice if you are over planning. If you're over planning, schedule fewer things for that upcoming week. If you're under planning, schedule more things. Okay. That's really it. That's what I've been doing, and it has worked wonders. The first time that I did this, I kind of started with a long priority list, and then I added it to my calendar. So that also might be something that you can do.

But really if you looked at my calendar right now, there are a few things in time slots like meetings or Grow You coaching calls or maybe a doctor appointment here and there that I know for sure that are concrete. But everything else is listed at the top. Just in G-Calendar it's called an event. I just add an entry, and I put a title. I know for that day, that's sort of my goal to get done whenever I have space to do it. I never beat myself up. If I don't get it all done, I just simply move it to the next day.

Now I want to talk with you about my mindset and the mindset that is going to serve you best with this process. How you think about your time matters more than using this process. It matters more than the actions. Why? Because you'll come up with awesome solutions if you're thinking from a place of time abundance.

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For example, it's really common right now for people to tell me things like I bet you're wondering what you did with all your time before you had kids. Or you don't have time for anything now I bet. At first I would agree, and then I realized and became more aware of what was happening. That these were optional thoughts that people were offering to me, and that I was believing on default just because they said them to me. They don't serve me.

So thinking I don't have enough time, and I had way more time before I had kids, those are thoughts and beliefs that helped me optimize my time right now. So I decided I didn't want to think them anymore. I came up with better feeling thoughts that feel true to me. So here are some of my thoughts that I think right now.

I have the same time in a day that I have always had. My time is just spread out differently. The activities that I do during the day are different than they were before, but the actual time is the exact same. I had 24 hours before, and I have 24 hours now.

I like the thought I have more time than ever. I actually feel that this is open and light and true for me. So if you think that thought, "I have more time than ever," and it doesn't feel true for you, don't adopt it, right. That's why I don't teach affirmations. I teach thoughts to borrow where you try on the thought, see if it works for you. But that really feels good to me. I have more time than ever.

What I love about the time I have now is there so much more time to think, which is the most important thing. So I could focus on the fact that I can't just get up and go whenever I want. I can't focus and I can't schedule my days exactly how I used to schedule them. I could come from a lot of lack. That would just not serve me.

So instead, what I'm focusing on is all of the amazing things about time during this season. There is so much time for me to think it's crazy. The amount of time that I rock and hold RJ and am with him I'm using so

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purposefully. Some of the times I'm just present and we're laughing and giggling and I'm playing with him, and it's lovely.

Other times, I'm there with him taking care of him or maybe I'm rocking him to sleep and I'm thinking. I am thinking about my life and my relationships and my business. I am using that time to think really, really purposefully. I think that before I didn't slow down. I didn't use my time a lot to think really in this way that I'm doing right now. So that's just an example.

The key is for you to come up with thoughts that feel true for you. So you want to put your brain to work on this. Become aware of what you currently think about your time, and then if those thoughts aren't serving, you come up with better feeling thoughts.

Okay. So now I want to talk with you kind of about my experience with the mindset and the actions here. So on any given day I have, I don't know, anywhere from one to five things that are on my calendar at the top. It also depends on whether I have childcare, which is typically three half days throughout the week.

So today, for example, what I have on my calendar is to record a podcast, write an email, my Thursday inspo email. I have a platinum member VIP call. So that is actually scheduled. That's not at the top. That's a specific time. I have walk and meditate on my calendar because the last couple of days I've been slacking on those two things. So those are all at the top except for the call which is scheduled in the actual time slot.

A couple things, as I mentioned, that I will do that I don't put on my calendar, shower, get dressed for the day, cook, listen to positive personal development or audio books or coaching, coach myself. Those are things that I know I will do so I don't need to put them on my calendar. I use my calendar as my mental reminder. So I don't want to have to rely on my brain to remember everything all day every day. It's exhausting. Then I wouldn't have space to think on purpose at a much greater scale.

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So I want to be thinking about shifting my mindset, living intentionally, growing my business, kind of showing up as the mom I want to be. I want to be thinking of how to overcome challenges. I don't want to be thinking about reminding myself to write an email. So it's really important that I use my calendar kind of as my virtual digital assistant to remind me of what I have going on for that day and for the week.

So for you, you want to put things on your calendar that you need someone to remind you of. So for a lot of you, that's going to be your own self-care. It might just be listen to a podcast or coach yourself or meditate. Just one thing that you want to do for the day to take care of yourself. Or it might be showering and getting ready. You also might include really anything that you would normally remind yourself of. If you are working on a book, it might be write a chapter in a book. Again, you want to be specific.

So if you're not familiar with my calendaring method, I teach you to calendar the specific result in the time slot. So you would never write on your calendar "work on book". You would put on your calendar "write chapters two and three for book". So it's very clear at the end of that timeframe whether you did the thing or not. Okay.

So in this kind of tweaked version of it where your calendar needs to be really flexible, you still want to put an entry for the desired outcome. You just don't put it in a time slot. So you wouldn't put "work on book". So I don't have on there "work on emails". I have on there that I need to write the Thursday inspo email. I will know at the end of the day whether that's done or not.

So if you are writing a book and you want to get three pages done, you're going to put an entry for "write three pages of book". Just to make it as specific as possible so that you're able to know whether you did the thing or didn't do the thing.

So now I want to dive into some kind of tips and mistakes and things to look out for as you do this to help you really have success with this type of planning. I think the biggest mistake is not scheduling self-care and thinking

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that we need to do everything for everyone always. So using our calendar as a way for us to give more than we have the capacity for. Don't do that. Use your calendar as your best friend who happens to be your assistant and is going to remind you of the things that are highest priority.

The next biggest mistake I see is trying to do too much in one day. Again, it comes from the sense of I need to do everything for everyone always and trying to accomplish the most amount of things thinking that somehow makes you better. You're not better if you do one thing or if you do 10 things. You are the same amount of goodness, and which is 100% lovable and amazing. You don't have to do anything or produce anything to make that true. You just get to be you, and what you're doing and producing in a day is just for fun.

Another big mistake I see is people skipping over the mindset work. So they want to take my calendaring method and use it, which I highly recommend, but then they'll have specific challenges for themselves. If they're not doing the mindset work, they won't be able to solve those challenges.

So if you don't watch your mind and manage it, you'll end up thinking that there's a challenge that you can't work through with respect to time. So you want to make sure that you are thinking on purpose when it comes to time. That you're not rushing around, that you're not coming from scarcity, that you truly believe that there is enough time for you.

Try to avoid as much as possible keeping any sort of list in your brain. Remember, your brain is like this super powerful computer that is capable of so much. The more that you rely on it for lists, the less space you have for using this superpower that is your brain. So if you really need to make a list, make it in your notes app on your phone. If you have something that you don't want to forget, jot it down on a sticky note. Just get it out of your brain.

Anytime that I find myself continuously coming back to something in my mind, I know that's a sign that I need to either make a decision, get it out on

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some form of paper. Like I know that it's taking up space where I could be using my mind so much more thoughtfully and purposefully.

This also is a way for you to avoid decision fatigue and give yourself a break. It's a way for you to be able to rely on yourself instead of your memory to make sure that you don't forget anything. So instead of saying, "Brain you need to remember all this." You're saying, "No brain, I got you. We're gonna make a list, and I know where this list is. I'll come back to that."

So I use Evernote and I also use the notes app on my phone. I don't keep lists really. You all know that. But sometimes if it's like grocery shopping or other types of shopping, I'll keep a list for that. Otherwise, I have things organized in notes and Evernote, but mostly everything's on my calendar. I think of my calendar as like my best friend who has my back for my time and is always trying to help me use my time in the absolute best way.

Also, I mentioned earlier that you want to check in with yourself weekly. Don't get frustrated if you don't do what you intend to do for a day, particularly if you have a flexible schedule. It's because there is a circumstance in your life that makes it that way.

So you have little ones at home is a perfect example. I like to think of them as a challenge to scheduling. I'm glad. I want that challenge and want a family, but it is a challenge. I can't schedule things down to the hour in time blocks like I used to. But I don't get frustrated about that. I don't want to be upset. I want to know that this is just a challenge that I'm working through and figuring out, and it's always working out in my favor.

If you are the creative type and you love being in flow and not planning. Like planning is not your thing. I hear you, and I get it. But I also know for sure that if you don't have some sort of process or structure to your days, you will not create the life you desire most. In fact, you will take action and you will do things based off inspiration and motivation, which comes and goes depending on the day.

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This means that you're going to take a lot of breaks. You will slow down. You'll go back and forth. You'll likely quit. You won't get a lot of traction in any direction at all. This is because you'll always be acting from what your mind wants to do in the moment.

I like to think of the example of eating cake for breakfast because you're craving something sweet versus having a plan for when you only eat sweets in the afternoon or evening after dinner. Sometimes your default brain in the moment wants that pleasure. It wants to go outside and do nothing. It wants to eat the cake. But if you have a plan and say don't worry brain, we're going to have some cake later. Right now we're going to eat some eggs. That is going to serve your highest self and your future self.

In the same way, you might say don't worry brain, we're going to get outside and take a walk later, but right now we're going to do this thing called working on the next chapter in our book. So this plan guides you to live into your highest self. Without it, you're going to be eating cake for breakfast basically.

As you think about time, you'll be tempted to think about your circumstances. I want to remind you that your circumstances will never prevent you from what you truly want. If you want a more calm home, you can have it. If you want to work fewer hours, you can do that. If you want to write that book, it's totally possible for you. Whatever you truly desire is available to you.

Sometimes we look to our circumstances, myself included, and we find so much evidence for what we don't want to be true. We internalize that. We think that it's no longer possible for us to have what we want. I want to just remind you that you have control over what you think and what you believe. So don't argue for your limitations.

This is kind of what happens when we say things like I can't work out because I don't have time, or I can't plan or get anything done or work on my business because I have kids. It might seem like that's the truth at first, but those are just thoughts that won't serve you.

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So what else can you think that will serve you? Such as having kids makes working on my business a challenge, but I'm working on a solution so I can show up as the mom I want to be and create my dream business. Do you see how that thought is so much more empowering? And yet, it's very unlikely that your brain on default is going to come up with that.

So you want to spend some time thinking about how you want to think about and relate to time. It is so worth it. As I've done this work in the last couple of months, it's been really powerful for me because now I'm using my time in a way that feels so much more aligned and purposeful for the future that I want to create.

So when RJ was first born, I didn't know how I would use my calendar, but I put my brain to work on solving this new challenge. Part planning, part childcare, part mindset led me to discover this new way of planning. Had I been convinced that it wasn't possible, I would have created that result. Instead I created this new system that works really well for me. Planning is amazing. I, again, think of it as my assistant who's my best friend who is having my back and helping me use my time in the way that is best for the life that I want to live.

So you don't have to be too strict and over plan. Leave some room for fun and play, but you also don't want to be so fluid and plan nothing or you won't live into your future and create your dreams. If you think that you don't have enough time and you're spread too thin, this is both a mindset problem and a scheduling and commitment problem. So work on it with the tools that I've laid out for you in this episode. Also come into Grow You, and I will help you with both. Have an amazing rest of the week. I will talk with you 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.