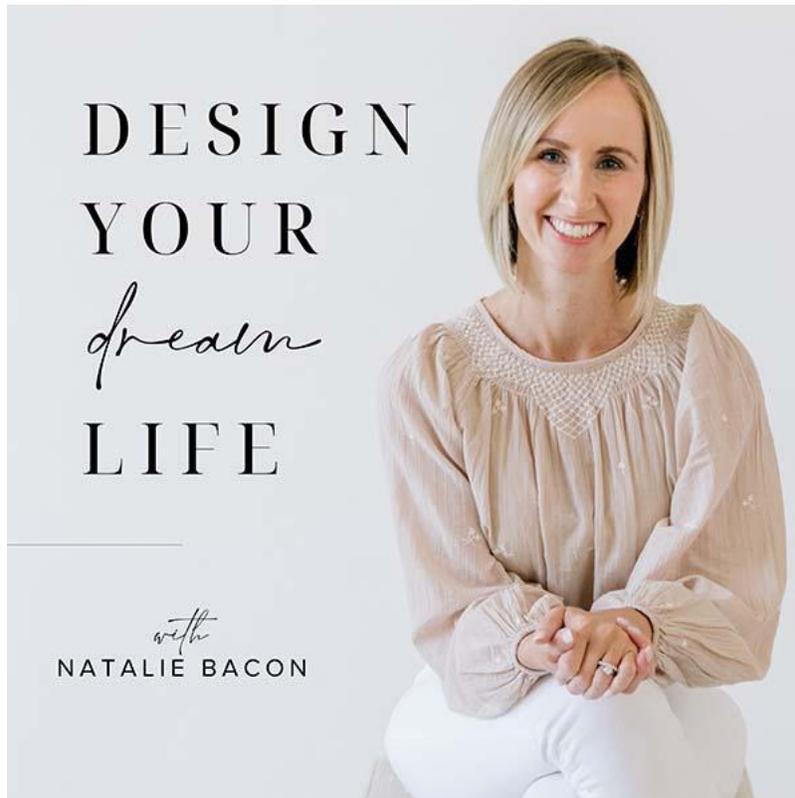


Self Talk For Moms



Full Episode Transcript

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.

Hey friend. What's happening? I am so happy to be here with you today. I hope you're doing well. I want to remind you to come and hang out with me in less than a week. I am hosting a workshop. Aside from the fact that we get to know each other a little bit more and hang out together, you get to learn some amazing new practices for how to stop feeling like you are failing as a mom.

This is brand new content, brand new tools, brand new practices. I'm teaching it in a way that I have never taught before. It's going to be fantastic. It is only \$19. You can get all of the details over at nataliebacon.com/workshop. I would really love to see you there.

Today I want to talk with you about self-talk and all the things self-talk as it relates to being a mom and motherhood. When I was doing research for this episode and just thinking about it from my own life as well as my clients' lives, I noticed that there was a lot of information out there about self-talk in general, but not a lot as it specifically relates to being a mom and the challenges of motherhood. So I want to do a special episode on that. Hopefully, you get a few little nuggets here that you can take with you and apply to your life.

So I want to start with giving you a few questions that I wrote down that I want to kind of use as the outline for this episode. If you are in a place where you can write these down, I think they can help as well. Make a note in your phone. Obviously don't do this if you are driving or on the go, but otherwise, these are the questions that are outlining this episode, and that I think will help you think about this topic in a way that's really useful in your own life.

So the first question is what is self-talk? The second question is what is your self-talk? The third question is why does self-talk matter? The fourth

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question is where did your self-talk come from? Question five, how is your self-talk impacting your life? Six, how can you change your self-talk? Seven, how to practice self-talk? These are the questions that I'm applying myself, and I'm hoping to answer for you here.

So I think there's this general understanding of what we mean by self-talk, right? It's this dialogue that we have with ourselves. But I want to make it really clear that it's running all of the time. So even if you don't do thought work, and you don't write your thoughts down, and you're not really practicing these mindfulness tools that much, you still have self-talk. Even if you are someone who doesn't know what self-talk is, you still have it. You're just not as aware of it.

So I'm sure you have people in your life who are not interested in personal development. They still have self-talk. They just might not describe it in that way, or even be aware that it's a thing at all. So I just like to point that out that it's not that you have to learn about self-talk for it to be there. It's there for everyone. What we're doing here is just bringing awareness to what already is.

What's happening is that your brain talks to you. It has thoughts that run on default. They run automatically. Some of your self-talk is probably really supportive and good. But what we are going to focus on is the self-talk that is harsh and critical and unsupportive.

So here's a really basic example. If you had a really rough day, if you have positive self-talk around hard days, it might sound like you're saying to yourself gosh, that was a really rough day. But you know what? We all did our best, and we're going to try again tomorrow. It doesn't mean that you are in toxic positivity where you're saying this day was amazing. It just means that the way that you speak to yourself about anything is in a way that is supportive. So in this example, you're acknowledging the rough day, but you're doing it in a way that's loving and caring and gentle with yourself.

On the other hand, if you said gosh, this was a really rough day, and everything went wrong, and I'm such a bad mom. I can't believe I yelled like

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that. I'm seriously horrible. My kids deserve better. That is the critical, harsh self-talk that seems really useful and seems responsible and yet isn't. It's causing so much more harm because what happens is instead of taking a look at it, which is what's required to change it, we avoid it.

We resist it, and we pretend it's not there. We think that we need to change our circumstances and our kids and our lives in order for us to feel better. But really, the truth is what we need to do is take a look at the way that we talk to ourselves.

This is sort of an aside, but the way that I teach how to stop yelling at your kids is so different. Because I say the way to stop yelling at your kids is to first stop yelling at yourself about yelling at your kids. What I mean by that is typically when you find yourself yelling at your child, you have so much guilt and shame, and you judge yourself so harshly for it that the reason you can't change it is because you're unwilling to actually accept yourself and be gentle with yourself and kind with yourself.

Said differently, you have to stop yelling at yourself in order to stop yelling at your kids. So that is one way that self-talk sort of manifests in real life in terms of how we show up as moms.

So think for a minute right now, what is your self-talk like? Can you think of one example? One is plenty I want to give you a few here aside from what I've already given you. Let's say that you are struggling with nighttime. Negative self-talk with sound like nighttime is such a struggle. This is horrible. It always takes longer than expected. I don't have time for myself. The kids are awful. I just wish it could be better. There's this like harshness and intensity to it, and it feels very stuck and unsolvable.

Another example of negative self-talk is I'm just not good enough. I see other moms who are able to balance all of the things, working, raising kids, and they make it look so easy. Why can't I? Negative self-talk usually has very disempowering questions attached to it. So she can do it. It's easy for her. Why can't that be for me? Why is my life so hard? Why is this season so challenging? Why don't my kids listen to me?

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Those questions are really disempowering because your brain will go to find the answers of these questions. It will make you feel worse. Instead what we want to do is shift into much more empowering self-talk that still is the truth for us, but it enables us to get unstuck.

So part of coaching, which is different than therapy in so many ways, but in one specific way is that we don't spend a lot of time and coaching kind of investigating and navigating the past. That said I think here it can be useful for you to just know that self-talk comes from all of the experiences that we've had.

So it might come from how your parents spoke to you growing up, or your peer group in school, or your colleagues at work right now. It could come from the culture that says no sick days for mom that makes you feel like you can never take a break. Or social media. All of these places are where your brain picks up the patterns for thinking.

Like I said, in some instances, you probably have positive self-talk, but we want to take a look at where your self-talk is really harsh and critical. I find that specifically with moms, we are so hard on ourselves. I think it's because we love our kids so much, and we just really want to do a good job. It seems like there's so much on the line for any mistake. So we end up having this unattainable standard, this perfectionist standard, where there's no room for us to be human and make mistakes. So if we do make a mistake, and we do fall short, we beat ourselves up for it.

Even the low grade bashing that we have of ourselves is just as harmful as the explicit bashing of ourselves. It may even be worse. So I don't know about you, but I don't go around expressly beating myself up. I'm not saying out loud I'm a horrible Mom. I can't do this. Right?

Of course, there may be moments of that. But generally, any sort of negative self-talk that I experience that I've found for some of my clients as well is that it's actually more subtle. I think because it's more subtle, it can be harder to identify and easier to overlook. Then it continues, and we don't pay attention to it, and it compounds. We think that's just who we are.

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I was coaching someone recently, and she said, “I just can't stop yelling at my five year old.” She said it as if it was a fact. I just can't stop yelling at my five year old is a thought. The facts are something like yesterday at 3:00 p.m., I yelled at my five year old for doing XYZ, right? That's a fact. I just can't stop yelling at my five year old makes it this bigger identity.

When we believe something like that, we make it mean that we are flawed internally, and we just can't be fixed. What I want you to see is that we can loosen up that thought and get curious and explore it. The reason that this is so powerful is because when you do that, you detach it from your identity. You see that you are a human.

In your role as a mom right now, you're finding it challenging to not yell at your daughter. That's okay. You're navigating it, and you're trying, and you're failing. That's okay. You never have to stop trying. You haven't figured out how to stop yelling yet. Even that is more empowering. Do you see how by adding on that word yet it gives the thought some momentum out of being stuck?

This can be so powerful for making real change in areas that you haven't been able to make change in for years. Just that little shift. When I was thinking about self-talk and what I wanted to talk with you about here, it was so tempting for me to want to go to all of the better feeling thoughts. Said differently all of the mantras, all of the next believable thoughts. I want to give you some of those, of course.

But I was thinking more about it. I wanted to explore with you the problem with negative self-talk. I think that we jump to where we want to go so quickly that we forget to pause and really appreciate how our self-talk is affecting our lives right now. It's only in seeing why there is such a problem that we will actually prioritize this. So it's really fun to try on new thoughts and to do thought work. If you're into personal development, which I assume you are, it can be entertaining and educational and fun to do this work. I'm always saying like let's make this work fun.

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But I think for you to view it as so important that it's worth your time, which there are so many things fighting for your time, of course. The only way that that happens is if we pause and see the effect of our negative self-talk on our lives. So let's do it. Let's take a look.

I think that negative self-talk is what makes motherhood exponentially harder than it already is. Motherhood in general is hard because it doesn't relent. Right? You are a mom 365 days of the year. I think we've been conditioned. Of course this is a generalization, but particularly in Western culture and in my life and in most of my clients' lives, we've been conditioned to do everything for everyone always.

So when we have that standard, it means there's no room to pause, to do self-care, to be gentle with ourselves, to laugh off mistakes. Instead if we make a mistake, we are mean to ourselves, we're harsh. We make it mean we're not a good enough mom. So there's this hard thing that we're doing 24/7, and we make it so much harder by the way that we talk to ourselves.

When we talk negatively to ourselves, it leads to feeling guilt, worried, pressure, anxiety, embarrassment, shame. I mean and even depression depending on how extensive your negative self-talk is. When we feel these really heavy, strong negative emotions, we end up showing up defeated.

You feel like a failure so you show up that way. You're irritated because you think you're not good enough, and you're feeling guilty. You think that you have to be perfect. Because you're not, there's something wrong with you. It can even turn into a little bit of self-pity. Believing that we're at the effect of our lives.

So this negative self-talk creates these negative feelings that are unsupportive, not useful. Then we show up in our lives and we take action in a way that is not from our highest self. Meaning it's not who we want to be. So negative self-talk isn't just about okay, I said this thing where I was judging myself, and it would just be better if I changed that thought and was nicer. It's about actually enjoying your life. Because you are a mom now

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and forever. So there is no point where you no longer will have these thoughts if you don't challenge them and change them.

When you give yourself grace, when you can laugh at your own mistakes and still show up on purpose where you're maybe apologizing if it's that type of mistake or repairing the relationship if needed, but you're doing it from a place of compassion and love. Your life changes in the most profound way. You don't have that guilt and that shame and that feeling of not enoughness.

What seems like a really hard season that you're constantly overwhelmed by and ready for it to be over suddenly feels like a harder class that you took in college. Yes, it's challenging, but it's something that you're doing on purpose where you're growing, and you're learning, and it's fun as well. You're so happy to be in it.

So, again, it's not that we go into toxic positivity, where everything is just amazing all the time. We still have those challenges. But when we're feeling challenging emotions, when we are experiencing challenging times, we don't make it mean anything negative about ourselves.

So here are some examples of positive self-talk. Nothing is wrong with me and nothing is wrong with my kids. Even when I mess up, I'm a good mom. I can do hard things. This is challenging, and I was made for this. I feel overwhelmed, and I can cope with this. I love every part of me, even the messy part that's making mistakes. I love her. I got this. I get to choose how I want to think and feel and show up every day. It's always up to me. I'm kind of amazing.

Like, just think about that last one. When's the last time you just gave yourself that praise that you are looking for? So these are a few examples of positive self-talk that you can borrow, try on, see how they feel for you. But I want to give you a process to change your negative self-talk that will be even more impactful for you because you can come up with thoughts that are empowering given your specific circumstances.

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So one of you listening has four kids under five years old. Another one of you has a 10 year old, a 14 year old, and a 17 year old. So you can create really specific positive self-talk that you can practice and use based on your circumstances that I just won't be able to do here for you.

So the process is first to pause, to give yourself space to do this. The second step is to ask yourself what am I saying to myself right now? The third step is to ask yourself how does this self-talk feel when I'm thinking it? The fourth step is to answer the question how do I show up when I feel this way? The last question to answer is what's a more supportive way to talk to myself about this topic? This is where you're going to want to get specific.

So if you struggle with mornings and getting out the door, what is your self-talk like? What do you want it to be in those challenging moments? It can be really tempting to say well, I just want my kids to listen, but that is outside of our control. Of course, we can have expectations, and we can have boundaries, and we can have consequences and all of those things, but we can't actually control their agency.

So instead, what you want to do is practice talking with yourself in a way that leads to the emotion that you want to feel. Said differently, if you're getting frustrated and irritated and agitated every morning, instead of feeling those stressful emotions, how do you want to feel? You probably want to feel calm, confident, something like that. What do you need to be telling yourself to create those feelings? That is the self-talk that you want to have.

It's the most important thing because what most people do, and this is why Grow You and the coaching that we do is so powerful and so different. Most advice out there will tell you actions to take. We all love a good strategy, but when you don't change the mindset and the feelings first, it doesn't work long term.

So I was talking with you earlier about the client who is struggling to stop yelling at her five year old. She said, "I've tried everything. I know that I'm doing it in the moment, and I still can't stop." What I was showing her was

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that it's her thought that she's now taken on as an identity. It's like saying Hi, my name is Karen, and I'm a woman who can't stop yelling at her kids. It's making the action part of your identity. That is why you continue to do it. Because your brain thinks that that's just who you are.

So you have to separate out your actions from who you are. Then go deeper and look at the thoughts and the feelings that you're having that are creating the action. It actually does take some time. That's why I wanted to go over with you why it's so important to change your self-talk because it is the only way to solve these challenges from the root cause.

I can speak to my own experience about this. I used to be someone who was so wound tight, I guess for lack of a better phrase, and would get so mad so easily. I'm just not that way anymore. I am someone who occasionally gets mad or occasionally feels irritated, but it's not something that I'm experiencing often. I've really shifted the emotions that I feel regularly. It's only from doing this work. So it's not fluff. It's not luxurious. It's really the most important thing.

So if you are working on your self-talk as it relates to motherhood, start with the process that I gave you a little bit ago. Pause, take a look at what you are saying to yourself right now, look at how that self-talk feels in your body, and then how you show up when you feel that way, and then come up with a more supportive self-talk as it relates to that specific circumstance.

The last part of this is practicing it. This is why I think that being a part of something like Grow You or whatever coaching program that is best for you is so important because you need to have a space where this is repeatedly in your ear to remind you to do it. It's one thing to learn about it and to hear about it. But if you're not actually doing it.

I heard Esther Hicks say recently it's like a vacuuming but the vacuum isn't plugged in. You'll get all the lines on the floor and you'll go through the motions, but there's no actual sucking up the dirt. So it's kind of like that

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where it's great to hear how to do it and to think about how to do it, but until you actually do it, you won't have that transformation.

So, that is my sell to you to do this work, to take a look at your self-talk, to change it, and then to practice it. Even if it's just once a day looking in the mirror in the morning--I do this--and telling yourself I love you. That will change your life because you are increasing the intimacy and the connection with yourself, and that will carry through with you throughout the day as like a reminder to be kind and loving and gentle to yourself. Which is so important, my friend.

You are doing amazing things in the world, in your families with your kids, and you deserve to be treated with the utmost love and respect that you give to everyone else. That's what I have for you today. I will talk with you next week. Bye, bye.

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.