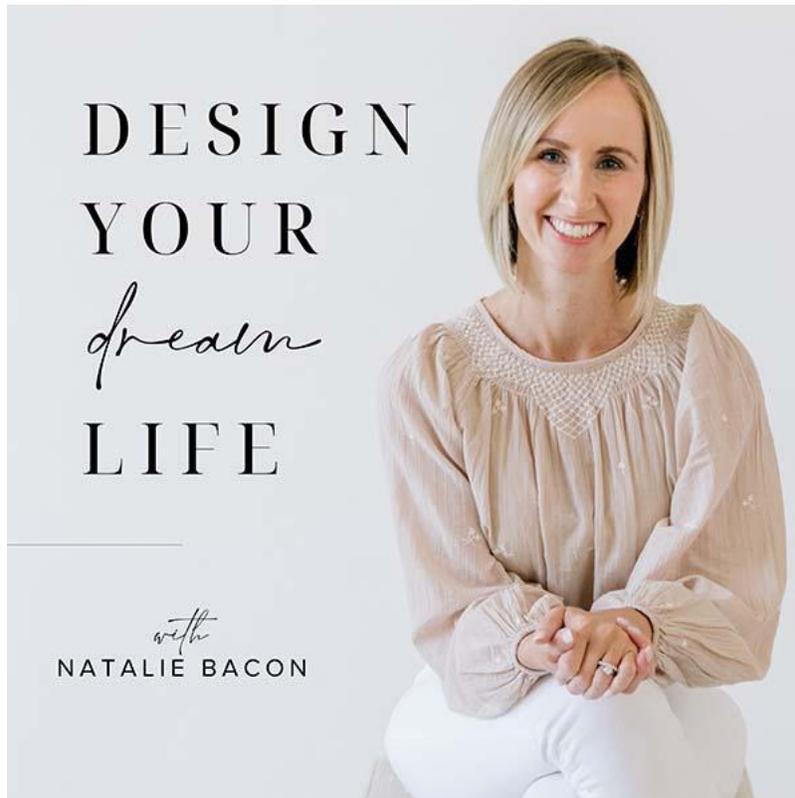


If You Don't Like Playing With Your Kids



Full Episode Transcript

With Your Host

Natalie Bacon

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

If You Don't Like Playing With Your Kids

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.

Hello my friend. Welcome to the podcast. So happy to be here with you today. I'm having a lot of fun over on Instagram. I would love for you to join me and reach out to me, send me a DM, say hi. I've been really active within my own constraints of how much I use social media, but still have been able to reply to most DMs that I get, give y'all some free coaching, and answer any questions you have.

The content over on the new Instagram page @nataliebaconcoaching is bite size, which is really fun. On the podcast, it gets to be a little bit longer. We only do that every week, but there is no message forum here. So I just want to invite you to come join me, send me a DM, say hi, let me know you're coming from the podcast.

Or if a mom or you have a friend who is a mom who would love some more mindfulness tools, I share so much every day on there. Send her my Instagram. A lot of you have already done that. I'm so appreciative of that. It is so helpful. I just want to say thank you, I love y'all, and I'll see you over on Instagram.

Today I have a topic that is brought to you by popular request, which is what to do and how to have a positive mindset around playing with your kids if you don't like playing with your kids. So I've coached many clients on this inside Grow You. I also hear about it often. I experience it myself with RJ and with my peer group and kids of all ages.

I have some strategies that will be helpful in terms of how you can think about it. Just help you feel a little bit more empowered around play and around what happens when you don't like play and what you can kind of avoid so you don't fall into this shame/blame trap, which can be pretty tempting.

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So the problem that I see most often is that a client will come to me and say they really don't like playing with their kids, but they're also making it mean that they're a bad mom. So it's something like Natalie help me. I don't like playing with my kids. I feel like such a bad mom. Then this feels like guilt for them and even shame. They avoid it. They avoid talking about it. They avoid admitting it to themselves. They pretend that they like it. Inside, they're sort of dreading play and thinking that they are a bad mom for that.

You may have experienced this yourself for certain types of play and/or at certain ages with your kids. It's not uncommon at all to enjoy different seasons. Maybe you love the baby phase, and don't love the toddler phase. Or maybe you love the teenage years, and didn't love the newborn phase.

I know for me, not a huge fan of the newborn phase. I was talking to one of my girlfriends the other day, and she loves the newborn phase. I have another girlfriend who doesn't love the baby phase, and I love the baby phase. Of course, we all have our opinions about toddlers and toddler play.

I just want you to know that it is so normal to have preferences because you're a human. Of course you have preferences. Of course you prefer to play in certain ways, and you prefer not to play in certain ways. So we want to just normalize that. It is okay if you don't like play and you don't like certain seasons. All that means is that you're human. Of course, I don't like play. Tell yourself the truth about that.

So once you can really tell yourself the truth, the next step is to remove any judgment that you have and instead have compassion. So it's one thing to admit to yourself yeah, I don't really like this type of play. It's another thing and another step to say, and that doesn't mean anything about me as a mom. Because I find that when we finally admit to ourselves that we don't really like this type of play, what's followed is the shame and the guilt, which is coming from the thought and that makes me a bad mom. I need to fix this.

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So I'm offering you strategies that you can use. These are mindfulness strategies. You can get to a place where you actually enjoy more play if you want, but we don't want to do it from a place of thinking that we are not a good enough mom because we have these preferences.

I like to think about preferences with food because usually they're not laced with so much judgment and heaviness. For example, I love strawberries. If you asked me if I liked strawberries, I would say yes. I really like strawberries. If you asked me if I liked lima beans, I would say no. Not a fan of lima beans. Also not really a fan of peas.

Now when I say this, I don't have any shame about it. I don't think I'm a bad person for not liking lima beans and peas, but really liking strawberries. That's the place that we want to get to with respect to our preferences around play. Okay. Where it's just something that we are saying is our preference without making it mean something else about us.

The reason that this is important is because when you judge yourself, when you shame yourself, when you make it mean that you are not a good enough mom, and something is wrong with you, you can't get any authority over it. Meaning you can't change it. You won't want to look at it. Shame says let's hide, We're not good enough. We're going to just pretend that we like it. Inside, we're sort of dreading the whole experience.

What we want to get to, and this is where we're doing inner work to get to this place of curiosity and openness. Like huh, that's really interesting that I don't like play. It's okay. I don't like this type of play. Maybe you don't like imaginative play, but you do like outside play or going on walks with your kids, or you like Legos or Barbies or whatever it is. You like certain kinds of play. Other kinds of play you don't like.

So you can get more specific, and you can be curious and open. You'll know if you've removed the judgment because of how it will feel. If you're not judging yourself, it feels like you're talking about the difference between liking certain food preferences. Yep, I like strawberries. Nope, don't really like lima beans.

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When you describe the types of play that you like with your kids and don't like with your kids, if you have shame around it and judgment, it will feel heavy. You'll try to justify it. You'll try to explain it away, if at all right? If you're admitting it at all. Otherwise, you may just ignore it, not admit it.

So what we want to do is we want to tell ourselves the truth, remove judgment, have compassion. I like to remind myself that if there are toddler games that I don't like to play, I have a niece and nephew and another niece on the way, and they are various ages, obviously older than RJ. Some of the time I absolutely love playing the games that they want to play, and other times I don't.

I just remind myself that their brain development is at a certain level right now. That's why they like certain things. If I don't like certain things, it's okay. It actually means that my brain is just more developed than theirs. I'm having thoughts that this isn't something that I want to do. I love how much we can learn from kids and from their play. That's not to say that they are less than. We still want to respect them, but it makes sense that they want to play the certain games that they're playing because of where their brain's at developmentally.

The next step to kind of feeling better about this and moving through it is to take responsibility for the reason that you don't like the play. So it's so interesting when we finally admit that we don't like play, and we kind of remove the judgment around it and we get curious around it and open up to it. We tend to think that it is a fact. It's like hi my name is Natalie. I'm five foot six, and I don't like to play with kids. We say it like that thinking that it's a fact.

So it's good to admit it. It's good to remove the judgment, but we also want to make sure that we are taking ownership of the reason that we don't like play. It's because of our thoughts, and it's because of our feelings. It's not because it's a fact that we don't like play.

So right now you are in the identity of someone who doesn't really like a particular type of play. Maybe it's the imaginative play. Let's go with that

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example. That's okay. It's just not a fact. It's your thoughts that are now beliefs because you've continued to think that thought so much.

The only reason that this is important, well, maybe there are a few reasons. It's important because we don't want to blame the play. We don't want to make it mean that this is a fixed way of experiencing play. We 100% can change it. So we want to make sure that we're in awareness of the fact that this is how we're showing up. Also seeing through that awareness that if we want to change it, we can.

So once we get to the place where we see that there are certain areas of play we don't like, and we can see that it's our thoughts creating that experience, and that this is our current identity. The next phase is asking yourself if you want to change that identity. Any answer is okay.

You may decide you know what? There are so many different areas that I love to play with my kids in. I'm totally okay not playing the toddler games or not playing the imaginative play. That doesn't mean anything about you as a mom. You do not have to do thought work on this, but you can if you want to get to the place where you do kind of enjoy it.

So two options there. If you decide you know what? I'm pretty clean about this. I'm not making it mean anything about me as a mom. I don't really like this type of play. You still can show up and play. I mean think about it. As adults, we do things all of the time that we don't want to do. I like to tell myself I don't really want to do this, and I'm going to do it anyway. This can be so freeing.

Just think about in any given day how many things we do that maybe we don't really want to do. As long as you're not in self-pity and thinking that you have to do it, it's okay and good to do things that maybe wouldn't be your first choice, but that you want to be the type of person who does that.

So, for example, if your spouse wants you to go fishing with him. You're like I'm not that into fishing, but I want to go because he wants me to go. So I'm

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going to do this thing even though I don't really want to do it, right. We do things like that all of the time, and you can do that with play.

This can be freeing insofar as you're not feeling like you have to play and you're not dreading play. You can say to yourself yeah, I don't really like imaginative play, and I'm going to play anyway. Just that thought alone can change your life. So that's one way of approaching it.

Another way of approaching it is yeah, I don't really like imaginative play or these toddler games, and I actually do kind of want to play around with my thoughts and feelings with respect to the circumstance with respect to the play and see if I can loosen up a bit and start to enjoy it a little bit more.

Now remember, it's really important that we do this from a clean place. Meaning we're not doing it so we can think that we are a better mom. We're not doing it so we can think that we're finally as good of a mom as the neighbor who loves to play with her kids. That would be kind of a messy, dirty way of doing it. Because you're tying your self-worth up in whether you like play.

But if you're doing it from a clean place, and you just want to grow in this area, you can start to show up with a good attitude. You can play in very little chunks. Like I'm going to spend three minutes doing this and really just loosen up and try to enjoy this and see what that's about. You can make sure that you're having enough play in your adult life.

So I remember a point in time, and I still struggle with this sometimes. I'm just coming from a very type A background, I'll say. Like my personality for so long was so type A and so rigid that it really took, and still sometimes takes, effort for me to loosen up and just play.

So, for you, if that's the case, and you're finding that you don't like playing with your kids in a certain setting or maybe in most settings, go inward and ask yourself do you need more play in your own life? Often if you add in play in your own life, whether that's with a hobby maybe like painting or writing or workout classes or something like that.

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Like, for me, I love a good dance class. For me, that's like play. It loosens me up, and I get out of that really critical thinking brain. I'm just in my body having fun. The more that you have that integrated into your life, the more you'll be comfortable loosening up and playing in your kids' lives.

So you don't have to like all of your kid's play, and I think it would be very rare if you just liked all of it. Through the entire childhood, you just liked all of it. Remember, think about food preferences. Of course, we have preferences. You just want to notice if this is something that you want to do work on. If it is, know that you can, and you can practice new thoughts like hmm, what about this don't I like? What might I try to think that would make me enjoy it a little bit more? Because it's always your thoughts creating your feelings.

If you feel bored when you are playing with your kids it's because you're thinking thoughts that create boredom. Again, that's okay. Different stages developmentally your kids will have games that it will be easier for you to enjoy than others. So you don't have to change your thoughts and feelings, but you can.

For me, I'll just tell you that as long as I like some of the activities, as long as I like about 50% or more, as long as I can enjoy myself and my time with any kids, whether it's RJ, my nieces and nephews, any other kids in my life. To me, that's good enough. I'm not trying to get to a place where I enjoy all types of play.

The reason for that is I really like just personally to be stimulated mentally. So I like a lot of games that require a lot of thought and a lot of using my brain. I like puzzles, right? It's not a surprise. But I also like to get into my body. I like to be silly and those things too. So I'm just comfortable where I'm at with that.

I just remind myself if there is a type of play that I don't like, I have so many options. I want to make sure I don't go into shame, blame, thinking that I'm a bad mom, thinking that I've done something wrong, thinking that I should change. We don't want to should on ourselves.

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Instead, I want to tell myself the truth. I don't really like this type of play. Have compassion. Of course, that makes sense I don't like this type of play. It's totally fine. Make sure don't make it mean anything about me as a mom or as a person, aunt, friend, whatever it is. And take responsibility for the reason of not liking play, which is my thoughts and feelings. Then decide, am I okay with that? Or do I want to take this as an opportunity to grow, not to make me a better anything, but to just expand my experience? To just see if I want to do the work in this area.

Because you can always change your identity. You can always change your relationship to anything. So make sure you tell yourself the truth, which is this is a thought that I don't like play. I can keep that thought or I can change it. But it's not a fact that I don't like play. That alone will help you tremendously.

Another point that I want to mention here is the emotion of curiosity can be so powerful when it comes to play. Let's say that you are playing with your child who is five, and it's the imaginative play that you don't really like. If you can get to curiosity, it can be a huge shift for you.

So often we think we need to go from dreading this type of play and feeling really closed and restricted to loving that type of play. We think those are the only two options. But instead, if you focus on curiosity and openness, you'll find you'll actually enjoy the experience more. So it might sound like I wonder why this is so fun for her. I wonder what she loves about this. I wonder what her brain is thinking. I wonder if I can loosen up.

Curiosity is just simply I wonder. This doesn't necessarily mean that you're saying these things, but instead if you think them, you can get into a place where you feel a little bit more open. You feel curious. That will be the next step from dread. You go to curiosity, and then from curiosity, when you get really comfortable in that place, then you can go into liking it more if you want to.

One of the things I love so much about motherhood is the opportunities that it provides for growth. As our kids grow and as they develop, it is always a

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new circumstance presented to us for us to take a look at what's going on internally. What's going on in your mind? What's going on in your body? How are you showing up, taking action, and what identity are you choosing to show up with as a mom? Do you like that identity or do you want to change it?

All of this is through the lens that you are already a good enough mom. Half mess, half amazing. That's how you are now, and whether you decide to work on play or not, you will always be that way. Half amazing, half mess worlds okayest mom.

So remind yourself, it's okay to not like playing with your kids. Nothing is wrong with you. You're not a bad mom. If you want to work on it and have some fun, you want 100% can. All right my friend 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.