

Someone Else's Negative Mindset



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Someone Else's Negative Mindset

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 beautiful friend. Welcome to the podcast. I'm so happy to be here with you today talking about someone else's negative mindset. It is a topic that I coach and talk a lot about. I want to bring you some tips here. So if you are doing this work in your life, and you are getting in to more intentional, purposeful thinking, and you're feeling good. You're seeing real change from the work that you're doing, and then you're finding it challenging to be around someone who is particularly negative.

Before I dive into all of that, I want to remind you that tomorrow I'm hosting a workshop specifically for you as a podcast listener. If you have never had me coach you, if you've never been in Grow You, this is for you. It's where I'm going to take the tools that I teach you here and apply them to your life. I'm doing this specifically on the topic of overwhelm.

So if you feel like you are overwhelmed in your life right now, if there's any part of it that feels busy, like it's too much, and you want to take a break from feeling overwhelmed, this workshop is for you. You can get all of the details and reserve your seat over at nataliebacon.com/overwhelm.

I do think it's best if you can attend live so that you can see the power of coaching and that I can answer any question you have. However, if you can't make it live, still register, and we will send you a replay later that night. So you can see the tool that was taught on the replay as well as all the questions that were asked. That will be helpful just to kind of watch it and see this work apply to other women's lives.

All right let's dive in to how to be around someone who is really negative. I think it's useful here to examine what we mean when we say someone is negative. So there's no blood test for negativity, but there is something that's happening. It's our sense of what other people are feeling. So when

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someone else is thinking very negatively, negative thoughts, they will feel negative.

So when you walk into a room, you can tell the general way people are feeling and the energy of the room through people's body language, through their expressions, through their tone of voice. But there is kind of a pause between what they are thinking and feeling and then how you decide to think and feel.

So no one else's mindset can jump into your body. No one else's feelings can jump into your body, but what typically happens is that we mirror people. This is the default automatic response of your brain. So if you think about your child being really upset, and then you getting upset that they're upset. Or your husband is frustrated, and you get frustrated that he's frustrated. Or your sister-in-law is very negative, and then you get negative about her negativity.

This is, again, kind of a natural human response. I think it's the default response. I know personally, myself, that is 100% how I respond on default. But it's not the only way that you can respond. It's not required. You can overcome this part of your brain. You can overcome that response by choosing intentionally how you want to think and feel and then creating that momentum.

So you always have agency over how you want to think, feel, and act. You may not be in the habit of consciously choosing how you want to think, feel, and act. You may be in the habit of going off of whatever your brain offers you on default, but that doesn't mean you don't have a choice. Okay.

So if your husband comes in, and he is feeling really frustrated, there is a space in between his frustration and your frustration. So his frustration is caused from his thinking. Your frustration is caused from your thinking. But when you walk into a room where someone else is already feeling frustrated, it's easy for your brain to go to the default way of thinking, which is I don't want them to be so frustrated. Then you create frustration for yourself because you're arguing with reality. Because the reality is that

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they're already feeling frustrated. So then you feel frustrated about their frustration.

Just having this awareness and starting to notice when your brain nears can be so helpful. I do a lot of coaching on how to stop kind of overreacting, snapping, particularly yelling at your kids. It's interesting because what I typically see is the child will have a lot of frustration, and they will throw a tantrum or a fit. Then as the mom, the client will throw a mental fit about the child's fit. So we have like an adult tantrum about the child's tantrum.

Of course, we act them out in different ways. The child may be kicking and screaming. As the adult we may be yelling or snapping, or even just kind of having that fit internally. But just noticing that this is what's happening, that we're mirroring can be so powerful, because you can see that it's a choice. You don't have to mirror. You can choose to think and feel and do anything you want. Part of this, I think, is changing your mindset. Another part of this in some scenarios is setting boundaries.

But before we get to any of that, it's just noticing that your mind will kind of have you thinking that you're a victim of someone else's mindset. This thinking leaves you so powerless. Why? Because you can't control what someone else says or does. If I could teach you how to control other people, I would. I wish I could. Trust me.

I am definitely a control enthusiast. I think that everyone should behave in a certain way. My brain tells me these things. My brain says that person should do things this way, and the other person should do things that way. The truth is that's all a lie. I have no idea how they should act. I am not the center of the world. What I think is just based on my thoughts and my experience. Regardless of what I think other people should do, it doesn't change the reality that I can't actually change them. I can't control their thoughts. I can't control their feelings. I can't control their actions.

Now, I certainly can make requests. I can say hey honey, did you realize that every day you come home, and you complain about work? I'm not sure if you've noticed that, and it's hard for me to manage my mind around. I just

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wanted to bring it to your attention. Like what's going on? Do you want to talk about it? Is there any way that you could cut back on the complaining? Whatever it is, I can make any request that I want.

So it doesn't mean that I ignore how someone feels in my life. It just means that I don't take on their feelings. I can have compassion for someone who is struggling or interpreting something negatively, but I don't have to be negative about their negativity. Where boundaries come into play is that you can limit your time around people who you find it hard to manage your mind around.

So for me, the more I do this work, the more I realize that my work is to just let everyone else be them. They can have messy brains. They're not supposed to do this work. It's totally fine. In the beginning, once we learn this work, we think that we want other people to do it so they can feel better.

But the truth is, we want other people to do it so that we can feel better. We need to accept reality and allow them to just be them. They can have a messy brain. They can be interpreting the world in a negative way. It's totally fine. We are not a victim of their brains, of their negativity, of their mindset.

When we think that we can't think and feel in a different way than they're thinking and feeling, we feel like we are at the effect of them. It just feels very powerless. Anytime you think that you have to think and feel a certain way that you don't want to, it leaves you really kind of feeling like you're at the effect of someone else.

I think on default, specifically for myself, I can still relate to this where my brain is always looking for a victim and a villain. You just want to be onto your brain. This comes from sort of this self-pity way of thinking that I am so familiar with. Now I can kind of notice it really quickly and move through it, but just start to pay attention if your brain is always looking for a victim and a villain.

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I am not talking about abuse or being in an actual setting where you are a victim. I am talking about the everyday day to day life where we're in traffic, and we are feeling really negative because we are thinking that we are victim of the traffic, right. We are interpreting things in a way that makes our brain kind of victimize ourselves. Okay, so there's a huge distinction there. I just want to make sure that you don't ever use this work against you. That I'm not talking about abuse or kind of anything like to say outside my paygrade.

I'm talking about everyday life, where you have a sister-in-law who is interpreting her life as negative, and then you feel like you're a victim of her mindset. That mindset for you is just going to leave you powerless. So you can offer to her that she's being negative, and you would like it if she interpreted the world differently. But my experience is that people don't really like to change per my request.

So instead, what you're left with is you changing or implementing a boundary. There could be an ad or there. So I think that limiting time around people who are hard for you to manage your mind around can be powerful, but you just want to be onto yourself.

Is this everyone that you're doing this with? Or is it one person who is speaking to in a way that you don't like, and you genuinely can see that this is a space where you need to have a boundary because you're loving yourself, and you're protecting yourself. You're doing it for you. You're not doing it so you can control the other person.

So just check in with yourself and see if you're trying to set a boundary to control someone else so that they stop swearing or interpreting things negatively. That is a cue for you that you either want to do your own thought work to kind of change how you're thinking about it or just get a better reason for your boundary.

I like to set boundaries for me. I don't want to set a boundary to try and control someone else. That's just not my highest self. I want to love other people. Kind of let the goal be to love everyone in the story. This is a tool

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that I teach. It's I love me, I love the other person, and I love us. That is how I want to think about everyone in my circumstances, everyone in the story.

Is that always how I am showing up? Definitely not. My brain has all of the drama. But I know that that's the goal. So when I'm in a place of clean thinking, I can know that that's where I want to get to. It's okay if I'm not there yet, but that's the work of it.

So what you want to do is find the pause between what someone else does or says and your reaction. In that pause is a decision. There is the default decision, which is probably to mirror. Right. So if your child is having a meltdown, and they're really frustrated, there's a decision. How do you want to react? You get to decide how you want to think and feel.

The same is true if your father-in-law is interpreting the world in a negative way. There is a pause before you show up before you take action. Behind every action is your thought and your feeling. So given who father-in-law is being, who do you want to be? This is one of the best questions you can ever ask because it puts the onus on you to change you. Again, because it's the only thing you can control. If I could teach you how to control father-in-law, I would definitely do that. But we can't.

So what we can control is ourselves. It does take practice. You just have to notice that when father-in-law interprets the world negatively, you don't have to react to that. Like what would it look like for you to proactively decide you're just gonna love him. It's totally fine that he is interpreting the world negatively. You can have compassion and understanding and be curious and show up in a very purposeful way.

Again, though, you can combine that with boundaries. So it might mean that you can show up as your best and love him in that way, spending an hour around him, and then after that you need to remove yourself. Or as you work on this, you may find that reducing the amount of time you spend with someone who interprets the world negatively can be helpful, but you're working on being able to be around people who interpret things negatively

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and create more space for you to show up on purpose. Again, because you're not the victim of someone else's mindset.

I think pre-coaching can be so powerful here. What I mean by pre-coaching is that you decide on purpose how you want to show up ahead of time. So notice how predictable people are. They consistently show up as themselves.

So let's say that your brother interprets the world in a way that you believe is negative. He does this consistently, right? It's noticing how predictable people are, and then also noticing your expectation of him to change. Instead, what I'm suggesting is that you remove that expectation, and you decide to change your mind about him instead of expecting him to change because it's the only thing that you have control over.

So here are some useful questions that you can ask and kind of get out ahead of it. Meaning, ask yourself these questions ahead of being around someone who it's harder for you to be around because of how they are in the world and how different it is than you. What are you needing from them? Why do you need them to be a certain way? Why are you using their negativity as a reason not to love them?

How do you want to think about them when they're feeling negative emotion? How do you want to feel when you're with them? What do you need to think to feel that way? How do you want to show up? Or act around them?

Finally, I mentioned this earlier, but I love this question. What kind of fill in the blank do you want to be? What kind of sister-in-law do you want to be here? What kind of daughter-in-law? What kind of friend do you want to be? Who do you want to be? This question helps you decide and be proactive in your relationships kind of from your highest self instead of being reactive and thinking that you have to think, feel, and act based on how other people are thinking, feeling, or acting.

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The last thing that I want to touch on here is an example. So this is from a client. She said, "My husband is very negative specifically about his job. I know this is my mindset, but I'm struggling to change it. It's hard for me to be with him given his negative outlook on life. He is very critical and quick to snap. This work in Grow You has changed my life 10x, but he's not interested in it. It's hard to watch him because I want him to change so he can feel better. I'm not sure where to go from here because no matter how I look at it, I can't seem to get to a better place about it."

Okay, so here is what I said to this client. The reason that it's not getting better is because you still think there's something wrong with him, his negativity. You would prefer that he change so that you don't have to change your mind about him. But he doesn't want to change. Have you asked him to stop being so negative? Have you talked with him to try to understand why his brain thinks it's a good idea to interpret the world this way using curiosity and openness and compassion.

The real reason that any of us want someone else to change is so that we can feel better. The work however is learning that you can feel better now without him doing anything different. So your options here are not to be with him anymore, put boundaries in place so you're not around him as much when he's interpreting the world negatively, or change your mind about his negativity being a problem. You can decide to drop your resentment and disappointment. You can just let him be him. You can decide that he is enough right now. Right where he is. This is the work.

So for you my friend listening to this podcast thinking about someone who interprets the world negatively in your mind, right. Of course that is a thought that we are thinking. Someone is being negative. There's no blood tests for that. But these tools will help you when your mind interprets it in that way.

As you noticed with that client and my coaching, I like to remind clients and myself of all of the options because one of the options is not change him. It's impossible for us to change other people. We can make requests, and

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they may or may not change. But every human has agency to think, feel, and act how they want.

So what we want to do is redirect our brains back to ourselves, and ask the question what are my options here? My option is not to change him. What are my other options? I like to list out all of the options, right? So that's why I include the option of not be with that person anymore. You can not be in that marriage anymore. So showing your brain oh, yeah, I do want to be married to this person. So how do I be married to this person and love him, and let him be him?

It might be a combination of doing mindset work and putting some boundaries in place. It might mean that when husband is negative about his job every day after work, you put a boundary on that. That you're willing to be open and loving and listen for 30 minutes. Then after that you remove yourself. It may mean that you coach yourself every day and decide how you want to think about husbands negativity.

One last point that I want to mention here is that it can be tempting, I think, to have pity, and other people who we disapprove of in our lives. So we don't want to do that. Instead, we want to have compassion. Compassion is very connecting. When you pity someone, it's oh I feel sorry for them. That's why they're so negative. I feel sorry for them. There's this hierarchy that I'm better than them because I'm not so negative. That is very disconnecting.

Compassion and openness is I believe you. I get you. Tell me more. Even if you don't understand fully why they're thinking this way, you can have compassion because your brain thinks in ways that other people don't understand. You can try to seek to understand and be open. Again, you can use boundaries there. But I just like to point out that sometimes we can think that we're being compassionate, but really it's pity. It's just not useful. It's very disconnecting.

So instead, we want to go to the place of being open, being loving, being connected, being curious, being compassionate, doing our pre-coaching

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and deciding what kind of person we want to be when we're around this person, knowing that we don't have to mirror them, knowing that we are not at the effect of their mindset, knowing that we always have agency to think, feel, and act however we want.

I truly believe that the people who are hardest for us to be around can be some of our greatest teachers. Now, of course, again, I want to point out, I'm not talking about anything kind of outside the scope of what is healthy. I'm talking about that difficult mother-in-law, that difficult sister, that difficult friend. The one who it's hard for you to manage your mind around.

I'm not talking about anything kind of beyond that. I'm not talking about abuse. I would never think that you should stay in a situation that you believe is abusive, or something that you don't want to tolerate. Okay. So I just like to say that as a caveat.

But for most of the clients who I work with who are listening right now, I want you to think about the one person in your life who does interpret the world in a negative way. Ask yourself, what kind of fill in the blank do I want to be? How do I want to show up? How do I want to think and feel and act with respect to this person? How can I respect them and love them and show up as my best self?

All right, my friend, this is the work that we are doing on an ongoing basis inside Grow You. Next month we are going to be talking about challenging relationships. So if you're not in there yet, you're going to want to come on in so that you can get the tools and practices like today's so that you can apply it to those relationships that are hardest for you. I love you so much. 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.