

Feel Your Feelings



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Natalie Bacon

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Feel Your Feelings

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, welcome to the podcast. Today I want to talk with you about how to feel your feelings. This is something that will help you tremendously. It will help you if you are feeling anxious or worried or overwhelmed or you experience a lot of mom guilt. Whatever negative emotion that you are feeling, stress, fear, self-doubt, all of them, this is the way forward.

If you are not in Grow You, I really want to encourage you to join. The membership should be opening in about a week I think from when this comes out. So head on over to nataliebacon.com/coaching and make sure that you are on the waitlist ahead of time.

I say this now because we have a pretty new bonus course in our bonus blast. It's an on demand course. As soon as you join, you get it. It's called processing feelings. This episode that I'm going to talk with you about is an introduction to what is in that course. I really think that just that course alone will help you navigate any challenge that you are facing in a very, very real way.

We'll talk about some specific examples in today's episode, but I want you to know that whatever you're struggling with is something that can be solved and overcome and worked through. Particularly if you are looking for a way to do it using the inner work and really focus on your thoughts and feelings and create that shift internally. So you then see it in real life. So I would love for you to join me in Grow You.

Now let's dive in on how to feel your feelings. I want to take a quick step back and talk about what we think happens when we experience a feeling. I say we because I have been doing this work for years. I am trained in it extensively. I am not only a certified life coach, but I have gone on to do advanced deep dive training, which is all about the mind body connection

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and tapping into intuition and feeling your feelings. Even still I'm always doing this work.

So I really mean it when it's a lifelong practice. It can be fun. It doesn't have to be something heavy that we wish we were better at, but it's good to know that this isn't something that you just learn once and it's solved. It really is like starting a yoga practice or a gym workout routine that you're going to do every day.

So let's go back to what we think happens. When something happens in the world, we have a feeling. When someone says something to us that we either like or don't like, we have a feeling. When we create an outcome in our life, when we take certain action, after all of that we have a feeling. So it seems like, without any other information, it seems like our feelings are caused by what we are doing or what is happening in the world or what other people do or say.

So if your sister-in-law calls and says she thinks that you are being unfair to your brother, her husband, and she is upset with you and you hang up the phone. You feel shocked and irritated. You will, on default, think that sister-in-law created those feelings of feeling shocked and irritated. That is actually not what's happening.

What's actually happening is that she called. She said words, and you had a thought about those words. Something like, "Wow, I didn't see that coming. Wow, she's wrong. Wow I wish she wouldn't have said that." Whatever your thought is, it happens so fast because your brain is brilliant. Then your brain sends a signal to your body almost instantly, and then you have a feeling. It happens even faster when you are in the habit of feeling a certain way.

So if you're in the habit of feeling irritated when you think about your sister-in-law, then your brain is really good about looking for evidence of sister-in-law being irritating. Then you feel that irritation. It's a subtle difference, but it actually is where all of your power is and where we're going to spend a lot

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of time helping you feel better. What I mean by that is loosening the resistance that you have that's creating so much more suffering.

So, again, when someone says something, when something happens in the world, when you take action, whatever is going on with you, with the world, with someone else and then you have a feeling about it. The reason you have a feeling is because what you are thinking.

So if you think about all of the problems that you have or have had in the past, they all stem from how you feel. So if you think that you are a bad mom, you're likely feeling something like shame or guilt. Those are feelings. If you think that you are in a really hard season right now and you feel overwhelmed, overwhelm is a feeling.

So often we don't know about this work. I don't know about you, but I wasn't taught this growing up. I do think that there's so much more information out there now that is so amazingly readily available. Yet there is still more work to be done because we're humans and we have to apply this to our lives in really real ways.

The default thinking is that oh, I am experiencing this overwhelm because of what's happening in my life. Because of my circumstances. Because I have four kids under seven years old at home, and that is what creates the overwhelm. It's just not true. It doesn't mean your feelings are invalid. It doesn't mean that at all. It doesn't mean you should feel something else. It just means that the cause of whatever you are feeling at any time is always from your thinking.

So whenever you feel a negative emotion, it's an indicator of what's going on internally for you. It's not an indicator of what's going on externally. So what I want to focus on is teaching you how to move through and feel your feelings so that you allow them without resisting, reacting, and avoiding them. Which is what we do on default.

So let's say that you're feeling really overwhelmed and you don't want to feel overwhelmed anymore. So you try to take a bunch of action on your to-

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do list, and you try to just get more done to feel less overwhelm. It ends up making you feel more overwhelmed, right. That to-do list never goes away.

Maybe you're just feeling stressed. So at the end of the day to wind down, you turn on Netflix or you pour yourself a glass of wine. For some of you, it's shopping. There's this desire to escape the negative feeling. That's normal. That just means your brain is doing what it's designed to do. Your brain was designed to avoid pain and seek pleasure. Your brain doesn't know the difference between pain that is okay and pain that is not.

So when you feel stress or overwhelm, your brain thinks, "Red flag. This is bad. Let's run away. Let's go seek some pleasure." In modern day, that pleasure looks like getting online and doing some shopping. Scrolling on Instagram. Having a glass of wine. Whatever you've conditioned your brain to do most naturally right now is what it's in the habit of doing.

So for me, it's sugar. Like if I'm feeling a little blah about my day, that blah feeling my brain doesn't really like. So it wants to avoid it. So it might go get a cookie. Now this isn't to say that I should never have cookies. It's just about seeing that the negative feeling is coming from your brain. It's not coming from the day. It's not coming from the kids. It's not coming from what sister-in-law said. It's not coming from anything like that.

So what we want to do is we want to get really curious with ourselves and learn how to process the feelings so that we stop avoiding them and resisting them and making them worse. It's like toddlers having a tantrum. So what we do is we have an internal tantrum and we get mad and then we yell. Did you know you can just feel angry or you can feel upset? You can allow that emotion without yelling, without reacting?

This isn't something that we are taught and trained to do. It is absolutely something that's available to you that you can practice. It's worth it because anytime that you are feeling a negative emotion and you react to it or resist it or avoid it, you make it worse and you add resistance to that negative feeling.

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So it's kind of like having a feeling in your body and saying to that feeling, "Leave, I don't like you here. Go away." The feeling is like, "Wait, but you're causing the feeling. I want to stay here." So you try to push it away and push it away, and it adds so much more resistance than if you just allowed it to be there and it would naturally go away. So I want to teach you how to allow that feeling so it reduces the suffering.

So for those of you who are new to my work, I want to just take a quick step back and review what a negative feeling even is. I mean technically there are just feelings. There's no such thing as a negative or positive. Classifying it as this way, as a negative feeling, is so useful.

There's lots of other ways to classify feelings. Sometimes I classify them supportive and unsupportive because you can have negative feelings that are supportive. So whatever classification you want to give to feelings that's useful for you is great. Classifying as negative and positive can be helpful for you to see what's really going on when you're experiencing that emotion, that feeling that's really uncomfortable.

So that's how I describe and define a negative feeling. It's simply a vibration in your body that feelings uncomfortable. Typically it's tight. It's unpleasant. So examples of feelings that are negative would be anxiety, overwhelm, worry, doubt, guilt, fear, disappointment, anger, shame.

If you're in Grow You, you can access that feelings list where we have pages and pages of feelings. Because the more that you increase your emotional vocabulary, the more you're able to identify the feeling in your body and allow it without going into those patterns of resistance and avoidance.

So any negative feeling that you have is always caused by what's happening in your brain. It's caused by your thoughts. So you have a thought, and that sends a signal to your body as to how you should feel. This is the only way we ever experience anything. No one actually comes into your body and makes you feel anything.

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So if you think of sister-in-law calling you, she doesn't come into you and put irritation in your body. She says words, and you have a thought. Your brain says let's feel irritated about that. Then you feel irritation.

What most people don't know is that you can allow your feelings because you are not your feelings, and you can decide deliberately do you want to feel the negative feelings that you're feeling or not. The key here though is to realize that the negative feelings are not an indication of what's going on in your life or in your world. They're an indication of what's going on in your mind.

So when I teach this, the argument comes up then well if that's true, why not just feel good all the time? Why not just feel happy that sister-in-law said what she said? The truthful answer is that you don't want to feel happy that she said what she said. The human experience was not made for that. We were not made to just feel happy all the time.

Can you imagine? We would be like robots. Like Stepford Wives. Everyone is just happy all of the time. There is no contrast of emotion. There's no diversity of emotion. There isn't the up and down. There isn't the contrast. So we wouldn't even know what happy was. We literally would just be like robots. So that's why you don't want to feel happy all the time. What you do want to do is see that you're the creator of your feelings, learn how to process those feelings, and then decide in purpose if that's even a feeling that you want to be experiencing.

So there are so many times in our live when we want to feel emotions that are not happy. So when someone in your family dies, how do you want to feel? Grief, loss, deep sadness probably. You don't want to feel happy. If you find out that there was a tragedy in the world or something terrible happened in your community, how do you want to feel about it? Maybe you want to feel heartbroken. If you find out that your daughter is making choices that you wouldn't choose for her, how do you want to feel?

This is where it gets trickier. Because we don't want our feelings to be so wrapped up in what other people are doing. Yet there are so many feelings

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that we can choose between anger and happy. What if you decided that you just wanted to feel concerned? Or maybe there is a different emotion. What emotion is going to help you show up in a way that you're the mom that you want to show up as. That's what you want to be thinking about.

If you are going something that is difficult for you when you have those four kids under seven years old and it is challenging, how do you want to feel? You might not want to feel overwhelmed, but you also might not want to feel really excited. There's so many other emotions. What about empowered? It's like this is hard, and I can do hard things. Versus this is hard and it shouldn't be hard or this is hard and I'm wishing it away. It's not going to be as hard in the next season or something like that. It's okay this is hard for me, but I was made for this. Let's do it.

So negative feelings, whenever you're experiencing them, are an indication of what's going on internally. They don't mean that you need to take action. They don't mean that you need to fix them. They don't mean that you need to escape them. They don't even mean that something has gone wrong.

Negative feelings are simply and indicator of what's going on internally for you. The healthiest thing that you can do with negative feelings is to feel them. You can open up to your feelings. You can allow them and accept them as if they were your friend. When you do this, you actually don't mind the negative feelings so much.

This is huge because you stop that behavior where you're trying to fix and solve and escape. The wine and the shopping and the ruminating of the thoughts. All of those things sort of go away. You sort of move into acceptance that this is part of life. This is what it means to be a human. You're here for it. That's okay. So you stop trying to run from your feelings. You stop the harsh judgement that you have towards yourself for feeling exhausted and for feeling overwhelmed.

Instead what I like to say, what I want you to write down and remember from this episode is to hold your pain with love. This means that you separate yourself from the negative feeling and you hold space for it. The

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imagery that I want you to have is that you have your two hands out kind of touching, your pinkies and your palms touching like you're cupping this little kitten. If you're allergic to cats, this little puppy or this little something that you find so endearing. You're holding it in your hands without judgement and with total openness and from a place of love.

When you do this, when you hold up your pain with love, you don't remove the pain. The pain doesn't go away, but you stop trying to suffocate the pain. You stop resisting the pain. When you resist the pain, that's when it turns into suffering. If you do this and you're wondering when the pain will go away, you are doing it wrong. The point is not to remove pain. Remember, we're not going to be robots. The point is to stop pushing the pain away, which is what causes it to get worse.

Instead when you hold up for your pain and you love it, you allow it, it will move through you. The irony, of course, when you do this, it's much less painful because there's no resistance.

So I want to give you some steps, some real practical steps to do this. Again, in the processing feelings course you'll get a bunch of lessons and workbook on how to do this inside Grow You. Here's how you can get started with it, okay? There are five steps that I want to give you.

Step number one is to name the feeling. Step number two is to welcome the feeling. Step number three is to describe the feeling. Step number four is to breathe through the feeling. Step number five is to find the thought causing the feeling. So I'm going to quickly go through what all of these mean.

Step number one is checking in with your body. So you have to pause and slow down, okay? Half the battle is this. Getting out of your mind because your brain, remember, wants to avoid the pain. So it thinks there's a huge problem when you're experiencing this discomfort and it wants to solve it. So you have to use your highest self to say, "No, no brain. We're not going to die. This is simply an emotion." That's where that pause is. You go into

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your body and you name the feeling in one word. Maybe it's stress. Maybe it's built. Whatever it is, name it.

Step number two is to welcome it. I like the imagery of imagining a friend is visiting. I'm going to welcome this negative emotion like it was a friend visiting my body. Step three is to describe that feeling in your body. This is one of the hardest parts because we want to go into thought land. Our brain wants to talk about this feeling in a certain way and it's that way. We're going to use big words when we do this. We might even bring up sister-in-law and all of the things.

Instead what I want you to do is go into your body. So where do you feel it? Is it in your chest? Is it tight? Is it in your shoulders? Is it in your jaw? As you are describing it, really allow your body to feel that. Really open up to it. That's step number four, which is to breathe through that feeling, right. Your breath is an indicator of how you are processing the feeling. So I want you to notice your breath and allow all of it. This will truly allow the feeling to move through you.

After you have done those steps, then you can find the thought that was causing it. You might say to yourself, "Okay I'm feeling irritated. What was the thought that caused it? I think it's most important to do this work after you've really allowed yourself to feel the feeling. Once you do find the thought causing it, notice if you're telling the story from blame, from fear, from scarcity, or from a really clean place that you want to be telling it from.

So, for example, I've coached on some marital issues and affairs. One of the ways that we process emotion with something like that is to make sure that the thoughts we're thinking are serving us. So if a client says, "I'm deeply saddened that my husband had an affair." This is a very useful thought to have in this client's situation, right? She wants to feel sad, and that thought is a thought that's serving her. It's allowing her to feel that feeling. She doesn't want to be happy that this happened, right?

Contrast this though to if she was thinking, "This is so unfair. My husband ruined our family. This shouldn't be happening." This type of story is not

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useful and it's going to create even more resistance. So that's where some of the thought work can be really powerful to see if you're in what we call clean pain versus dirty pain. There's an entire lesson on that inside Grow You as well, but it's worth mentioning here so that you can get started with noticing how your thoughts and the stories that you're telling are creating your feelings.

Again, that doesn't mean that we want to go to this is the most amazing thing that husband had an affair. What is really true for your highest self? there's going to be some deep sadness there that you want to experience, but we don't have to go to blame and thinking thoughts that are going to make it worse for ourselves.

So as you notice yourself feeling feelings that are big, that are negative, that you don't want to be feeling, I want to invite you to do this process. And to just remember to hold that pain, to hold that negative feeling with love. It's like hey worry. I see you there. I got you. It's okay. You can be here. Notice when I say those phrases, it's from this place of openness and warmth and love for myself. There's this separation. It's watching my feelings. It's I'm not feelings. I'm the watcher of my feelings.

So if you master this skill and you do it regularly, your life becomes so much better because it's less scary and less worrisome and less anxiety filled. You're still going to have some fear. You might even have some worry and some anxiety, but the resistance is gone. You're holding those feelings with love, and you're allowing them to move through you.

This is like radical acceptance of what it means to be a human. It's our life that includes the most amazing, wonderful feelings, and it also includes really uncomfortable challenging feelings. You are 100% capable of experiencing them. There is no feeling that you can't feel. We tend to make feelings so much worse by our resistance of them. When you do this process, you just feel the negative feeling without the resistance. Without making it worse.

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Then, oh my goodness, your whole world expands and really explodes because you see that there is nothing that you can't handle. Like you could handle all of it if you're willing to feel your feelings. It's like the secret. It sounds so, I don't know, like fluffy or maybe like an intellectual concept. At least that's how I would think of it.

When I apply it to my daily life, when I actually do it, when I do the practices, it is so profound what a big impact it has on my life and how much better I feel just by allowing the negative feelings to be there. By seeing that life is supposed to be half good and half bad. I'm a human and I'm here for the human experience, and I accept all of it. That is my invitation to you my friend. I will talk to 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.