

## Three Default Mindsets



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**Natalie Bacon**

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## Three Default Mindsets

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 there. Welcome to the podcast. Today I have a fun episode. We are going to talk about your default mindset. Specifically I'm going to go through three default mindsets that cause and create problems and challenges that we really don't even know. We're not even aware that these mindset create such problems, and yet they do. By knowing about them, you can change them so they don't create the challenges that you may be experiencing due to being caused by thinking in this way.

So the first mindset is that your default brain always wants to repeat what you've done in the past. So your brain on default loves to be really efficient. It wants to do what's familiar to you. So whatever you've always done is comfort to you brain. So if you are in the habit of scrolling your phone right before bed, that's what you'll continue to do because that's the habit that you're in. Your brain thinks it's the easiest. It's most efficient. It wants to make your life easier.

If you are in the habit of worrying constantly about everything, it doesn't matter what about your life changes. It doesn't matter if you have any of the problems that you currently have solved. If your brain and mindset are in the habit of worrying then that will continue unless you solve it from the mindset level.

So if you have a child who you are really worried about meeting their milestones and then they do meet their milestones, you will find something else to worry about because this is the default way your brain has been programmed. If you're in the habit of trying to control your kids or your spouse, that's what you'll continue to do.

Same thing with any other relationship. So if you have a tense relationship with your sister-in-law, you'll continue to have that tension in the relationship because of what's happened in the past. This doesn't mean

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that you can't change it. It just means that we want to be aware that on default, your brain thinks it's best to continue believing what it's always believed and doing what it's always done and feeling what it's always felt.

So the same is true about feelings. If you are in the habit of feeling irritated a lot, you'll continue to feel irritated. It's momentum. Your brain really likes to keep going on the path that it's on because it's easiest. What's amazing is that your brain can be changed. You can change your mindset so you can get on a different momentum. You can get on a different path where the default feeling isn't irritation or worry. Maybe it is contentment or feeling empowered. That is going to serve you so much more.

So this default mindset, the first one that I'm talking with you about that your brain wants to repeat what it's always done is actually amazing when what you're in the habit of is serving you. So if you are in the habit of feeling empowered about your life, that's serving you.

If you are in the habit of thinking I don't know how, but I know that it's going to work out. I know that it's all going to work out. If that's sort of your default outlook on life and your brain has been in the habit of thinking that way for years, that is serving you so well.

What I find in my own life and in my client's lives is that there are so many default patterns that our brains are in that aren't serving us. Those are the ones that we want to look at. So we're going to talk about this one more in detail, but first I just want to give you a quick summary of the other two so you kind of know where we're headed.

So the second default mindset that can create some problems and challenges is that you're taught to look at what's happening outside of you to explain your feelings. So this is the idea that experiences create feelings. It's the sense that when something happens in your family, in your life, in the world, it causes you to feel a certain way. So other people, other things, other events create our feelings.

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If your three year old bites your six year old and you get really frustrated about it, the default thinking is that it's because three year old bit six year old that you are feeling frustrated. It's thinking that this event that happened outside of you, this fact, this event that you were not involved in, the kid's behavior, caused you to feel frustrated. This is a problem because it's not the truth.

The truth is that there's a tiny step that happens in between kid's behavior and your feeling frustrated, and it's your thought. You have to interpret that behavior as being a problem and something that you want to feel frustrated about. Meaning you have a thought this shouldn't be happening. I'm horrible. I'm failing as a mom. He should know better. Whatever your thought it.

It's important for you to see that this is what's happening. Because if you don't and you stick with this default mindset that what's happening in the world is creating how you feel, you will always be trying to control what's happening in the world. So you'll always be trying to change your circumstances and control the world. It feels very disempowering. Sometimes we can change our circumstances. I don't know about you, but if you've tried to control your kids, if you've tried to control your spouse or other people, it doesn't work. It feels very disempowering.

Now this doesn't mean that you're not going to still have rules and you're not going to still teach your children. Of course. The distinction here is that we don't want to make our emotional lives so dependent on what kids are doing. Because it's very likely if three year old is being a three year old, he's still going to do a lot of things that we need to teach him or we want to teach him aren't the best way to do things.

So we don't want to hang our emotions on it. It's not that we don't want to teach them. It's that every time something happens that we don't like, we don't get frustrated about it. So default mindset number two is thinking that whatever's happening outside of us is creating how we feel.

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Okay default mindset number three that I want to talk with you about today is that you're conditioned to think that over there is when you'll be happy. So this is the mindset where you think that if you can just do this one more thing or you can just get out of this challenging season, everything will be better.

So an example of this is let's say you have four kids under five years old, and you're thinking I just need to get past this. Then I'll have more time. Then I'll be happier. It's thinking that the season that you're in creates your happiness.

I've coached a lot of women about wanting that next size home, that bigger home. We just need to get into a bigger home. Then the kids and the dogs will have more space. They won't fight as much. We'll have much better experiences. We'll be happier. Right? Even if you don't say "and then we'll be happy" that's sort of the idea.

We've been conditioned to think this way forever. I mean you can think about it as a child yourself in school trying to get to the next thing. There's nothing wrong with achievement and goals, but the magic really happens when you figure out how to be happy with yourself and set those goals for fun not because you think that you need to set the goals and do more to feel better. That's where we get ourselves into trouble and where we're always chasing the next season.

So I want to go back and talk with you about each of these three default mindsets again because they are so important and will help you so much in whatever you are going through. So, again, that first default mindset is your brain wants to repeat what you've always done.

This stems from the way that your brain is wired. I like to think of the brain in two parts. I call it the toddler brain and the adult brain. So the toddler brain means well but can cause a lot of harm. So if you give the toddler crayons and some paper and they're in a space where they can draw, harmless. If you leave the toddler unattended, they find a sharpie marker

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and go to town on the walls causing some harm unintended. You can think of your default brain like that.

I think it's really helpful to think of it like this because it release some of the judgment. I mean how often have you heard yourself say, "Oh my gosh that was so dumb. Why did I do that? I can't believe I yelled like that or I can't believe I overate." Whatever it is. We can be harsh with ourselves. When you think about your default brain wanting to just be efficient and wanting to do what it always has done, you lose some of that judgement.

Then we have the prefrontal cortex, which is your adult most human part of your brain. This is where you can plan ahead. It's much slower and it takes a lot more energy.

So think about changing diapers. It is very easy for me to change diapers. I have pretty much been changing diapers my entire life. I started when I was a kid. You know I had a younger sister who was a baby, and that was really fun for me. I did it all the way through high school and college as a babysitter. Even in law school when I was a mother's helper. So I know how to change diapers. It's not something that I need to use my prefrontal cortex for.

Contrast that with Steve who had never changed a diaper before. It's something that he needed to use his prefrontal cortex to learn. It didn't take him a ton of repetition to get good at changing diapers, but this is something that he did need to use his prefrontal cortex for to learn for the first time as a new skill.

So depending on how hard your brain interprets the new skill, that determines how many reps you need to get in. That's why there's no set number as to how long it takes for something to become a habit. It's purely based on how your brain interprets whether that thing is challenging.

So if you think about helping your child, let's say you have a fifth grader, do some math homework. You once learned that math. You passed fifth grade. Maybe you even did really well with the math homework when you

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were in fifth grade. But your brain hasn't looked at that type of math in decades.

So when you go to help your fifth grader, your brain is going to struggle because it doesn't have those neural pathways anymore. It has decided hey we don't need this anymore. So I'm just going to get rid of it. But now you're finding that you want to bring some of those back. So you have to relearn the multiplication and the fractions. It's going to require you to use the slower function of your brain.

Okay another example of this is driving. Anywhere you drive regularly is something that is now a habit. You don't really have to think about it. You don't have to put the GPS on. It's just where you're going. If you decide to change your route or you want to go somewhere else that you've never been before, you have to use that prefrontal cortex. Once you continue to do that ide over and over and over, if you practice it enough it will become the new default.

So, again, as I mentioned in the beginning, some of your default habits and practices and mindset and feelings are really serving you. But if you are in a rut, feeling like you have a negative mindset, I want you to just really know that nothing is wrong with you. It's your brain just continuing on the path of least resistance. It's continuing to do what is feels most comfortable with.

So what we want to do is we want to reprogram our brains to have the most optimal default settings. So we want to take a look at any of those habits that aren't serving us. So if you are in a habit of feeling self-pity or overwhelm or frustration and you find yourself feeling these feelings on a daily basis, that's where you want to take a look and see what are you thinking that's creating those feelings and decide with your prefrontal cortex how you want to think about it instead.

That leads us really nicely into the default mindset number two that I briefly talked about that I want to talk about again. That you are taught to look for what's happening outside of you to explain how you feel. So if you are in



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the habit of feeling self-pity or overwhelm or frustration, on default your brain will look to explain those feelings from what is happening outside of you.

We are not taught that our thoughts create our feelings, which is scientifically true. When we grow up and kind of how we're taught to think about it is that what happens outside of us creates our feelings. So we always want to change our lives, the external part of our lives to change how we feel.

So if you think about the three year old biting the six year old and you feel frustrated, you want to solve this problem very fast so that you don't feel frustrated. Your brain will tell you that it's because you want to be a good mom and you want to make sure that three year old is acting how three year old should be acting and how six year old is not getting bit and all these other reasons. The truth is that anytime you want to have anything, create anything, change anything it's so that you can feel a feeling.

So when you want to help three year old stop biting six year old, you can do that. But what you want to do is not have such emotional weight in the game. When you're feeling frustrated, you want to discover what am I thinking that's creating the frustration? What are my thoughts?

So some of your thoughts might be this shouldn't be happening, why is he doing this? He should know better. This is a really big problem. Then you feel really frustrated and try to control your kids, solve the problem, and you really don't feel better until it's resolved. The truth is that you could think something else that still helps you solve the problem but doesn't leave you feeling so emotionally upset. This is the key because kids are going to have challenges throughout the 18 years that they live with you and, as you know, even beyond that as adults.

So if your emotions hang in their behavior, you're in big trouble. You're going to create so much suffering because then you can't be content and emotionally in a good place unless all of your kids are all of the time, which



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is pretty much impossible. Because you can only control how you feel, and they can only control how they feel.

So instead what you can do is decide what you want to think on purpose. So, of course, you don't want to be happy that three year old is biting six year old. You don't want to not care. You don't want to say, "Oh I don't care. Let him do whatever he wants. It's fine." There are so many thoughts that you could think that are in between thinking that this is a huge problem that you needed to be frustrated about. But there are so many thoughts you can think between this is the worst thing ever and this is amazing. It's not a problem.

So maybe you think, "Okay, he is still learning not to bite. I thought that we had resolved this, but we haven't. This is something we're going to focus more on. It's not a reflection of me as a mom. I can support him in the best way I know how, and that is good enough. Let's think about one step that we can take forward on this." Right?

That's just something I came up with. You can come up with any thought. Again, this is going to require you to use that prefrontal cortex, which is slower, which is something that takes more energy. But it's so worth it. There are thousands and thousands of other thoughts that you could think that won't create frustration but that still allow you to stay in the truth of it and help solve the problem.

So, again, you don't have to think this is awesome, but you can think something that has your own back as a mom. That's going to leave you in the best possible place so that you show up your best. So that you're not getting frustrated.

Remember because of that first default mindset, that your brain wants to be efficient, changing this, changing where you stop blaming your feelings on what's happening outside of you is actually a habit that is kind of hard to break. It's still 100% worth it. I think that your life and your satisfaction with your life and your internal wellbeing depends on it.

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Your happiness and how you feel on a daily basis for the rest of your life depends on breaking this habit of thinking that what's happening outside of you is the reason for how you feel. Because once you break that habit, you can get in the habit of creating your feelings on purpose and creating your thoughts on purpose. This is really where the magic happens.

That leads us into number three, which is being conditioned to think that over there is when you'll be happy. It's like when I graduate college, I'll be happy. When I get the job, I'll be happy. When I get married, I'll be happy. When I have kids or when we buy a house or when I have a creative outlet, whatever the case is. We tend to think that we will be happy over there.

I was coaching a mom in Grow You who has six kids. There are a couple left at home who are teenagers, and the rest are out of the house. She all of a sudden found that she had a lot more time on her hands. She realized she was filling all of her time with doing more even though she had previously thought she would have more time during this season. For the first time, she was pausing and realizing that she was extremely uncomfortable doing less. She had this idea that by doing less, she was being lazy and that she needed to do more to be good enough.

You've all heard me talk about how women, I think, are socialized to think that they need to do everything for everyone always. This was coming up for her where she had spent decades doing everything for everyone always and thinking that her happiness was on the other side of doing more. There's always more to do, right. That's what make this world amazing. We live in a progressive society where we can do more.

The downside of that is if you hang your worth and value on output and thinking that you have to create more and do more and achieve more, you will find yourself hustling and in this go, go, go energy where you never feel good enough because you're trying to outrun yourself. You're trying to do more to be good enough. So I want you to know that you are good enough now without doing anything else. You don't have to perform. You don't have to accomplish. You can just give yourself permission to do nothing and feel proud of yourself and feel worthy.

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I really sunk into this lesson when I was pregnant. My body told me I couldn't keep going at the rate I had been, and my capacity had changed. So I was doing about half, maybe two-thirds of what I had done before in a given day. Yet I didn't want to compare that output while I was pregnant to my past self when I wasn't pregnant. So I decided that I was going to believe that I was good enough even if all I did that day was take a nap.

I really settled into being okay with just doing less and enjoying myself. The beauty of this is that when you give yourself permission to enjoy right now without needing to do more, you then can decide that you want to do more just for fun. So goals and producing and getting more done. All of that stops being about worthiness. Instead it starts to be about just what you want to do. You can have fun with it.

So notice if you're just trying to get through the day, to make it to the weekend, or get past this season. This is a sign that you're stuck in this mindset and thinking that over there is going to be better. Other examples that I've heard with this mindset are thinking that once we are completely out of debt, it will be better. Once I make more money or we as a family achieve a certain level of financial success. Once I lose the weight. Once I fill in the blank I will be happy is basically the mindset.

I promise you that over there isn't better because you have the same mindset. So your mindset comes with you. Over there only gets better if you change your mindset.

So I love using mindset because it's such a visual that we can all relate to. If you think that if you lose 25 pounds, you will be happier. You lose 25 pounds and you do find yourself happier even for a little while, it's not because you lost the weight. It's because you're changing how you're thinking about yourself. I promise you that if you were in the habit of beating yourself up throughout that process, you will continue to beat yourself up. It will just be about something else because you didn't get at the root cause, which is always your mindset.

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So what I say is let's clean up that mindset. Let's get you to a place of self-love and self-kindness. Then let's set a goal to lose weight and see what's possible for you. Not because you feel good enough once you lose the weight. The same is true for any season you have with littles. The same is true for your career, anything. You can change your mindset right now and feel better. You don't have to wait until over there.

So my clients will say, "Well, what about hard seasons? What about if I feel like this is really a hard season and my brain is just telling me that over there is better?" What I say is that this doesn't mean that you fake it.

It doesn't mean you say this is the best time of my life. This season of raising babies and toddlers is as much fun as I had in college, right? It doesn't mean that you do that because your brain is so incredibly smart, it will know that you're lying to it. But it also doesn't mean that you feel sorry for yourself. You don't slip into this pattern of thinking that your life is just really hard and it shouldn't be. Where there's this low grade self-pity.

Instead you can acknowledge this is a hard season, but you wouldn't have it any other way. You love your family that you're growing. You love the lessons that you're learning even though sometimes they're really hard. Even though sometimes the days are really hard. You're here for all of it.

This is going to feel so much more empowering than thinking this is so hard. I can't do any of this. I just need to get out of this season, which feels like that low grade disappointment. Low grade self-pity. It doesn't serve you. So what you want to do for challenges that seem really hard is accept that they are hard, but reframe them in a way that gives you momentum to go forward.

Okay so the three default mindsets that are your brain has are your brain wants to repeat what you've always done, no matter if that is serving you or it's not serving you. You're taught to look at what's happening outside of you to explain how you're feeling inside, which is never the case. How you feel is always an indicator of what's going on inside for you, not an indicator

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of what's going on outside. Number three, you're conditioned to think that over there is when you'll be happy.

I think these default mindsets create some of our biggest problems, yet they're seen as so normal given the modern world we live in. That's why I call them default. They're default mindsets. Most moms I know start off thinking with these mindsets. It's why they're experiencing so much more tension, anxiety, and overwhelm because they can feel very powerless.

This was also my experience. Doing the inner work, changing these mindsets is really what set me free. Because I can't control the world. Three year old is still going to bite six year old. Three year old is still going to be a three year old. Spouse and sister-in-law are still going to act how they're going to act. They all have agency. Yet, I can use my agency. I can use my brain to reprogram how I'm thinking and how I'm feeling so that I show up in a way that reflects the wife and mom and woman that I want to be.

So know that you have this power too. Your mind is the most powerful resource you have. You can change your mindset. When you do, you'll change how you feel and how you show up for yourself, for your family and your community and in the world. I promise you it feels so much better. Regardless of what's happening in your life, these tools can help you.

All right my friend. Pay attention to these three default mindsets and start to notice when you're in them. That's the first step towards change. 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](https://nataliebacon.com/coaching) to learn more.