

# How To Become More Mindful



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With Your Host

**Natalie Bacon**

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# How To Become More Mindful

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 want to talk with you about how to become more mindful. My definition of mindfulness is awareness with acceptance. I have looked at so many different definitions, and that is the definition that I've come up with that I apply to my teachings and my work and all of the work that we do here and inside any of the programs. It's becoming aware of whatever it is that you want to be mindful of with acceptance. Meaning without judgement.

So I'm in a mindful parenting group. The mission and purpose of that group is to become aware of our own parenting styles and what other parenting styles exist out there. Then make choices very consciously about how to best parent. You can do this with anything. So you can choose any area of your life that you want to increase your mindfulness around.

So you might want to have a more mindful marriage or more mindful friendships. You might want to become more of a mindful sleeper. So for any of you who struggle with sleeping, this is something that would be really valuable for you to consider prioritizing. You might want to become a mindful eater, particularly if you want to change something about your health. Whether that is just to have better eating habits or lose weight or something else health related. Mindful eating is one way to start that journey.

So when you become more aware of whatever it is that you want to focus on and you accept it without judgment, what happens is you decrease your resistance to whatever it is. So if you are yelling at your kids and you start practicing mindful parenting, the first step is to allow yourself space to see how you are reacting. Which means very practically noticing that you're yelling without beating yourself up for doing it. Without hating yourself for yelling.

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This is often one of the hardest steps in how to become more mindful because we want to skip to the part where we don't yell at all. The truth is the way that you get there is by watching what's going on. Watching what's going on. Watching how you are acting and reacting and where that's coming from, which is always going to be your mind and your body. What you are thinking and how you are feeling.

As you do this practice of becoming more mindful, you will notice that there will be this ripple effect in so many areas of your life. If you struggle with anxiety or overwhelm or anger, those will be reduced because you'll reduce any resistance that you have to those emotions. You will allow yourself to be messy and amazing without thinking it should be perfect. You'll increase your confidence, and I think you will have so much more fun in every day, which I think is missing for so many of us. No matter what's going on in your life, you can absolutely have more fun.

So I want to go through some steps with you for how to become more mindful. I am teaching this to you today because Grow You is open right now. Also at the time that this is airing at the end of February, we are gearing up for what is to come in March. In March I am teaching a new course on becoming more mindful. It's a brand new curriculum. You're going to get a brand new course. You're going to get a brand new workbook and all of the calls included as well, let alone everything that's already in Grow You like the bonus courses and all of that.

The topic for March, the topic that I'm going to be teaching you is how to become more mindful. I created a calendar with 31 days of mindfulness that you're going to get. You don't have to do all 31 days, but it's available to you if you want to.

I even think this would be really fun to do with a friend. So if you have another mom friend who would love to do this work, you both can join Grow You for \$79. Head on over to [nataliebacon.com/coaching](https://nataliebacon.com/coaching), and you will join just in time for the March curriculum which ones out on March 1<sup>st</sup>. I will be

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teaching you all things mindfulness. You can get help wherever you're struggling.

So if you are applying these tools and you're trying it out and you're finding that it's harder or it's more challenging or you can't get this one thing, there are so many different ways for you to get help. You can come to a live call and I can help you with it there. You can also submit in our written forum any questions that you have, and you'll get an answer within a couple business days. So there's so many different ways for you to really deepen your mindfulness this upcoming month. So head on over to [nataliebacon.com/coaching](http://nataliebacon.com/coaching) and I will see you there.

Today I want to continue teaching you some of what will be inside so you can get a taste of what it's really like to become more mindful and exactly how to do that. So step number one is to slow everything way down. It's to pause.

For whatever reason, it's our brain. I know the reason. We don't want to slow down. The brain wants to do things fast, and it likes to get into that stress response, which means we can often feel very hurried and anxious and worried. So step number one sounds simple. It is simple. Pause and slow it down, but it is hard to apply if you're someone who isn't in the practice of this.

So let's take a real coaching example. I have a client, a Grow You member, who has a five year old and an 18 month old. She feels very stressed out about her mornings. So the mornings felt very rushed and stressed because the five year old struggles with getting ready. She's trying to help her go to the bathroom. It's a struggle in the morning for them. Then the 18 month old is always crying and is particularly needy right now.

So the client was saying, "Okay, I just want my mornings to be easier, and I feel frustrated and defeated almost every day when I think about my morning routine and when I am in the middle of it."

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So step number one is to just pause and slow it down during the morning routine. Notice that everything is okay. Even if five year old isn't ready in time and ends up being late for school, even if 18 month old child cries every morning, it's all okay. So you want to pause in the middle of whatever it is that you want to become more mindful of and just slow everything down. Really slow it down. This is going to be hard for your brain, but this is the first step.

Step number two is to breathe, to take some breaths and to calm down your nervous system. Make sure they're deep breaths from your diaphragm, not from that higher part of your chest where your lungs are. You want to breathe in and out. Your bellybutton is going in and out instead of up and down. You want to make sure you're sitting or standing up straight, and you just take a moment to focus on your breath.

So right in the middle of when the chaos is happening and the five year old and the 18 month old are needing what they need, you pause and you just take your mind off of fixing and rushing and thinking that something has gone wrong. You just focus on your breath. Just two, three, four breaths in and out to help you calm down that stress response that your brain thinks is so important.

Step number three is to then notice what you're thinking. Notice how you're feeling. Notice your surroundings in your environment. So we want to watch our thoughts, watch our feelings, and watch our surroundings. So you can ask yourself what am I thinking right now? I'm thinking I wish they could just do it right. I wish they could do it faster. I wish I could teach them how to behave better. This is so hard. I can't do this. Okay, if those are some of your thoughts.

Ask yourself what are you feeling. You may be feeling frustrated, defeated. Then notice your surroundings. When I say notice, I mean pay attention to the sensory input that you're getting from your senses. So visually what do you see? You may see that your five year old is in the bathroom calling for you so you hear her. You may notice that the 18 month old is running

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around in and out of crying. So you're seeing that. You're hearing that. Is there anything you're smelling or feeling or tasting? You really want to just bring some awareness to what's going on.

Watch it without trying to fix it. This is the hard part for us as moms, right? We want to just fix. That's that fight, flight, or freeze stress response. So instead when we pause, when we breathe, when we watch, we will create some space and get out of that reactive need to put out fires mode where we think that something has gone wrong. I promise you nothing has wrong even if it's really hard. So with this step, you just want to become aware of your thoughts and feelings and what's happening outside of you all as separate things.

Step number four is for you to direct your brain and your body to think and feel on purpose. So once you become aware of your thoughts and feelings and surroundings, decide on purpose how you want to think and feel about them. How do you want to think about your five year old getting ready struggling in the morning?

In one way, you can think, "She should know better. I should be teaching her better. If I just did something better then she wouldn't be struggling." Or you could think, "Oh, this is just one of the things that she's learning as part of being a human. Nothing's gone wrong here." Notice the difference in how you feel based on what you choose to think.

Same thing for 18 month old crying and being needy. How do you want to think? You probably don't want to be super happy about it, but you also probably don't want to be frustrated about it. What if you were compassionate and grounded and content so that you could show up in a way where you didn't bring your stress into the situation?

It will take time for you to practice these new thoughts and feelings, but it's so worth it because then you don't struggle so much with your mornings. Then you don't feel like something has gone wrong. This is true even though nothing about five year old and 18 month old's behavior has

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changed, but you've changed. You've become more aware of them, of yourself, of your thoughts, of your feelings. You've calmed down your nervous system. You've decided on purpose how you want to show up.

The last step that I want to introduce you to is to find some time later in the day to be still. I like to do this by practicing 10 minutes of silence. So you sit down, close your eyes, set the timer for 10 minutes, sit up straight, and do nothing but focus on your breath and anything else your senses can take in. Keeping your focus out of the past and the future, which is going to be your mind being really overactive. Slow it down. If you do this every day, the stillness will be something that your body starts to get used to. This will show up in that morning routine where you want more mindfulness.

These steps are the beginning of how you can start your own mindfulness practice again in any area of your life. I think it's easiest to pick an area—parenting, marriage, eating, friendships, your sleep—because then it's easier for you to come up with examples and ways for you to use this. I want to mention that I think at first mindfulness can seem like this intangible concept, but the more that you practice it the more that your body will adapt to it. In so doing, you change who you are being.

This is why it doesn't really matter what area of your life you choose to work on first. Because as your body changes in response to this increased awareness, it will have a ripple effect in other areas. So if you really work on having a more mindful marriage and you start to notice how you're showing up and notice the words you're using and how you're connecting, and you start to watch your relationship that you've created and you watch it deliberately, you will shift how you are showing up in that marriage. From there, that shift will carry over into other areas of your life.

I love that quote, I don't know who originally said it, but it's how you do anything is how you do everything. So with becoming more mindful, you can really pick any area. Pick one that sounds fun to you that might be a little bit of a challenge that you want to make some changes in.

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This is why I think it can be really fun to do this work with a friend even. So if you head on over to Grow You with a friend, I think it can be a really fun month to do this work and have someone to talk about it with because you will experience these inner shifts in a way that people who are not doing the practice with you won't be experiencing. That connection over mindfulness can be something really powerful for yourself and your relationship.

I think one of the biggest benefits to mindfulness is that you will see new results in your life. So if you're working on mindful parenting, you will experience parenting in a new way. I also think you'll have this overall spark that will return to your life.

You'll find this new enjoyment in the simple things. Instead of dreading cleaning the house, you actually don't mind it so much. It's those little day to day things where it can feel like you're in the middle of a hard season and yet you find a way to see it with new eyes. That's the practice of mindfulness, and it all starts with having more awareness to who you are being with respect to any area of your life and you do that without judgement.

I think on a broader level too, your whole outlook on life and on the world can shift. If you're someone who's generally negative or pessimistic or struggles kind of with how you're approaching your day to day life whether that's through stress or anxiety or kind of this apathy. Mindfulness will help you shift just a little bit to a lighter space. Because you let go of the resistance and attachment that you have to the way that you are thinking and feeling. Instead you create space between your thoughts and your feelings and what's happening in the world. This is so powerful because then you see that you can let go of all of it.

So I'll go over the steps that I gave you here again real quickly. Then you can head on over to Grow You and get the rest of the steps as well as the 31 days of mindfulness that we're going to be starting March 1<sup>st</sup>. So the first

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step is to pause. This is where you want to slow it way down. I think this is the hardest step because of the path of least resistance.

So the path of least resistance is always the path you're already on. So if you are on the path, think of a hamster wheel where you are on this path of whatever the emotion is. Anxiety, rushing, urgency, frustration. It's so much easier to continue to feel that way. Even though consciously you would say I don't want to feel this way, it's not really true. Because your brain loves to repeat the past. So pausing can be the hardest step. You do this by slowing down. Know that it's going to be a little bit of a challenge, and you'll have a little bit of resistance because it's a new path.

Then step number two is to take deep breaths. This will help you calm down your nervous system. Step three is to notice what you're thinking, notice how you're feeling, and notice what's happening in your surroundings, in your environment.

Step four is to direct your brain to think on purpose. Then you will feel differently. So you're directing your brain and your body. How do you want to think? How do you want to feel? This is going to help you because you'll show up differently. Because when you feel different, you act different and you create an entirely different experience. The last step is to be still and practice 10 minutes of silence every day so that you get more comfortable being calm and steady and present.

All right my friends to get the 31 days of mindfulness and practice with me and all of the other amazing women in Grow You, head on over to [nataliebacon.com/coaching](https://nataliebacon.com/coaching). 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.