

Mommy Wine Culture



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Natalie Bacon

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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. I'm so happy to be here with you. I want to invite you to my free coaching call. It is happening soon, within the next week on March 21st. It is called Ask Natalie Everything. How it works is you can come live. I won't be able to see you or hear you, but if you want you can participate.

So you'll be able to get on this call, click a button, and ask me any question that you have. Or you can simply join the call and listen in. We are a group of women and moms who love the inner work, and I will be answering your questions live. So if you have challenge right now that you're struggling with or you want help with a goal or anything like that related to mindfulness, this is how you can work with me a little bit for free. It's kind of like taking what I teach on the podcast to that next level.

If you've never had coaching before and you're not really sure what it's all about, this would be the most perfect call for you to attend because you can join so easily via Zoom and listen in and see what it's really like to get coached and get your questions answered in a very different way than asking one of your friends or peers for advice.

This is where I actually use my training and my tools to coach you at a really high level. The result is that I help you solve the root cause of whatever you are struggling with whether it's feeling overwhelmed with your daily commitments or if it is feeling stressed and you want help sort of managing your life and your time. You're feeling anxiety. Or it could be that you haven't lost any weight, and you've set this weight loss goal.

So anytime you're feeling kind of stuck of having a challenge, coach is what helps you the most because it helps you see that root cause of the problem that you can't see yourself. In coaching we call it reading the label from

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inside the bottle. So if you are a bottle, it's very hard to read that label from inside. Meaning it's hard for you to see what your brain is doing on default.

But if you come to coaching, you can have someone else who's outside of you read that label so easily, and I'm that person. I'm trained as a life coach. Last month's call was so successful, and I love doing these. So I'm going to have another one this month. I would so love for you to be there so you can get a taste of what this is really like and so I can help you just a little bit.

I'm also going to give you a tool that you can use in your daily life as a self-coaching tool. You'll be able to use this as a way for you to work on yourself in your daily coaching practice or in your daily morning routine or anything like that. You can get all of the details over at nataliebacon.com/asknatalie. That's all one word, no dashes. Just forward slash asknatalie.

Today what I want to talk to you about is mommy wine culture. Mommy wine culture is something that is on my mind because I don't drink. Wine and wine in motherhood is something that I find to be so prevalent and something that I'm not a part of at all. So I thought that sharing my experience here would help so that if you are curious about stopping drinking or slowing down how much you drink or just want to explore this topic more, I could give you some tools and a way for you to think about it a little bit differently that I think will help.

So when I'm talking about mommy wine culture, I'm talking about this idea that the way you cope with being a mom and the challenges that are specific to being a mom is by drinking wine. So it's mom deserves a glass of wine to feel better from her hard day. If you look online, there are memes and mugs and shirts and commercials. It really has become culturally engrained, almost like a marketing campaign to get moms to normalize drinking to compensate for how hard the day was. How hard the season is. So basically it's saying you need alcohol to get through motherhood.

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I just want to say before we get started my hope here is not to convince you that alcohol is bad or that you should even limit or stop drinking at all. It's simply to bring more awareness to what mommy wine culture is so that you can decide for yourself what's best for you instead of defaulting to whatever's out there and just drinking on default without considering all of the effects of it.

So when it comes to alcohol, I want you to consider why you drink. So alcohol is categorized as a group one carcinogen by the International Agency for Research on Cancer. Even light or moderate alcohol consumption will increase your cancer risk. It is right up there with tobacco and asbestos. Alcohol is also a top cause of preventable cancer after smoking and obesity.

However, most people don't know that alcohol can cause cancer. Of course, we do know that alcohol can have a variety of other effects like liver disease, right, cirrhosis of the liver or just the effects that we most commonly experience in our lives. Maybe irritability, increased anxiety, headaches, weight gain. Maybe not physical effects, but effects on your family life, effects on your personal life. If you've gotten in trouble for drinking, gotten arrested, anything like that.

There are so many different ways that alcohol can negatively affect your life. Yet given all of this when I ask people why they drink, typically I get responses like, "Everyone drinks. I can't have fun without alcohol. I've always drank. Drinking helps me cope with motherhood stress and overwhelm. I don't know what motherhood would be like without alcohol. I don't know how to connect with friends without drinking. I can't imagine my life without alcohol."

These are reasons that, at one time, I had for drinking myself. Yet none of these reasons are really good reasons to continue drinking. If you notice they're based on social norms and insecurities. So if the reason that you drink is because you can't imagine what motherhood would be like without alcohol or you don't know how to connect with friends or you don't know how to have fun, you're sort of saying that this is what you've always done.

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This is what your peer group does. This is where you feel most comfortable.

That's okay if that's your initial reason for drinking. I think this is more default thinking, and I want you to question it. Even if you never change your drinking habits, just question whether you like those reasons. So when I did this work a few years ago, I didn't really like those reasons. So I don't like to do something just because I've always done it. I know that when my brain tells me that everyone does something or no one does something, it's always a lie, right. Our brain tends to do this black and white thinking and go to extremes.

As it turns out, about half or less than half of the adult population drinks alcohol. If you would have asked me a few years ago what percentage of adults drink alcohol, I for sure would have thought it would have been 75% to 80%. And even higher than that if you just look at adults between the age of 18 and 60. I would have thought that the non-drinkers were much older or much younger.

Yet as it turns out, over half of the adult population right in that middle life age doesn't drink alcohol at all. I can relate to this now because I don't drink, and I'm not around a lot of people who drink. But yet three years ago, I had a completely different view of drinking and how "everyone" drinks. So it's a good idea to slow down your thinking and take a look at the reasons why you drink and question them. Question them if they are thoughts or facts. Question whether you like the thoughts that you are thinking.

It's really interesting when I consider my mindset shift around alcohol. I'm actually really surprised that I have this view that most people don't drink. If you would have asked me a few years ago when I quit drinking if I ever would have thought that that would be how I'd think, I would have said no. I would have thought that I would limit my own drinking, but that I would still believe that everyone pretty much drinks. Because at the time, I thought that was a fact.

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I find it so fascinating that a few years later I have the opposite view. I have the opposite mindset. I think that most adults don't drink. So what I noticed about my brain is that overtime, I started to hang out with people who drank less alcohol. It just wasn't a part of my life anymore, so naturally I didn't attract people who had alcohol as a really big part of their life. Now I'm still around people who do drink here and there, but it's not like I used to be where I felt like everyone in my life was drinking. It is just fascinating to me to see this switch.

I find that looking back on the last few years of my life, my personal life has just exploded since I quit drinking. I got engaged. I planned a wedding and got married. I treated my family to a destination wedding at a very high end hotel resort. I moved across the country. I got another puppy so my sweet Penny girl could have a playmate. I started working fewer hours. I got pregnant and had a baby. I made friends with people who don't drink that much.

My mornings are so much better. My days are better. My health is better. My attitude is better. My feelings are more balanced. Ultimately I think that cutting out drinking, I really stepped into who I wanted to be as a mom right away without having alcohol a part of my life.

Now if you are new here or you're not familiar with my story at all, I record a couple of episodes in the past about how I quit drinking and how my year without alcohol had been. I'm not sober. I was never an alcoholic. I'm not counting days. I just choose to not drink. Because my life is better without alcohol. It doesn't mean that I think alcohol is bad, and it also doesn't mean that I won't ever consider drinking again. It just means that right now I don't want to drink. I don't think that it adds value to my life.

So I was recently coaching someone in Grow You about taking a break from drinking. She had taken a break, and she had realized that she wasn't having fun. She wanted tips on how to go about this new journey for her. I asked her what had happened, and she explained that when she was at her sister's house, her mom and sisters and a couple friends were there.

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They were all cheersing and having fun and having drinks, and she felt left out.

I asked her what she was drinking and how she was behaving. She said that she wasn't drinking anything, and she was sort of separate from the group. Like physically she wasn't in the same room with them as much, and she sort of hung back as they were cheersing and having fun. I asked her why didn't you grab a non-alcoholic drink or a sparkling water and put it in a nice wine glass or cocktail glass and cheers with them?

It was so fascinating because she said she had never even considered that she could do that. This is where your thoughts really end up in your results. So if you have the thought I can't have fun without alcohol, you will create that result. You close down your mind, and you close down the creativity that your mind can find if it was open. So if you think I'm not going to drink and I'm going to have a lot of fun, your brain will look for ways to make that happen.

She was so relieved to know that she could participate and cheers and have fun and be a part of the group and have fun. So people will look to you for how to interpret your experience. If you are in the corner sort of sulking, not having fun then that's how they're going to think of not drinking and of you not drinking. However if you're having a blast and you have a drink in a cup that's non-alcoholic, and you're cheersing with everyone and you're non-alcoholic drink then you are showing them that you are having fun without drinking alcohol.

It's so interesting to be on the other side of this because I really had to do this consciously at first, but now it's so effortless it's not even on my mind. I have a guy friend, shoutout to Damen, who has never really drank alcohol. I used to find it so fascinating that he doesn't say he doesn't really think about what to say if he wants a drink. It just doesn't even cross his mind. I couldn't relate to that. I found it really interesting and almost unbelievable.

Now having not drank for a few years, I get it. I don't think about alcohol at all. I'll say maybe the first year of not drinking, I did think about it. I think this

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is important to note because it's almost like those of us who want to take a break from drinking or want to stop drinking, we just wish that everyone else in our life didn't drink alcohol. Because then we wouldn't have to manage our mind around it. We wouldn't have to know what to say. We wouldn't have to feel uncomfortable, all of those things because it would just be the norm.

What I want to offer to you is that if you're willing to go through sort of that first year of awkwardness and figuring out who you are without alcohol, you do get to the other side where it is that way. Where it's not even on your mind at all. Where you have no mental chatter about it. Where you don't have to think about how to respond. Where you know how to have fun without at the alcohol and it's not even on your mind whatsoever. So if you're considering taking a break or being more conscious with alcohol, I think the question that comes up is whether to abstain or whether to moderate.

So we all create habits that don't serve us over time. This could be social media use. This could be eating sugar and sweets. This could be shopping or it could be drinking alcohol or drugs or anything like that, smoking. The question is what to do when you overdo it in these areas. Do you cut it out and abstain completely? Or do you do it in moderation?

So if I think of smoking cigarettes. I've never smoked cigarettes. I don't have any mental chatter about it. I abstain from that 100%. If I think of social media, I participate in social media. I like using social media. Also I don't want to overuse it. I want to moderate how I use social media.

So when you think about abstaining or moderating in terms of alcohol, I just want you to know that you can do either. If you abstain from it, you really eliminate it and you never use it again, which is actually easier on your brain because you don't have to remake the decision consistently.

You might not want to abstain. You might want to continue drinking, and you might want to moderate that instead. It's kind of like social media, or for me it's sugar and sweets. I don't want to completely eliminate sugar and

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sweets, but I want to moderate it because I know that overusing it over time isn't good for my body.

So the way that you moderate something, in particular here we're talking about drinking, is to become a conscious drinker. So if you're in Grow You, there's a lesson on this in my inner work tools in the bonus vault. You can watch that. For those of you that aren't in Grow You, how I teach conscious drinking is in three steps.

So you decide ahead of time how much you're going to drink. I recommend 24 hours, but it at least needs to be 12 hours. So you want to make sure you're making the decision of how much you're going to drink in a certain setting from your prefrontal cortex. So if it's Friday and you're going out Saturday night, you want to decide Friday how much you're going to drink that next evening.

Step number two is to follow through. This goes to the relationship that you have with yourself. So you want to make sure, make sure, make sure that you do what you say you're going to do. Number three is to allow urges that come up. So you might say I'm only going to have two drinks. Then Saturday night comes and you have two drinks and you have the urge to have more. It's really important that you don't have more and you just honor that urge, that feeling, and you allow it to move through you.

You can always redecide. So you might decide the next weekend I'm going to have six drinks because I didn't like that experience of limiting myself to two. The key is that you're making that decision from your highest self, from your parent brain. In the moment, that's when your default brain, your primitive brain, your toddler brain is in charge. So if you are out having drinks with friends, you're in the moment where your default brain is going to want that dopamine hit. It's going to say, "Oh no, we need to keep drinking." You're not going to make decisions from your highest self when you decide in the moment.

Something to also be aware of is that alcohol is really effective at making you feel really good in the moment. This means that when you cut out

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alcohol or decrease it, what you're left with is your feelings. So if you think about it, if you feel stressed at the end of the day after working and/or taking care of the kids and you say mommy deserves a drink and then you drink, the alcohol numbs your nervous system so you don't experience that stress or whatever negative emotion that you're feeling.

So when you take out the alcohol, you're left with the stress. This means that without alcohol, you're left with the truth of your life. You're left with what's hard, specifically your emotions. You can find other escapes to feel the alcohol. So if you give up booze, you might start eating more cookies or increasing your sugar. Or you might swap it out for shopping or working. It could even be positive escapes like exercising or listening to music.

What I teach and what I want to encourage you to do is to notice and allow your feelings without adding in something to numb them away. So you can learn to watch your feelings. You can become aware of them and allow them to be there, holding them with love.

What I teach in Grow You is to hold your feelings with love. When you do that, the truth about your life becomes apparent. Eventually this is how your life can be better. It takes being willing to experience those negative emotions, but I promise you on the other side of that is the truth of your life, which you can lean into and move through in a way that leads you to your deepest desires.

So what I mean by that is you might be drinking because you're unsatisfied in your marriage, and you feel like you are carrying the mental and physical and emotional load of the household and taking care of your kids. When you stop drinking, that becomes even more apparent because you don't have this crutch to escape with. While it's hard to deal with the truth of that, it's going to be so helpful for you to really see how you're thinking and feeling about that area of your life so that you can actually work through it in a constructive way. It's hard but you can totally do hard things.

So I want to leave you with five really practical tips if you are thinking about limiting your alcohol consumption or abstaining from alcohol all together. I

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think these will help you in your alcohol journey and help you question the mommy wine culture that has become so prevalent.

Number one, always make decisions about alcohol in the morning. This will ensure that you make them from your prefrontal cortex, which is your adult highest self-brain, and you won't make them from your primitive in the moment toddler brain. So, again, you want to decide Friday morning how much you're going to drink at night for that day or for the next day.

I'll tell you, I've really considered starting drinking again, but I tell myself okay well I have to make that decision in the morning. There's never been one morning where I've wanted to make the decision to drink again. It's always that primitive brain at night where I'm tired or it's an event like New Year's Eve, something like that, where that desire really becomes apparent again, and I say I don't make this decision at night. I can remake it in the morning. There's just never been a morning where I've just really wanted to say, "Yes, I want to drink again." There might be in the future, but there hasn't been so far. So I just continue not to drink.

Number two, visualize having fun and not drinking. What time do you stay out until? What do you say to your friends? How do you act? I can't tell you how many times I've been around friends who decide not to drink and they'll decide that in the moment, and they end up not having fun because that's their mindset. I can't have fun unless I'm drinking.

So they kind of withdraw from conversation. They end up saying I'm going to go home early. They really just make their experience not as fun. Remember, fun is a feeling that you create. I love to ask the question did you make it fun instead of saying was that fun as if the thing that you're doing is fun or the circumstance is fun. It puts it back on you to create the fun. Did you make that fun?

Number three, decide how you want to feel. Remember feelings are typically one word. So when you are out and you're not drinking, how do you want to feel about that? Do you want to feel fun? Do you want to feel energized? Do you want to feel engaged? Again on default if you're used to

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associating booze with fun and you take away the booze, your default brain is going to go to some feeling that's not very helpful. Maybe self-pity or apathy or something else like disappointed or just down. So instead you can decide ahead of time how you want to feel, and you can create that feeling on purpose from how you think.

Tip number four is to know your drink order ahead of time. I like to order sparkling water in a wine glass with a lime. If there are mocktails, I will always ask about the mocktails. If not, I default to sparkling water. I make sure it's in a wine glass so that I have a drink in my hand, and I can participate with other people who are drinking, particularly if I'm out at a restaurant with friends.

This is true not just for if you're out at restaurants but also if you are going over to one of your girlfriend's house or you're getting together with other moms. Even if they're all drinking wine, you can have sparkling water in a nice fancy glass. You can bring over fun mocktail type of drinks. You can integrate that without feeling like you're the odd man out. People are going to look to you for how to interpret your experience of not drinking. If you're having fun and if you are connected and you make not drinking the most amazing thing ever, that is magnetic, and that is something that people will be drawn to.

So you don't have to think that you're going to be disconnected or not a part of the group or it has to be this awkward interaction where you don't stay out as late or you don't get invited or anything like that. You absolutely can be a part of the group and feel connected. You just have to have the mindset that this is your decision and it's the best decision ever.

Tip number five is to have a plan for what to say when people ask you if you want a drink. So this is where, I think, some moms fall into drinking again without even having planned on it. I was just listening to another podcast for someone who hadn't drank for a couple years just decided to have a drink when she was out with some new mom friends. She wanted to be accepted by them and be a part of the group. So she just said, "Yeah, I'll have a drink."

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What I don't want you to do is make that decision in the moment. You want to decide ahead of time if you're drinking, how much you're drinking so that you can kind of put some limits and some constraints around that. So if you know what you're going to tell people, you can decide to feel that certain way ahead of time.

So something that I typically say is I love experimenting with my health, and I just find that my life is better without alcohol. So I don't drink for right now. That's usually what I say when they ask me what my favorite drink is or something like that. I'll even say I used to drink a lot of sparkling drinks. I used to really like tequila or I used to really like Prosecco or champagne. I'm very open and honest that yeah I used to drink. I didn't have a problem, but I love experimenting with my health. I just find that my life is better without alcohol. So I just do that for now.

I make it very connecting. I don't make it something like I'm better because I'm not drinking. I don't make it this weird topic. People feed off of my energy around it. So I really make it this positive experience for me.

You can also have a plan for what to tell people if they specifically say hey, what are you drinking? What can I get you to drink? You might say oh actually I'm taking a break from alcohol right now, but I'll have a sparkling water. I'll have a mocktail or something like that. The key is to just have a plan ahead of time so that you've thought this through and make the decision that you want to make in the moment instead of sort of going with that insecurity or nervousness if you haven't thought about it ahead of time.

While mommy wine culture is something that's really prevalent for us in our generation, I want you to know that you can always decide intentionally what role you want alcohol to play in your life. That doesn't mean anything about how fun you are, how many friends you have, the connections that you currently have. It doesn't mean anything about your marriage, if your husband drinks, or anything like that. You 100% can decide to change your relationship with alcohol and still have fun and still be the life of the party, and still be the mom that you want to be.

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I am a few years in of not drinking, and my life is so much better because of that. I don't think I would have the life that I have now if I had continued to drink. I didn't have a problem drinking. I wasn't an alcoholic. I wasn't overdrinking. Drinking and alcohol was just one of my hobbies. When I eliminated that, it created so much more space. I filled that space with so many amazing new things. My family life is just growing and so incredible in part because I don't have alcohol a part of it.

The friends that I meet now and the things that I do with those friends and how I'm growing as a mom, it's just not aligned with drinking alcohol at all. I still will participate in things that other moms do with wine. I'm not against wine, but it's just not something that I want to have space for. Because I don't think it adds value to my life.

For you, it might be more like the sugar is for me where you want to moderate it instead of abstain from it. Just make sure that you do the thought work around moderation so that it doesn't take up too much mental chatter, in which case you end up over analyzing your decisions in which case it takes up so much space in your brain which you probably don't want it to do.

So as you navigate mommy wine culture, bring awareness to what you're thinking about it, how you're feeling about it. Think about your future and what you want your future to look like and where wine and booze in general fits into that. All right my friend make sure you come to Ask Natalie Anything. I would love to coach you and talk with you about mommy wine culture. I will see you there. 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.