

# Feeling Irritated By Your Spouse



## Full Episode Transcript

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**Natalie Bacon**

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## Feeling Irritated By Your Spouse

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. As always, I am thrilled to be here with you today. I have a fun episode for you about what to do, how to think, how to feel when you are irritated by your spouse. Before we jump into that though, I want to invite you to come hang out with me at a workshop called How to Stay Calm. It is happening next Wednesday, a week from today, on September 14<sup>th</sup>. You can get all of the details at [nataliebacon.com/calm](http://nataliebacon.com/calm).

This is a workshop I've never taught before. So it will be brand new tools for you. It is also something that I'm hosting because I have been getting so many emails and DMs and messages and asked about coaching on this topic really extensively in the last I don't know six months or so. So I try to pay attention to what is all on your mind so that I can help you most with that. That's the point. That's why I'm here.

So I noticed, you want more tools for how to stay calm. That's what I'm going to give you. You will also get one to one access to me. You can ask me anything with respect to this topic. I will coach you. It will be a lot of fun. If you are a podcast listener, and you've never come to something like this, this is the one you want to attend. It's going to be some of my best work.

Also, I want to let you know that with respect to the feeling irritated that we're going to jump into, I just redid the marriage and relationship toolkit inside Grow You. So I have a program called Grow You. When you join the program, you get immediate access to what's called the bonus vault where I include on demand courses, tools, workshops, downloads. It's sort of like the Netflix of mental and emotional health for moms. You can kind of go in there and pick and choose whatever you want to watch at any time.

We've always had a marriage and relationship tool kit in there. I created it right when I launched Grow You several years ago. I just redid the entire

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course. It has new and improved tools. It is simplified in a way that is much more practical and usable for you to use in your everyday life.

So what I do is, I queue up the website on my phone almost like an app. It's on my home screen. I put an AirPods in, and I will listen to these tools as I am doing the dishes, cleaning up, whatever it is. So know that you can access and use everything that's inside Grow You in a really easy way. I talk about how to do that right when you join. So if you want more information or that sounds interesting to you, go on over to [nataliebacon.com/coaching](https://nataliebacon.com/coaching) and you can read more about it.

Okay, now let's dive in to today's topic, feeling irritated by your spouse. This is also brought to you by several requests for this topic. I can relate to this personally. I think even if you're not married and you're in a partnership or in a relationship, or maybe you're single right now but you have had past relationships or you want a relationship in the future. This will help you with how to navigate when you are feeling irritated.

You'll see in the title it says feeling irritated by your spouse because that's what we think is happening. On default our brains think my spouse did this thing. It is irritating me. But if you have been a follower of my work, you know that this is not possible. That's what I want to talk with you here today all about.

What's actually happening is that your spouse does something. Let's say that he was supposed to pick up dinner on his way home from work, and he forgets it. So spouse forgets dinner is what happened. Those are the facts. When you see this, when you notice this, when he walks in the door without dinner, you immediately feel irritated, and you think it's because your spouse forgot dinner.

But what's actually happening is that in between spouse forgetting dinner and you feeling irritated is your mindset. Your thoughts, your brain, it's interpreting what happened. It's telling you a story. That story in your mind is creating the irritation. So it's always your thoughts creating your feelings.

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It's always the story that you're telling about spouse forgetting that's creating the irritation.

I think conceptually, we kind of get it. Yes, thoughts create feelings. You've heard me say that before. But how often are you using this work in real life and noticing it? That is work that I do ongoing. That's why I brought you this topic. I'm hoping that through these examples this can be really powerful in your life.

So think about anything that your spouse does that "irritates" you, and how he can't actually irritate you. So what are you thinking that feels like irritation? Whenever you are feeling irritated, it's an indication of what's happening internally for you, not externally.

I was coaching someone recently. She said, "I was so irritated with my spouse, I just had to leave the room. I didn't know where to go from here. What should I do?" Notice that in this question, we're focusing on the actions, and that that is what we do as humans. We want to know what to do to solve the problem.

But before we can take action, we need to clean up our thinking and our feelings. Because how we think and how we feel will drive the best actions possible to help us solve any challenge. What we don't want to do is feel really irritated and act out that irritation. It's sort of like adding fuel to the fire. It just makes things worse.

When you think about anything your spouse does that triggers thoughts for you to feel irritated by, pay attention to what those thoughts are. They might be something like why can't he remember anything? Why doesn't he think about his family more? Why do I always have to remind him? This is so annoying. He is so irritating. This is frustrating. What are we going to do for dinner? This isn't the first time this has happened. He can't get things right.

These are all thoughts. They are not facts. Even when we say things like he is so irritating, or this is so irritating, what we're doing is we are projecting our feeling onto something or someone else. We are making it

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mean that spouse created our feelings. So simply noticing this can be really powerful for you.

What you want to do is give yourself permission to validate your feelings, but also take responsibility for them. So this is an important balance because we don't want to beat ourselves up for feeling irritation, but we also don't want to blame the irritation on spouse.

What we want to do is say oh, I'm feeling irritated. That's a cue for me to go inward. That's a cue that this is coming from my mindset. It's okay. I can validate my feelings. I can validate feeling irritated. I can feel irritation without acting out on it. I can still show up as I want to show up. I don't have to yell or snap or be rude or take any action that isn't from my highest self. I can feel this feeling. I can attribute it to what I'm thinking. I'm thinking something that's creating irritation. This thought isn't serving me, and that's okay. I can still feel it.

Because here's the thing. When you feel irritated, that is not the time to try to change your thoughts. So there's two parts to solving this. There's the processing your feelings part, and then there's the mindset part. Everyone always wants to jump to let me just change my thoughts. Let me just change what I'm thinking. That is what you're going to do out of the moment. That is the long term work that we do inside Grow You. That's very powerful. It's just not helpful when you're in the moment and you're already feeling irritated.

So if you are feeling irritated, immediately your job is to welcome the feeling and allow it to be there. It's processing your feelings, naming the feeling in your body, attributing it to your thoughts. It's not pushing it away. So you don't want to try to remove it, get rid of it, think that something's gone wrong. When you can allow it and process it, you will create more space between your feelings and your actions.

In so doing, you're really learning how to regulate your emotions, feel your feelings without thinking that you have to react to them. Did you know you

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can just feel irritated, and what I call do irritation, feel the feeling, without acting out on it?

When you know that, as a human, there is no place in time where you get to the future where you never feel a negative emotion, you start to see that there is no point to beating yourself up about negative feelings in the first place. Because we're not trying to stop feeling irritated permanently. It's not like once you learn how to process irritation, you're never going to feel irritated again.

Feeling irritated is only a problem if you resist the feeling, which is what I don't want you to do. I want you to practice processing the feeling, allowing it, naming it, kind of going through the steps that I recommend for processing feelings, and be with that feeling. Interestingly, the more that you do this, the less irritation will become this default emotion.

You instead become someone who periodically experiences the feeling of irritation, and you're able to feel that feeling because you're human. Of course, sometimes you feel irritated. You have a brain that's going to interpret things negatively in ways that doesn't serve you. But that is very different than having your default emotion that you experience with respect to your spouse be irritation.

On the one hand, you're a wife who sometimes feels irritated. On the other hand, you're an irritated wife. The difference is with respect to you doing the inner work. If you are someone who works on your mindset, processes your feelings, you will be able to reduce how often you experience irritation. However, you're not sort of ever going to get to a place where irritation just doesn't exist. It just won't be that big of a deal. When it comes up for you, you notice it, you allow it. It's not that big of a thing.

So when you think of your top 1, 2, 3, 4 emotions, is irritation one of them? If so, that's an indication that you want to really do some of this thought work and feeling work to process your feelings and create a better mindset so that irritation isn't one of your top emotions, but instead is just one of the many emotions that you experience.

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So as part of allowing your feelings to be with you, I think it can be powerful to create a connected relationship with the feeling. So instead of looking outward at what spouse did and thinking that the irritation you're experiencing is coming from him not remembering dinner, and then your brain goes down this rabbit hole of how he always does this. Your brain is really thinking about all of the things about him, and it's outside of you.

When you go inward, you can create this connection with the feeling that is almost like you're talking to the emotion when you notice it's there. So it sounds something like I'm feeling a negative emotion. I'm feeling irritation. This is coming from what I'm thinking. I can feel this feeling without acting out on it.

I know that this mindset is one that's coming from a thought error and not necessarily one I want to have in the future, but it's okay. It's okay that I'm having this mindset right now, and that it created these feelings. I can handle this. I'm a human. Of course, I created irritation. This is what we do as humans. I can feel irritation. Nothing has gone wrong. So in that dialogue, what I'm doing there is allowing the irritation to be there. But I'm also taking ownership of creating the feeling. I'm not blaming the feeling on something outside of me.

Finally, I'm not making it mean that something has gone wrong. There's no way to stop feeling negative emotions because you are human. But, again, if you notice you feel irritated as one of your top emotions, this is where you're going to want to spend time really feeling that emotion and not trying to fix it or get away from it.

Okay, so that is kind of part one, right, when you feel the feeling. When you notice that you are feeling irritated, processing the feeling is what you want to do. The second part of this is what you do out of the moment. It's how you get ahead of it the next time. This is choosing a better, more helpful, more useful mindset that doesn't lead to so much irritation.

One of the most useful questions that you can ask yourself is, if my spouse does X, Y, Z in the future, how do I want to think about it? How do I want to

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feel about it? How do I want to act? So for example, let's say that your spouse is forgetting to pick up dinner on the way home from work, like he says he's going to. When you're doing this work out of the moment, imagine that your spouse again forgets dinner. How do you want to think about it?

What I see happening is so often instead of asking this question, we ask the question of how can I better control husband? How can I get my spouse to behave in a way that he's not behaving? How can I get him to remember dinner? Now I'm all for you making requests. You've probably heard me say this before. So definitely ask spouse to remember dinner and see if he will. But what I see happening most often is that we've tried that route already. We have asked spouse to remember. We asked them to pick up dinner, and they still forget.

So it can be really powerful for you instead of focusing on how to better control spouse or get them to take different action for you to focus on okay, how do I want to think about this the next time spouse acts this way? The next time spouse forgets dinner? How do you want to think? How do you want to feel? How do you want to act? You get to decide.

Right now your brain is in the default mindset of creating a story that is a narrative that creates irritation. Why can't he remember anything? Why do I always have to remind him? This is so annoying. What are we going to have for dinner? This isn't the first time. All of those thoughts that don't serve you at all.

Instead, what you can do is come up out of the moment with better feeling thoughts. Something like sometimes my spouse forgets things, and that's okay. I know that I'm not perfect either. We're both doing our best, and that's good enough. I'm sure I do things that he thinks are annoying too. Even though it feels like a big deal right now, I know that it's not. I can figure out dinner with what we have at home. Marriage is 50/50, and this is just the part where my brain thinks some things are annoying, and that's okay. I love this man and his forgetfulness.



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These are examples of what you might try on. What I mean buy try on is you have to think the thoughts and see how they feel for you. So if you try on the thought I love this man and his forgetfulness, and your brain is just not buying it. Your brain hates his forgetfulness then you shouldn't practice that thought because it's not going to be helpful in the moment.

What you want to do out of the moment is look for and find thoughts that will be more helpful than what your default brain is coming up with. Like I get it. This is the part where he's not perfect, and I'm certainly not perfect either. If that feels good for you, then you would practice thinking that. Spouses are usually pretty predictable. They typically behave consistently. So the next time that he forgets something, that's when you would practice these.

You're not going to be perfect, which is why the irritation will come back because you'll have some of that default mindset. But the more that you practice this, the better you will get at having this new mindset be a part of you. But it does take intentionally rehearsing that new mindset.

So I like to ask myself what am I mentally rehearsing right now with my spouse, with my marriage? I'm always mentally rehearsing something. Is it something that is going to bring about more connection and more respect and more love? Or is it something that is going to create more separation? Because your thoughts always create your feelings. So find the thoughts that are the most helpful for you in your marriage. You'll know it because of how it feels. Then you get to practice it, and you won't be perfect. That's okay.

The result of doing this work will be that you will stop blaming your spouse for irritating you because you'll know it's coming from your thoughts. When you do feel irritated, it won't be that big of a deal because you'll be able to process the feeling without resistance, without trying to escape or avoid or act it out.

In the moment, you'll be able to get over things much more quickly because you will have practiced allowing your feelings and showing up more

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purposefully as this habit that you are now really skilled at. Ultimately you will feel irritated less frequently because you'll be thinking more deliberately. Whenever you find yourself irritated, start saying I'm irritated because I'm thinking fill in the blank. I'm irritated because I'm thinking husband forgot dinner, and that's okay. I can do irritation. Knowing my spouse forgot dinner, knowing that I can show up as the wife I want to be. What now? How do I want to show up as my best self?

These questions are so much more helpful for creating a connected, positive marriage that won't let feelings like irritation boil up, spill over, and turn into bigger fights than they need to be. So feel your feelings. Allow them. Welcome them. Remind yourself you're human. Choose your mindset on purpose. Practice that mindset so you can show up as the woman and wife who you want to be. That's what I have for you my friend. 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.