

Mom Rage



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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.

Hello, my friend. Welcome to the podcast. I am so happy to be here with you today. We are going to be talking about mom rage. This is a topic that is so near and dear to my heart because I think there is so much shame and judgment around having mom rage. It's something we talk about as if it's so terrible and so bad. I want to give you some practical tools to help you navigate mom rage anytime that you are experiencing it.

Before we dive in to all of that goodness, I want to invite you to join me next Thursday for a workshop. I am going live for a virtual workshop. We're going to be on Zoom. I am teaching a new class called Breaking Up With Overwhelm. This is going to help you unwind overwhelm, press pause in your life, and allow you to really become more aware of the cause of overwhelm and how you can just say goodbye to it.

This is something that I think will help you regardless of the season that you are in. If you identify as someone who feels a lot of overwhelm, I want you to be there. I want you to get these tools. You can sign up, grab your seat at nataliebacon.com/overwhelm. It's next Thursday, October 20th. I'm so looking forward to helping you to coaching you and to getting to know you a little bit more. I will see you there. Now let's dive in to mom rage.

First, I like to define what we're talking about because we throw these terms around. While that can be really useful to connect in our own lives, I think on the podcast where we're trying to learn and grow, really taking a step back and breaking it down and looking at what are we even talking about can be so powerful. So mom rage is really just anger.

The term mom rage is what we use to describe anger as it relates to feeling anger in our role as mom. It could be anger with your kids, anger at yourself, anger what's happening in your home, anger towards your spouse, some sort of feeling of anger that you're really taking out when you

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are in your role as mom. I also think that it can come from feelings of irritability or frustration.

I'm going to talk about it through the lens of anger. But if you're listening and you identify more with having mom rage in terms of being irritated all the time, or annoyed, or frustrated, all of those feelings sort of are similar. If you identify with one more than the other, go for it. Use that one, but I'll be talking about it mostly through the lens of anger.

I think what makes mom rage so bad is that we don't separate out the feeling from the actions. So when we typically think about mom rage and wanting to get some help with our "mom rage" what we are referring to is our reaction to the feeling of anger. That's why most strategies, if you look up how to overcome mom rage or something like that, they're going to focus on taking different actions. Leave the room, take a few deep breaths, go talk to a friend.

That's not bad. Those might be helpful. The problem is it's sort of like breaking your arm and then putting the arm in a sling and never going to the doctor and having him reset the arm. Sure, does it help alleviate some of the pain in the moment? Yes. Does it solve the root cause so that your arm is healed and functioning properly? No. So that's the reason that it won't solve the root cause of the mom rage. So if you've tried other methods of solving this in the past, this is why it doesn't work. It's because you're sort of dealing with the symptoms and not the root cause.

Mom rage if it's really just anger as it relates to our role of motherhood is a feeling. Anger is just a feeling. It's a feeling in your body. All feelings are created from our thoughts. So you have a thought, and that creates a feeling of anger. Particularly through your role as mom. When you are feeling anger as a mom, you'll label that mom rage, and it's coming from whatever you're thinking.

So I am I'm talking about it in a way that is hopefully helpful for you, but I want to share my own experience as well. Because I'm a human being, I experience anger, and we all experience anger. Anger is a feeling. It's not

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even bad. No feeling is bad. What we want to see here is that there are actions that we can take that we may want to label as bad or right or wrong or not that we want to be taking. The feeling, though, isn't bad.

So let me talk about my own experience with mom rage. I can remember one night when RJ was about gosh, maybe four months old if I remember correctly. I remember the feeling though. I remember being so mad. I would definitely label it as anger. I would definitely label it as mom rage. It was the middle of the night, probably I don't know 3:00 a.m. I remember distinctly that it was not 4:00 a.m. or later.

RJ has never been a great sleeper. We do lots of different sleep training for that. It's been wonderful and helpful. But just overall, it hasn't been easy for him. Before we started any of that, he would just get up sometimes in the middle of the night. I remember this one night where he was up at 3:00 a.m. I had just fed him, and I had just put him back down. He got back up., and he was up. He wasn't like sleepy up like needed to be rocked back to sleep. He was up giggling and ready to play at 3:00 a.m. I was so mad in my body.

I was thinking thoughts like this is wrong. This shouldn't be happening. I shouldn't have to be up right now. Why is this happening? It just came over me. Now, I didn't act that out, but I distinctly remember feeling that feeling. It's okay. It's okay that I felt that anger. Anger really isn't a problem.

The problem is when we resist the anger, when we avoid the anger, when we react to the anger. So if this was the middle of the day, and I would have yelled or something like that, that's the problem. That's where we say oh, mom, rage is such a problem that I want to fix. But the feeling of anger, not that big of a deal.

When I have experienced anger, even outside of my role as mom. When it becomes so bad is when I'm resisting it, when I'm trying to avoid it, when I'm trying to get away from it. But whenever I don't do that, when I go inward, and I notice it, I watch the feeling, and I breathe through it, it's not that big of a deal. So changing actions is different than processing feelings.

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I want to point out that there's never a point where we just never feel anger again. We never feel irritation again. We never feel frustrated again. So part of this is simply just separating out your actions from who you are and from your feelings. It sounds like I'm a good mom who is experiencing the feeling of anger. If you yelled, it's I took an action that wasn't so good. I want to maybe repair, maybe apologize, and I want to work on that. Not taking those actions anymore, not yelling. But feeling the feeling is okay. You want to validate your feelings.

So when we say we're working on mom rage, or when we're working on kind of anything, it's working on not taking those actions and validating and welcoming our feelings. I have to say that the more I do this work, the more I just have thoughts like I don't even know anything. What I mean by that is there are so many layers and levels to all of this work, to working on your mindset, to feeling your feelings.

So I have been working on feeling my feelings since I was introduced to this work. Yet even today, I can say that in this season I feel like I am working on welcoming those more challenging feelings as if I had never been working on them before. For me in the past, my tendency would have been to work on changing my thoughts so I never would even get to the place of feeling anger.

I do think that if you feel anger a lot, this is work that you want to do. Cultivating a mindset where anger isn't one of your top emotions, or irritation or frustration isn't one of your top emotions. Also at the same time knowing that when you don't choose that mindset that's more empowering, when you do go into feelings of anger from what you're thinking, it's okay. Leaning in to feeling the feeling and welcoming it.

So for me, in that moment, it's validating my feelings. I like to put my hand on my heart. It's okay. Of course, this is happening. I sort of like talk to myself just in my mind to breathe through the anger. I'm feeling anger. It's not a problem. I can welcome the anger, and you sort of separate yourself from your feelings. I am not an angry mom. I'm a mom who is feeling the emotion of anger.

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Just imagine if you got really skilled at feeling your feelings in this way, and you just normalize them. How amazing would that be for you and also for the rest of your family? You would be teaching the skill of emotional awareness. This is so powerful. So I'll coach a lot of my clients who will say things like how do I deal with this mom rage so it's not something that my kids are seeing?

What I want to say is yes, we want to make sure you're not taking actions like yelling, snapping, overreacting. That is work that yes, you want to stop doing. But you don't want the goal to be to stop feeling anger. You want to be a human mom, not a robot mom. So how that would look in your life would be cultivating the skill of feeling your feelings. So it might be oh, honey, I'm feeling anger right now. It's in my body. It feels really hot in my chest. You're sharing that, and it's not a problem.

So when we work on becoming the best versions of ourselves, it means showing up and taking the actions that we want to take, but it doesn't mean we feel positive emotions all of the time. So it's widening that gap in between the feeling and the action or reaction. The action or reaction comes from resisting the anger. There is always a pause between the feeling you're experiencing and the action that you're taking. That's why I like to say it's a practice. It's a skill. It's something that you want to get really good at.

So as you're cultivating this new mindset, you will still experience anger. That's okay. The other skill besides cultivating this new mindset is the skill of practicing the feeling. Like I said, I continue to do this work, and it's so powerful.

Let's take another example. Let's say that your spouse, in this case your husband, is working a lot, and he is at a busy season in his work. You're doing more of some of the responsibilities that he typically does for the home. Let's say that you're taking out the trash, cleaning up the kitchen after dinner, and you're also grocery shopping. Those are a few things that he would normally do. You're doing this for a couple of weeks during his busy season. You agreed to this, whether it was expressly or not.

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But after the first week of taking on these extra responsibilities, you find yourself more irritable. So the feeling is irritation. You find yourself snapping more. That's the action that you're taking. Then by the next week, you're feeling anger, and then you are yelling. This is such an opportunity for you to go inward and see what are you thinking, and how are you feeling?

It might be that you're thinking I should be able to handle this. I shouldn't feel so mad. He does so much for our family. Or you might be thinking thoughts like I shouldn't have to do all this. He should help more. This isn't working for me. I need a break. These are thoughts that are optional, and you may or may not want to keep them.

I know that for someone like myself who has been doing this work for a while, whenever I get into thoughts where I'm blaming, they're not very helpful for me. So there is usually a way for me to think about it and still meet my needs.

What I never want you to do is think of thought like he should be helping me more, and then hear that that's just a thought and interpret that to mean that you should think I can do all of it and never ask for help. That is definitely not the message that I'm sending. The message that I want you to hear is that it is always your thoughts that you are thinking that create the feeling.

So in this example, let's say that you agreed explicitly to take on some extra responsibilities. Then after a week or two of doing that, you realize it's much more than you thought it would be. You thought you had the capacity for it, but you're realizing after week two that you don't have the capacity for it. What I'm not suggesting is that you sit there quietly, kind of seething and build up this resentment. What I am suggesting you do is you figure out what your needs are and what you are thinking about it.

Instead of I should be able to do this, or I shouldn't have to do all of this, or we should have more help, or we don't have enough help, or anything that sort of argues with reality, can you figure out what you're thinking? Then

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come up with a thought that feels more empowering and that meets your needs. So it might be something like, this is a lot harder than I anticipated. It's okay that I'm feeling these feelings of overwhelm, of irritability, of anger. I can process those feelings, and what is it that I need right now? How can I get a break? How can I get more help and support?

So you're changing the frame, changing the thoughts that you are thinking to support you. Not so that you're living in the land of rainbows and daisies, but so that you actually think thoughts that are more helpful. Because thoughts like I should be able to handle this, or I shouldn't feel this way, or I shouldn't snap, or he should be more helpful, or we should have more help. Those thoughts just won't help you. They will hurt you. Literally, they will create more resistance in your life, and they won't help you come up with more solutions.

So removing any judgment that you have, taking a look at the thoughts that you are thinking. What is it that I'm thinking that's creating these feelings? Then deciding okay, given our circumstances right now, what is it that I want to think? If I need more self-care, what can I think that will empower me to create that? Your brain will always look for solutions when you ask better questions.

So a lot of times mom rage comes up after we've already taken the action that we don't like. So for example, you find yourself yelling and upset and then you identify it as mom rage. That's okay. It's after the fact. What you want to do is take a look at what is it that I need here? What's the need that I haven't addressed for myself?

I think that there is this sort of idea of self-sacrifice in motherhood that is glorified. It means giving at your own expense. It means you as a mom should give more to your kids and neglect your own needs. That makes you a good mom. That is BS. I'm calling BS on that. What that actually does is makes you invisible. That's fine if you are a robot mom, but you're not a robot mom. You're a human mom. You literally have so many needs.

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If you do not value meeting your own needs, then it is going to be very hard for you to overcome mom rage because you won't give yourself permission to take a look at what your needs are. If you need a break, if you need some sleep, if you need some help. It may not even be that you can get that specific need met in that moment, but figuring out what that need is can be so powerful for helping you navigate mom rage in the future.

So I know that I've covered a lot so far, but I want to go through kind of the five specific steps really succinctly here. So that you can have a tool to help you navigate mom rage. So number one is understanding what mom rage is. Mom rage is feeling the feeling of anger with respect to your role as a mom.

Step two, feel your feelings of anger without reacting. This is a skill that you can get so good at anger is simply a feeling in your body. You don't have to take action from it. Right now you're in the habit of taking action so quickly from your anger. You're reacting to your anger. So you want to cultivate this skill, this practice of feeling your feelings. If you're in Grow You, you can take the processing feelings course and learn exactly how to do this. If you're not in there, join us. You get the course right when you join. It will help you learn the skill of feeling that feeling of anger.

Step three is to have compassion for yourself when you feel anger and when you take an action that you don't like. So when you make a mistake, when you yell, when you snap, when you overreact, have a compassion. Tell yourself I'm a good mom who took an action that wasn't my best. The problem that we get into and where it becomes mom shame is when we say I took a bad action and therefore I am bad. That is a level of judgment that makes this work so much harder.

If telling yourself that actually helped you not do it more in the future, I might tell you to do that. But it actually doesn't. Shame makes you hide. So you're never going to want to look at your thoughts or your feelings or your actions. You'll want to hide from it. So you want to remind yourself I am a good human. I'm a human being who took an action that wasn't so great. That's okay. I'm working on that. I can repair that. I can apologize. I can

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work on not taking that action anymore. I want to validate my feelings, and say that all feelings are welcome, but all actions are not welcome.

Step number four is to decide how you want to think and feel in certain circumstances. So for me after that instance of feeling really intense feelings of mom rage when RJ woke up in the middle of the night, I came up with a better mindset that I genuinely wanted to have. Okay. The mindset that I created for those moments when he woke up in the middle of the night was this.

Of course, he's up right now. He's not doing this to me. He is trying his best. It's okay that I'm tired. I can do tired. Tired isn't a problem. I want to get up with him in the middle of the night. He's supposed to get up in the middle of the night, even when it's unexpected. Those thoughts helped me so much for kind of the unexpected wake ups.

For me personally, that was the most triggering. For you, what is it in your life? What circumstances trigger those thoughts for you? What do you want to think? For some of you, I know I've coached a lot of clients who have kids who fight or who are disagreeing. When you feel anger about that, what are you thinking? It might be some version of the thought my kids aren't supposed to fight. That thought creates so much resistance and anger in your body because it argues with reality.

So can you think the thought, of course my kids are supposed to fight. Kids are supposed to fight. My kids are supposed to fight sometimes? How do I want to show up as mom? What boundaries do I want to have in place? How do I want to think and feel about it? We don't want to show up fighting about their fighting. Do you see that? We tend to mirror our kids. So out of the moment, you can really decide how you want to think and feel in certain situations, particularly those that come up often that are most triggering for you.

Then step five is for you to check in with yourself like you check in with the rest of your family. I don't know about you, but for me as a mom I love to check in with Steve and RJ and even our dogs and make sure that

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everyone is okay. It's very easy to do that and forget to check in with myself.

So one thing that I make sure to do is to see how Natalie is doing. It's like how are you doing today Natalie? What do you need? Then seeing how I can meet that need. When you normalize taking care of your own needs regularly, mom rage doesn't come up that often.

Yes, will you feel anger? Of course, you are human. Anger will come up. But it's not going to be so consistently because you're going to be in the habit of treating yourself with the love, kindness, respect, and validation that you give to the rest of the family. This is where you want to notice if you are glorifying any sort of self-sacrifice in motherhood because that will only hurt you.

So use these five steps to help you navigate mom rage. If you want more help processing your feelings, learning how to do that, and learning how to create a mindset that really helps you show up as the woman, wife, mom who you want to be, join me inside Grow You, and you will get all of the tools to help you do that. That's what I have for you today my friend. I love you so much. Have compassion for yourself, your feelings, and your actions, and I will see 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 to learn more.