

Your Relationship With Aging



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With Your Host

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Your Relationship With Aging

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.

What's happening my friends? Welcome to the podcast. I'm so happy to be here with you today. It is the end of the year. Can you believe it? We are heading in to January. In January inside Grow You, the topic of the month is body love. I am teaching a brand new workshop class and workbook and coaching call all on the topic of body.

Which means that if you want to change your eating habits, if you want to lose weight, if you want to get stronger, if you want to make any sort of change with your body, this is an excellent time to join Grow You. We'll only do it during this month in the program. So it won't be available for at least another year at a minimum. I know that so many of you want to make this next year the year that things are different for you and your body.

I have done a lot of work on my own body. In the past it was losing weight. Most recently, the last few years I've done a lot of work on drinking. I don't drink alcohol. Choose more of a conscious drinking lifestyle. In the future, I have to say that my body work that I'll be doing is related to sugar. That is an area that I definitely could improve on. So I will be doing that part of the work this month with everyone in Grow You.

So if you would like more information, give it a try this month. Dive in to how to love your body through change. So you're going to change your body not from hating your body, but instead from accepting and loving your body. That is the work that we're doing. You can learn more over at nataliebacon.com/coaching.

With that I'm bringing to you today's topic, which is your relationship with aging. Did you know that you have a relationship with aging? A relationship is the thoughts that you have about something. It's quite literally how you relate to something. So anything that you think about you have a relationship to.

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So ask yourself, what is your relationship like with aging. Now before we bring more consciousness into any area of our lives, I like to think of a spectrum where either on the one end, there's sort of this disconnection from a place of judgment, and on the other end, there's this disconnection from a place of kind of ignoring and nonexistence.

So when you were younger, you probably just ignored the fact that your body would be aging. I mean you knew that you had a body that would age and you knew that you were getting older, but you didn't really think much about the aging process. So that's one end of the spectrum. The other end of the spectrum, which is where I typically find people in their 30s or older, is on the judgmental side. This is where the thoughts and the relationship is really harsh and critical and judgmental, and it's also very disconnecting.

Where we want to be is in the middle where there's awareness, but it isn't negative. There's awareness and acceptance, and it feels connected. So just ask yourself what's your relationship like with aging? What are your thoughts about aging? What are those default thoughts?

Now, I know the tendency is to jump to what you want to think, what you want your relationship to be like, but it's sort of like that GPS that I often refer to. Before we can get to the end destination, we have to know the starting point. Where are you currently at? What's your current address.

For mindful thinking it's what are your current thoughts about aging? How do those thoughts feel? Are they very expansive and open? Or are they very disconnecting and rooted in resistance? Now, culturally, specifically in the Western American culture that I'm a part of, we are given so many messages about anti-aging. Literally, this is against what is natural for the human body.

So if you just take a really broad perspective, bodies are supposed to age. This is a natural part of our humaneness. We have a human body. That human body is supposed to age. We've sort of vilified aging and made it bad.

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That doesn't mean that we have to go to the opposite extreme where we just think that aging is the best thing ever, and we want to get to this point where we're 100 years old and our bodies aren't what they once were. I think that just bringing awareness to the fact that aging is a normal and natural part, and it's quite literally how human bodies are designed to age and to grow. There can be acceptance of the good parts and the bad parts, of the easy parts and the hard parts, of all of the greatness that is included instead of sort of this black and white thinking about aging.

So just think about your thoughts. What are your thoughts? Is it that you hate aging? Is it that you wish you were younger? Is it that you think oh, my skin was so much better when I was younger? I weighed a better weight when I was younger. My body was so much better. Is it that you wish you could have your body, your younger body, your pre-baby body? Is it that you can't run like you used to, and you wish that your body was different in some way? Is it that you think that younger is better? Is it that you think that wrinkles and the natural progression of the skin aging is bad?

So before, again, we go into what we should be thinking or want to be thinking, I just like to approach it with curiosity. So I actually came up with this specific podcast because I've been doing work on this myself. It just dawned on me one day that I have a relationship with aging. On default, the thoughts that I had about aging were what I was given socially and culturally. So it's not like I sat around really mad about aging. It wasn't taking up a lot of headspace.

But my thoughts about aging in general were that it's a bad thing. Particularly as a woman, as a mom, the goal is to look like you're not aging. I just stopped myself, and I went into curiosity. Curiosity is the secret sauce to doing mindset work. I asked myself what do I want to think about aging? What am I thinking about aging? Does this feel good to me? Is this helpful for me?

I realized that the way I was thinking about aging wasn't very helpful. I still have a lot of work to do to clean it up, but I'm going to share with you my thoughts on it now as well as some other thoughts that you might consider.

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But let's start first with just getting to the facts. Like what are the facts here that we're even talking about?

Well, you have a body, and that body is a human body, and human bodies age and grow. So your body will age and grow. You will have thoughts about aging and growing. You get to take on the default thoughts that your brain offers you, or you can choose your thoughts on purpose. You can choose how you want to relate to the aging process. You can also choose how you take care of your body as it ages.

So those are the facts. I think just accepting that and seeing that for what it is can be really empowering to see that you have so much more control over how you relate to your body, how you think about your body, and how you think about aging.

So now let's shift into thinking about how you might think about your body as it ages. How do you want to think, and more importantly, how do you want to feel about your body and towards your body and in your body as it ages? How do you want to take care of your body while its aging?

As part of the Grow You curriculum this month, I'm talking in depth about how you are not your body. So you are the soul or the spirit within your body. You've been given this human body and you are in it, and you get to take care of it while it grows and ages. You also get to decide how you want to think about your body.

So if we take it as true that you are not your body, and that you get a say in how you think, how you feel, how you relate to your body, how you take care of your body, how do you want to do that? I think slowing down and answering these questions is some of the most important work you can do because there's no escaping your body. As long as you are alive you are within your body.

So deciding on purpose how you want to think and feel about your body, how you want to act towards your body and treat your body will create the value system through which you make all other decisions. So before you

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can know what kind of clothes you want to wear, what kind of makeup if you want to wear makeup, what kind of skin treatments if you want to wear skin treatments, if you want to do you know different workouts or massages or eat certain foods or drink or not, and all of those decisions to be made.

First, they're made through the values that you have. So if you decide on the values more intentionally then you can make those decisions in a way that you're not trying to be perfect and always get it right, but you can have that inner confidence in knowing that you made them through the lens of what's most important to you.

So, for me, it's really important that I love my body, that I take care of my body, that I surrender to my body, that I accept and allow the aging process to happen, and that I kind of dress up my body and take care of my body and move my body and feed my body good foods and sort of like how I look. Not that that's the most important thing, but it's a part of it. Another part of it is the way that I move my body and the way that I consume foods and beverages and all of that.

So the way that I do that is I try to be conscious about it. Now, there's always more to bring awareness and attention to. So I'm not, by any means, perfect at it. For example, sugar is a huge part of the work that I want to do, but I like to think thoughts like I'm grateful I have a body. I accept the aging process. I'm going to learn more about my body and the needs that it has as it ages. I surrender to my body.

So if I am pregnant and my capacity is lower, then I surrender that that's my human body's capacity. I don't resist it. If in however many years, my knees say no more running or whatever it is, I'm going to surrender to that. It doesn't mean that there's some sadness that might not be present. That's okay. That's the clean pain of a chapter ending. But that's very different than resistance, than resisting what is and not accepting it.

I want to always surrender to my body's capacity in the present while also pushing my body within its humaneness. So if there's not something wrong with my knees, and I think that strength training is something that I want to

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work on, which it is, then I want to yes, surrender to my body, but also push it to be the best that it can be within the scope of its capabilities.

So assuming that the doctor says yes, strength train. It's all great, right? I'm not saying that I would do that if there was something wrong with my back. I wouldn't force it. But instead, I'm saying there's both surrendering and a little bit of encouraging and pushing from that possibility space.

I like to think that I'll give my body what it needs as it ages. That I know just from watching my dad age pretty rapidly and also pass away and seeing the dying process, I know that some parts of aging may be hard. I want to accept that. Accept that as part of the journey of having a human body.

As far as how I relate to my body now and think about how I want to treat my body, I want to choose movement. I want to choose medicine when my body needs medicine. I want to choose food. I want to choose self-care to take care of my body. I want to choose to be mindful of the decisions that I make around makeup and clothes and skincare and in all of those things. I like the way that I feel on default when I dress up and when I do my hair and when I put on makeup. I want to keep doing that.

But I also want to be mindful of the humaneness of my body. So what does that look like in 10 years, in 20 years, in 30 years, and just being aware of the fact that I am not my body and that my body is aging. That that's a beautiful thing, and that I can love that my body is aging.

I like to think of bodies as self-growing. So I find it fascinating with babies. They all have milestones that are the typical recommendations for typical babies or kids. It's not dependent on anything other than their humaneness and their capabilities, their brains, right. So isn't that mind blowing? Like around the same time kids typically rollover or sit up or learn to walk. Then we all kind of go to school around the same age. It's because our bodies grow around the same rate and that continues, and that's the aging process. It's just because we are human being.

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So really taking a broader view of that, and accepting that can be really powerful. I think particularly too when it's hard and challenging and you have these default automatic thoughts that you don't like your body as much or you don't look as good as before.

I can say personally that whenever I get to the place of a negative thought like that where it's related to my looks, I just kind of remind myself that the purpose of my body is not to be an ornament. So my body's purpose is to kind of be my vessel, my house for my soul, and to allow me to live in this world. It's not supposed to be an object for someone else and for society.

Is that perfect? No. Do I still want to look good and feel like I look pretty? Yes. But the more awareness I bring to the priority of it not being focused on objectification and self-objectification, the better space that I am in. I think that this is work that all women and moms can do, and it can help let go of some of the kind of societal pressures just to remind yourself oh yeah, I have a human body, and human bodies are supposed to age. Nothing has gone wrong here.

For myself, I like to come up with supportive and true and believable thoughts that kind of don't go to either extreme. So if there's something that I see in the mirror on my body that I don't like, instead of oh I don't like this part of my skin. I pretty much on default now because I've trained my brain to think this way. I think the thought huh, that's really weird. That's a weird part of the body.

So I'm just kind of normalizing the fact that bodies are weird, and it's totally fine. I like to remind myself that all human beings have human bodies. So what I see on social media or in the media in general is not the truth insofar as it's not true how my brain is making it mean that someone else and other people have these perfect bodies. That's not true.

Every single person has a human body. That human body is a body that is both amazing and challenging and hard and limited in its humaneness. Every single human body ages, and that's a good thing. That's the way of it. That's the way it's supposed to be.

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So how do you want to age? Do you want to think about it as aging gracefully? Are you in resistance to aging? I like to think of a river. Are you going with the river downstream, or are you fighting the river and you're trying to go upstream? Either way, your human body ages. One way, going downstream with the aging process, is an acceptance and connection. Another way, going against it, is going to feel in your body really terrible. It'll feel like resistance.

So if you have been resisting aging, how can you start accepting it? What do you need to think to accept your humaneness and allow it and get to a place where not only do you allow it, but you look forward to it? I mean think about when we are young how much we look forward to our bodies growing and changing and the kind of journey of growth from being a kid to being a teenager to being an adult, a young adult. Then I think we sort of idealize youth.

Because we are in human bodies that are aging, I think that idealizing where we're at right now and thinking about the future as a growth journey that's positive for our human bodies, even when it's challenging and hard. If we relate to it in that way, it serves us so much better in our lives because that's what's happening. There's no way out of it. Your body will age. So if you accept it and you feel empowered by it and connected to it, it can really help you feel reenergized about your body and relating to your body and your entire life. All right, my friends, that's what I have for you today. 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.