

Episode #224: Reinvent Yourself In Motherhood



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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. Welcome to a new year. It is January when this episode is first airing. There's nothing like the beginning of a new year to talk about and think about reinvention. Who are you becoming? Who do you want to become? I want to talk with you today, particularly about reinventing yourself in motherhood.

This is something that I've done in my life pretty much as soon as I became a mom. It's ongoing. I think that it really helps me choose intentionally how I want to show up instead of just kind of going with whatever my brain and body default to, which I promise you is not always the most helpful way. It creates a lot of overwhelm, a lot of anxiety, a lot of worry, all of those emotions that don't help me show up as the mom I want to be.

What you can do is this reinvention process, and it will help you reinvent yourself so that yes, you're still human, and you'll feel those feelings, but they won't be the primary way that you show up as a mom.

Before we dive in, I have a favor. I am wondering if you can help me out and share this podcast with someone who you think would love mindfulness practices. The way that this podcast can grow, meaning the way that these tools can get out to more people and can help more people, is primarily through reviews and word of mouth. So it would mean the world to me if you just shared this podcast with one other person who you think would enjoy it. Thank you so much in advance.

All right let's dive in to reinventing yourself in motherhood. So we all have a default way of being in all of our roles. Your default way of being as an employee, your default way of being as a wife, your default way of being as a friend, your default way of being as a mom. So you are not only a mom. You have many roles, some of which I just described. But specifically in your role as mom, your brain and body have a default way of showing up.

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All default means is automatic. So you don't have to think about it. This is just typically how you show up in your role as mom. You probably have some default ways of showing up as a mom that are really amazing. We want to keep those ways. But today, what I want to show you is the benefit of looking at those default ways of showing up and then intentionally deciding who you want to be, how you want to show up as a mom in that role. Because then you have so much more control over how you want to be as a mom, and you can apply this to any role in your life as well.

So just pause and think to yourself what kind of mom am I? When I pause and ask myself that question, I have so many different things that come up. Now, the reason that answering this question is extremely hard to do is because we care so much about being a good mom. So there can be a lot of shame around anything that's short of perfect.

So, for example, if you answer that question, and your brain comes up with a mom who yells a lot. Shame wants you to hide. Shame thinks that's not what a good mom does. So we're going to work on that, and you try to kind of run from it. There's like this urgency. We've got to solve this yelling thing because it means I'm a bad mom, and my kids deserve better. We're sort of beating ourselves up, because we're in shame, and we think that we are bad.

The reason that this is not useful is because it won't help you actually change the yelling. Aside from the fact that it feels bad and you're sort of beating yourself up, it doesn't help you solve the problem. It doesn't help you actually change. So if there is a certain way that you show up as a mom, and you want to change it, it requires first looking at what's actually happening. So I get asked all the time how do I have a more positive mindset? How do I become the mom I want to be? Those questions aren't bad. I just like to say that they're the wrong first questions.

If you think of that GPS analogy that I've given before, that's saying how do I get to the end destination? It's great that we want to have that end destination, but the starting point needs to be there too. The starting point in reinventing yourself in motherhood is where are we right now. Then the

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ending point is where do we want to go. You can just rinse and repeat this process. Your ending point eventually becomes your new starting point.

So it's January at the time this is airing. In 12 months from now if you do this reinvention process, you will have a new starting point. You can continue to grow in your role as a mom, which I think being a mom is one of the most beautiful and amazing growth journeys that you can be on. So why not do it intentionally?

When you think about your role as mom, think about that starting point. Think about where you're at right now. That's what we're trying to do is gain awareness of who you are as a mom. I like to use the analogy of a job. If you were an employee, or maybe you are an employee at a company, and you had a year and review with your boss. So let's say every January you meet with your boss, and you go over the things that you did amazingly well in the last year, and the areas of improvement. This is just something that you expect to do year after year in your role in this company.

I think that we can borrow that model for motherhood in a really healthy and empowering way. I teach this process in depth in the Empowered Mom Process. It's a course inside Grow You. If you're in there, it's in the bonus vault. It's for platinum members. This course walks you through how to become an empowered mom and think about yourself in your role as mom so that you can evaluate how you're doing. Because if you don't know what a "good mom" is then how can you ever evaluate yourself?

What I find that we tend to do on default is think that we are always failing, and that we're never good enough. But we haven't even defined what success is. We just beat ourselves up saying that we're failing. We don't give ourselves actual feedback like you would get if you sat down with your boss. We're just really mean to ourselves.

We sort of indulge in beating ourselves up, which just feels bad and leads to shame. Of course, most importantly, isn't helpful for actually improving in that particular area. We definitely don't tell ourselves what we're doing amazingly well, at least most of us don't, not in my experience.

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So here today what I want you to get started with or what I think that will be really helpful for you to get started with is just thinking about what kind of mom you are, and thinking about it particularly as it relates to feelings and actions. I think the feelings and actions to look at those will help you see kind of your mindset, right? If you think of every action that we take, behind that there's a feeling. Behind that feeling, there is a thought.

So the root cause of solving and changing ourselves is always from our thoughts and our thinking, but I think that we can get a lot of access to what's going on by looking at the actions that we're taking and looking at the feelings that we're feeling.

So, back to the original question of what kind of mom are you. Answer the question specifically as it relates to feelings. What feelings do you experience most often in your role, specifically as mom. You have lots of other roles. You could do this for those too, but just specifically as mom what feelings for you come up?

Again, be careful not to go to judgment. Like I know I shouldn't feel this way, or this is bad that I feel this way. I like to say put your curiosity glasses on and just be open and loving and kind towards yourself. Feelings aren't bad or wrong. So it doesn't mean anything about you as a mom, if you answer this question and your top feelings are all negative, right? It's just meaning that you're feeling that tension in your body. You're feeling that discomfort in your body. It actually has nothing to do with you as a mom. Okay?

So answer that question. What feelings do you experience most often in your role as mom? Notice the temptation to say something like I'm an overwhelmed mom. I'm an exhausted mom. I'm stressed. I'm a worried mom. We tend to make our feelings our identity. I want you to separate those out. So I'm a mom who sometimes feels overwhelmed. That already feels so much better. Right? Because it's separating out who you are from your feelings. I'm a mom who a lot of the times feels exhausted. Emphasis on feels. I'm a mom who feels stress. I'm a mom who feels worried.

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Already there you're shifting your identity because you're loosening the grip that the feelings have on you. You are not your feelings. So that's how you answer the question with your default feelings. What are your default feelings? What feelings do you experience most often in your role as mom?

The next part of this is the actions. What actions do you take most often in your role as mom? Are you a mom who is on her phone often? Are you a mom who yells often? Are you a mom who doesn't like to play with her kids? Are you a mom who sees the work of motherhood as work that you don't want to do?

I think that, again, try not to judge yourself. Like there's nothing wrong. I did a whole episode on not wanting to or not liking and not enjoying playing with your kids. There's nothing wrong with you for any of these things. But again, gaining awareness is the first step towards growth.

In this episode, particularly, I want to talk about reinventing yourself. So the examples that I've given so far for feelings and actions are the ones that you would want to work on. I think that this exercise can be very powerful to bring up the positives as well. I talk about that in the course. Giving yourself praise and making sure that you are assessing the good things, the things that you're doing well, and you want to keep up.

But for here, when you think about reinvention, it's like your next phase of growth. So if you find yourself being really controlling. I'm a mom who tries to control everything her kids do. I'm a mom who fill in the blank without judgment. We all are human moms. So that means that there is going to be 50/50. Where 50% of the time, you're amazing and you nail it and you get it right, and 50% of the time. that's your human part. That's your messy part. Can you love that part of you?

All we're doing here is picking out one of those things from the messy parts, and deciding to work on it. Just because we want to grow, not because it makes us any more worthy as a mom. Because that messy part is never finished. It's never complete. There's always more messiness to us because we're humans, and we can evolve and grow.

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I think life is going to go on anyways. Like the years are going to pass anyways. Giving your brain and your mind something to work on is so powerful and fulfilling. It really is more fulfilling, I think, than I ever talk about or is explainable or understandable without doing it. It really does help your brain focus.

Otherwise, your brain is going to do what it does on default, which is go into trying to find problems in your current environment that might not even be problems or seeking a lot of pleasure, I avoiding a lot of pain. Whatever those default tendencies that your brain has, they will go to that if you don't have a growth journey that you're working on.

So reinventing your identity can be really powerful and fulfilling for you. Then of course it has the ripple effect of impacting your kids, your home, your family. Once you have your default identity for your feelings and for your actions written down. I listed a handful of each. You could do that. I wouldn't go crazy and list 20.

Again, use that analogy of working at a company, and you're meeting with your boss. There's probably going to be a handful of things that they point out that you're doing really well, and a handful of things that you could work on in the next year. That's how you kind of want to think about your role as a mom in this family unit.

The next part of this is deciding where you want to go. So part one was the awareness piece. How are you showing up on default? What are those top feelings that you're experiencing most often? What are the main actions that you're taking in your role as mom that you would like to improve and change?

The next part of this is who do I want to become? What do I want my top feelings to be? What do I want to be the main actions that I am taking in my role as mom? You might write down a handful of each as well. The one caveat that I want to mention here that's really important is not to romanticize the future you who you're becoming so much that you think she is a robot.

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So you 100% can change your default feelings so that you feel content and joy and connection as your top feelings. But you still have a brain. You still have a body. You are still you so you still will feel disappointment. You still will feel stressed. You still will feel anxious. They just won't be your top emotions. So I always like to say that whenever I'm teaching reinvention. Keep in mind that yes, you can transform the top feelings so that they're not the default feelings you've always felt. Yet, you'll still have negative emotion.

So I can speak to this. I would say that it wasn't until the last couple of years where content was one of my top emotions. So before I did this work on reinventing my top emotion to include content, I was really someone who was in a lot of busied energy. A lot of like go, go, go rushed energy. I did this work, this reinvention process, and I transformed my feelings. One of my top feelings that I changed was that rushed energy to become someone who feels content. Like daily I feel content as a top emotion.

That doesn't mean though I don't feel a wide range of other emotions. It's just that I consistently feel content. But I also wake up sometimes and feel anxious. I also feel disappointment. I also feel frustrated. It's just that if I gave you my top emotions, content would be one of them. Those other emotions aren't my top feelings.

So that's how you want to think about this work. It's not that we're going to reinvent ourselves into a robot. But instead, we are going to reinvent ourselves into a mom who mostly feels whatever top feelings you want to feel. I would suggest starting with one feeling that you want to change and one action that you want to change.

So maybe you want to be a mom who feels more joy. Maybe you want to be a mom who enjoys play. You could work on both of those. Becoming a mom who enjoys play and becoming a mom who feels more joy, and that would be a complete reinvention in your role as mom. Of course, there's that ripple effect. It will carry over into your other roles. You will show up in a completely different way.

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So for me, I feel content in my family and my home as a mom, but I also just feel content in my business and in my friendships and in my life. I don't have that rushed, busy energy. That need to always be working, always be doing. That was an identity that I had carried with me for decades. I was an attorney. Then I was a wealth manager. Really getting into more internal balance was something that I wanted to do. I wanted to reinvent myself with.

So for you, where are you going? If we're looking at that GPS, and we have the starting point, choose a feeling and an action that you would like to work on in the next year I would say as your role as mom. Sometimes a year can sound like oh, that's a long time to wait for this. I want to do so many other things. But it's actually focusing on one focus at a time with intention and with commitment that leads to long lasting results.

Like when I think about my transformation, this is something that I carry with me now effortlessly. I don't have to work on it. It's not something that is at the forefront of my mind because my body now remembers the feeling of content. So that's what happens with the body. The body memorizes feelings. So for me, I was in the habit of feeling really rushed and busy.

So my body was very familiar with it. So I had to break that feeling habit, as I like to call it. It was uncomfortable because my body hadn't calmed down and been in a state of calm and content for a long period of time. So it just wasn't used to that. So it is a growth journey. I always like to say for a Type A overachiever, taking a nap in the middle of a Monday is a goal, right?

We tend to talk about goals as these external outcome goals that require us to do more, but I think goals are actually much more personal and intimate. I think when we do an identity transformation, a reinvention, that is better than any goal because the way that you show up in your life is completely different. So you will take different actions, and you will get different results.

So my friend for this next year, for these next 12 months, who are you becoming in your role as a mom? You don't have to go with the default way

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that you've always been. This may be something that you want to journal about and imagine and visualize because I think that our relationships, our friendships, our peers, our family members, they reinforce and they reaffirm our identities because that's how we've always been. It's not their fault. It's not our fault. It's no one's fault. It's just how it goes.

So my brother thinks of me as like the bossy sister. That's just always how he's going to see me. But as long as I'm not thinking of myself in that way then I don't show up in that way. So even if other people are reaffirming who you've always been, let's say you've always been someone who was stubborn. Maybe your family members comment on that, and they kind of make jokes about it. You still don't have to live into that identity. You don't have to say anything to them. You can treat that however you want. You can have a boundary, or you could just laugh about it, whatever it is.

The key point though is that they, other people, they don't create who you are. Your thoughts create who you are. So if you want to create a new identity, you have to think about yourself differently. That's the work that we do and Grow You. So if you visualize and you practice and you create new thoughts on purpose, and you practice them about yourself then you will feel differently and you will show up differently. You will take different actions.

So have that idea of the GPS in mind, where you're starting from as a mom in your identity right now with your feelings and actions, and where are you going in the next 12 months? What do you want your top feelings as a mom to be? What are some actions that you want to change?

Using the analogy of being an employee at a company, if you're thinking about how you wanted to grow in your role in that job, it's the same idea. It's just seeing motherhood as a role and as an opportunity for growth. Doing it from a place of loving yourself really is the most beneficial way to do it because you won't give up on yourself, you won't beat yourself up, you won't wish this was over. You'll see that it's actually really fun to have something to focus on and work towards and grow.

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It's sort of like if you've ever worked out before, and there was a time where you started working out. It was just so painful and so hard and your body just hurt. You just kept doing it anyways. Then eventually, you got in the habit of it, and you started to really love it. Even though it's still hard on your body, you love that process.

That's the same with personal development growth, with reinventing yourself. It can feel kind of hard at first, but it's hard because you're growing. It's hard because you're changing. What a beautiful thing to get stronger and give yourself that gift. All right, my friends. That's what I have for you today. 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 to learn more.