

Being Pulled In Different Directions



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With Your Host

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'm so happy to be here with you today. I know I say that every week, and I genuinely mean it. I love spending this time with y'all. I sort of imagine us just having a little chat, maybe with a beverage, a coffee or a tea or some hot water with lemon if you're like me. I just want you to know that I genuinely appreciate this time together.

With that, I want to invite you to join me for a workshop I'm hosting called *Becoming Her*. It's the start of a new year. I think there is no better time to reinvent yourself. Reinvent yourself as a woman, reinvent yourself in your marriage, in your family, as a partner, as a mom. However you want to reinvent yourself in your life, this workshop will help you do that. It's a three day workshop happening shortly here in the next week on January 23rd, 24th, and 25th. Each day, I'm going to be teaching you how to become the next version of yourself.

I was just coaching someone on this, and she wanted to become someone who complained less. She loved her family. She loved her kids. Yet she found that after hard moments like tantrums she would complain about that tantrum or how she reacted or something like that for the rest of the day. So her journey was that she wanted to become someone who doesn't complain. I coached her to do that. That's what she's going to be working on for the next few months.

But it doesn't have to be complaining. That's just one example. You might want to be someone who knows how to manage her anxiety better, or show up with more calm. Or maybe you want it to be some sort of outcome like a goal like losing weight. It can be an identity shift, like someone who just doesn't complain, or knows how to process anxiety or shows up with more calm, who doesn't yell, or it could be something like weight loss or a career change or something based on an outcome like a goal that you want to set.

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It doesn't really matter what it is. The transformation process is the same. It's you are the version of you right now, and you are going to become that next version of you intentionally on purpose. I would love for you to come check it out. Not only will I be teaching, I will be coaching. So I will coach you specifically on where you are now and where you want to go and give you the next best steps for you to take to become that version of yourself. You can sign up over at nataliebacon.com/becoming. I will see you there my friend.

Now let's dive into today's topic, being pulled in different directions. I coach so much on this topic, and I get it, my friend. I get the feeling of being pulled in so many different directions. We're actually going to talk about whether that's a feeling or a thought and how to best approach when you are thinking and feeling this way.

So often this comes up when we notice things about our lives where it feels kind of overwhelming. So there's a lot of overstimulation, a lot of overwhelm. There's a lot going on. You're probably in charge of your family and the kids and the meals and the home and the cooking and the cleaning, and your work and your relationships and activities and schedules and holidays and people getting sick. Trying to kind of navigate all of it. Whatever your version of that is, just swap out one of the examples that I gave for whatever it is for you in your life.

On default, what's happening there is that the brain is interpreting your life as "I'm being pulled in so many different directions." This is just what the brain does. If you've been following my work for a while, you have heard me say that your brain just on default scans for what it believes to be true. So it thinks that it's sort of like reporting the facts to you. So when you have the thought I'm being pulled in so many different directions, it feels so true.

I say it in this way because I want you to know that it is just one interpretation of many. I'm being pulled in so many different directions is a thought. Oftentimes we express it with the word feeling. We say I feel like I'm being pulled in many different directions, but that sentence is a thought. The feeling that it creates will be different for everyone. So if you check in

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with your body and you think the thought of being pulled in so many different directions, what does it feel like to you?

For me, it feels a little bit like overwhelm. Feelings are always those one word feelings. This can kind of seem nitpicky. Like okay, what's the point of doing this? Separating all of this out? But actually separating out the facts from your thoughts and feelings is the foundation for cleaning up your mind and cleaning up the way that you think and feel so that you can create a really empowering mindset. I always tell my clients that I never know what you should think. I'm just here to show you how to think.

So the thought I'm being pulled in so many directions might serve you. It's just that on default what happens is we think that that's the truth. Like it's a fact that I'm being pulled in so many different directions. But that's not a fact. So what can be really helpful is to get clear about what the facts actually are. What are the facts?

So here's an example. Let's say your oldest just took a toy from your youngest. Your youngest starts crying. You spill coffee on the carpet, the doorbell rings, and the dogs start barking. So those would be facts. You could break them all out into five separate facts. Oldest took the toy from the youngest, youngest starts crying, you spill your coffee, doorbell starts ringing, dogs start barking. Okay so all of that happens pretty quickly, within 30 seconds.

Your brain is so fast. It is so smart. It will process that and compartmentalize it in the quickest way possible. If you are someone who is struggling with being pulled in different directions then your brain likely is going to interpret something like that as I'm being pulled in so many different directions. When we talk with our friends about this, of course, we want them to validate our experience.

But when you come to coaching, when you come to Grow You, when you're listening to this podcast, it's sort of like having a designer come over to your home. When your friends come over to your home, you want your friends to say everything looks amazing. It's perfect. When a designer

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comes over, you want the designer to say hey maybe if you moved a table there, maybe if you put art over there, that would actually work better for the room. Right? We don't want that from our friends. We want that from the professionals who we hire. So that's what you're sort of getting here in coaching and with me.

So when you tell your friends all of this or when they tell you all this, we want to validate how they're feeling. But when you do it for yourself, when you come into something like Grow You or you're listening to the podcast or doing it on your own, you just want to be aware of the difference there and how powerful it can be to get that help so you can separate out thoughts, feelings, and actions. Then the benefit, of course, being that you get to choose your thoughts, feelings, and actions on purpose and show up in the most empowered way.

So we always start by separating out facts from thoughts. If you have a set of facts, like what I described, five facts. Oldest took toy from youngest, youngest starts crying, you spilled coffee on the carpet, doorbell starts ringing, dogs start barking, right? We don't really know where the story's going. There's just some random facts that I've listed out.

What do you want to think about those facts? It seems like the truth is I'm being pulled in so many different directions. Again, when we're talking to our girlfriends, we want that validation. But when we slow it down here, we just want to question if I think that thought and then I feel overwhelmed, is that the best way for me to show up? Is that the most helpful?

That's the question I like to ask. Not is it true, but is it helpful because lots of things could be true. It probably feels true when I think the thought I'm being pulled in many directions, but other things also feel true. Like, this is hard, and I can do hard things. That feels true as well. So there are always I like to think of hundreds or thousands of thoughts available to me that will either help me and empower me or kind of disempower me and keep me stuck.

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I like to think that while the primitive toddler brain means well, it actually has this tendency towards stuckness and negativity. That, of course, comes from the brain needing to look out and scan for danger to make sure that we survived.

So useful if you're crossing a street or if you're walking around in the city, and it's late at night. Not as useful in the middle of the day when your oldest takes a toy from your youngest, your youngest is crying, you spilled coffee, the doorbell rings, and the dogs barking. It's not that useful to scan for what's wrong and how this is really bad, but that is the default programming.

Now, it's important to see that it's the default programming, which means it doesn't have to stay that way. You can retrain your brain. You can change the way that you're thinking. So the most important thing here is to just see that I'm being pulled in so many different directions is an optional interpretation.

Now, of course, this does not mean that you shouldn't think it. I think that a lot of people think that by pointing out something as a thought, that means that I'm somehow suggesting you shouldn't have that thought. That is definitely not the case. You actually might want to keep the thought. That is up to you based on looking at the impact the thought is having on your life. Then you get to decide whether you want to keep it or not.

I like to make that decision for myself based on how does it make me feel? What actions do I take when I think and feel that way? So when I'm thinking kind of my highest self Natalie, my best self, when she is in a challenging moment or when these five facts are happening or some other version of those facts, what does my highest self want to think and feel? What actions does she take?

Now this is a really useful way to think about it because it puts you in a place where circumstances aren't always what you want, right? It would be great if I never spilled coffee. It would be great if the kids always got along. It would be great if the dogs didn't bark when someone came to the door,

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right? But all of these things are happening all of the time, and we can't control a lot of our circumstances.

Yet we can control how we react to them. We can control our thoughts and feelings about them. So how does it feel to think the thought of being pulled in so many different directions? Does it feel empowering to you, or does it feel disempowering? If it feels disempowering or defeating or discouraging, how do you act? How do you show up in your life when you're thinking and feeling that way? That will tell you whether this thought serves you or not.

Now again, I'm not suggesting that you go to the opposite thought like this is the best day ever. I'm so glad all these things are happening. But I believe there are just hundreds if not thousands of available thoughts that would feel just as true for you. A lot of times my clients will try to go to a thought that sounds lovely, but they don't yet believe. That's also not helpful. Because if you don't believe it, it won't create the feeling in your body. So you want to make sure you believe the thought.

So instead of I'm being pulled in so many different directions, what might you think that feels true for you? This is a really hard moment. I can do hard things. Maybe you want to add that self-soothing hand on heart self-compassion element as well.

So these are kind of all suggestions. But again, you could do a rampage of available thoughts. The idea is that you want to choose a thought that feels true to you and empowers you to show up how you want to show up. How do you want to think when your oldest takes the toy from your youngest, when your youngest is crying, when you spill coffee, when the doorbell rings, when the dog is barking.

What if you thought, wow, this is hard. I'm kind of amazing that I can navigate all of this. It's hard, and I'm getting stronger. It's hard and I can do hard things. Or whatever your version of it is. The more that you practice intentionally creating thoughts, the better you will get at creating thoughts that feel the best for you. You might have some thoughts in your brain that

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are so much better than the thoughts I could ever offer to you, but it's cultivating that skill of intentionally creating thoughts that empower you.

I think once you get to an empowered mindset, meaning you've decided the thought that you want to think that feels true and empowering and helpful to you then that's when I think you can use other tools that can help you navigate the problem of being pulled in different directions. Meaning you could use decision making, you could use delegating, you could use other mindfulness practices and tools, planning right, that kind of help you manage whatever your mental load is right now.

The reason that that is second is because if you try to make changes, if you try to delegate, if you try to make quicker decisions or say no more often, and you don't change your mindset first, you will still have the recurring thoughts that feel disempowering. So you always want to clean up your thinking first to get to that empowered place. Then by all means say no more often, do less, schedule less, get a better scheduling tool, work on your decision making skills, kind of all of those other tools that tend to be more focused on the actions that you take can be very, very powerful.

But if you just understand that thoughts create feelings and feelings create actions, if you really want to solve being pulled in different directions from the root cause, it's so much more empowering and permanent to do it from the thought and the mindset which will then create different feelings. Then from there, taking action will be more sustainable because you'll have that foundation of thoughts and feelings that are really supportive of those types of decisions that you want to make.

So let's ground this in a different example. Let's say that on default, your brain comes up with a thought I'm being pulled in many different directions. It has to do with your schedule and you managing work and home and the pets and dinner and the kid's activities and when one of them is sick, and all of those things, okay. So your brain on default has a thought I'm being pulled in many different directions. Your brain is attributing that thought to your schedule and kind of how the flow of your week is going.

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It can be really useful to come up with a way where you plan more efficiently and you include more white space and time to take care of yourself, which might mean fewer activities. Or it might mean coming up with other alternatives like carpooling or seeing if your kids can catch a ride with the neighbors or some other solutions, but you don't want to jump to that part until you change your thoughts about it.

Because what will happen is if you just jump to the changing of the schedule right away and you don't do the thought and feeling work, you will still have the feeling of overwhelm. You will still have whatever feeling that thought is creating because thoughts create feelings. Your life doesn't create feelings.

Now I know that I say that a lot. If you've been listening to while, I'm sure you've heard me say that. But even to this day, my brain thinks oh yeah, but my feelings are kind of created from that thing that just happened. So I have to slow it way down, get coaching, and coach myself to actually separate everything out and get to a place of really clean thinking about it so that I can permanently solve the problem.

Otherwise, it's not like you're going to do any harm by taking the action first. It just won't be permanent most likely. So what would happen is you would start this new calendaring method. You wouldn't change your thoughts and feelings about it, and you would sort of slip in and out of following the plan, not following the plan, getting overwhelmed even more because of other things and "life happening". So don't do that. Instead, do it from the thoughts and feelings first. This is why what I am called is a causal coach. So I will help you solve your challenges from the root cause. Then I will help you take the action that you need to take.

So biggest takeaways here. Being pulled in different directions is the thought. How does that thought feel when you think it? When you think the thought I'm being pulled in so many different directions, does it feel, like go into your body to answer this question? Does it feel expansive and open and helpful? Does it help you show up and take action in a way that serves you and your family?

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Or does it feel defeating, closed off, disempowering, and unhelpful? If it feels disempowering and unhelpful, then it's a cue that you want to separate out all of the facts and come up with another thought that still feels true to you but feels more open and empowering and expansive.

From there, then you can decide to take the actions you want to take, but you'll do it from a much better feeling place. You will do it from feeling empowered. You will do it from feeling confident. You will do it from feeling connected and certain instead of trying to take action, like changing your calendar, in order to feel better and reduce overwhelm, which I call a thought error. That's impossible. It doesn't work. Actions don't create feelings, thoughts, create feelings. So change your thoughts first, which will change your feelings, and then take the action that you want to take.

So when your brain offers you default thoughts like I'm being pulled in so many different directions, ask yourself is that thought helpful? Ask yourself how does it feel? How do you show up when you think that thought? Then decide how you want to think on purpose. Did you know that there is no thought police? You could praise yourself. You could say wow, I am crushing it. I am doing an amazing job. Go me. This is hard. It feels a little crazy, and I'm awesome. Who better than me?

Did you know that you could just tell yourself that? I think it's so interesting that we don't do this. We are so quick to compliment and give our friends such encouragement. Part of doing this work is turning inward and giving yourself that praise, that adoration, that uplifting self-talk. From there, then decide if you want to do less, if you want to do more, if it's too much. But don't do less from self-pity, from feeling sorry for yourself. Do less from feeling empowered just because you want to.

One more note here. Whatever you tell your brain to look for is what it will find evidence of. I like to visualize typing in something to Google and then all of those search results that come up for that specific search that I typed in. Your brain is sort of the same way. So if you're typing in I'm being pulled in so many different directions, it will scan your life for evidence of that. But your brain doesn't discriminate against different thoughts.

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So you could just as easily type in this is hard, and I am getting so much stronger. I am so capable. Go me. You could type that in to your brain. You could practice that thought, and your brain would just as easily come up with results to support that. Assuming that it's actually a thought that you believe, and it's not something that isn't believable to you. So it has to be something believable to you.

But the point is that you can think anything you want, and you have the most powerful tool at your disposal, which is your brain. You can train your brain to think thoughts that feel more empowering than what your brain will offer you on default.

I used to be the queen of self-pity. I would go into so many disempowering thoughts, and my brain still goes into self-pity sometimes. But the more that I do this work in my everyday life, the more I can catch it, and I can pull myself out of it. I'm telling you it is a lifelong practice of training my brain and my body to serve me and help me be the woman, wife, and mom that I want to be. That is my hope for you, my friend. Find that thought, question it, see if it's helpful for you. If it's not, choose a better feeling thought and practice that. 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.