

Edit Your Life With Subtraction



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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 am so happy to be here with you today to talk about how to edit your life with subtraction. Before we dive in, I want to make sure that you know about the open Q&A call that I am hosting tomorrow. If you have a question that you would like answered by me, anything goes. It can be anything with your marriage, with your kids, with other relationships, with colleagues. Any challenge that you are facing or maybe it's some sort of goal that you're working on. My mindfulness life coaching tools can absolutely help you.

I would love for you to come and join me, get to know me a little more so I can get to know you even better as well at the open Q&A call. If you go to nataliebacon.com/open, you can reserve your seat. This is tomorrow. We'll be live for about an hour-ish. I want to make sure that I can answer all of your questions. Like all the other calls, you will not see anyone or hear anyone, and no one will be able to see or hear you.

I know that when I join calls like this for the first time, I always want to know what I'm getting into. There are a lot of people who run Zoom in a very different way than I do. So you join, and you see everyone's face. This is not like that. You can join and sort of hang out in the background if you want to. Participate if you want. I would love for you to participate. But if you don't want to, I just want you to know that is available to you. You can really see what it's like to have these mindfulness life coaching tools applied to your life, and they can really make a big difference.

So if there is something you're challenged with right now, it doesn't matter if it's little or big. I promise you these tools can help. So join me, reserve your seat, and I will see you tomorrow. All the information is nataliebacon.com/open. With that, let's dive in.

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So a lot of people teach that less is more. The reason is that when you have less stuff, you have less to take care of. So it's less time consuming, and it's easier. I think that there is validity in that. I've experienced that myself. I like to have things decluttered and organized, and I think it can be very helpful. But that is not the approach that I am taking here.

What I am going to teach you about less is more is very different. So when you think about your stuff, I want you to think about it as anchoring to your past. So, for example, if you buy something today, tomorrow that thing that you bought is from your past. If I go look in my closet, all the jeans that I have in my closet right now are jeans I bought over the last few years. So everything in my environment is a reflection of my past.

Now there's nothing wrong with your past in and of itself. This isn't just inherently bad, but it ensures you continue to live from your past. What I teach and what I want you to have as a big takeaway from this episode is to live from your future. So some of the things you will want to come with you into your future. But on default, everything comes with you. That's why I want to teach you the process of editing your life with subtraction so that it's a conscious decision if you want all of those jeans in your future.

So instead of deciding who you want to be by looking to your past, I want you to decide who you want to be, what you want your life to be like by looking to your future. So for this reason, all of the stuff in your life needs to be continuously edited and removed. Otherwise you won't be able to have room for future you. If my closet is so stuffed from all of the things that I bought in the past, there is no room for things to come in from my future.

I talk about this inside Grow You this month. I'm teaching a class on how to edit your life. I teach you several decluttering strategies, how to reduce your stuff to make space for what you want most, and live into your future. Highly recommend just coming in for this class so you can learn how to declutter simply and effectively. You can get all the details over at nataliebacon.com/coaching.

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As part of that class, I talk about a flow. We don't want to stop the flow of things coming in. Sure, we can sort of adjust the faucet. Maybe you want to slow down the flow, but there's never going to be a point where things just stop. We don't want it to be that way. We want our future to be full of things, but we have to have a process for making space for that. Otherwise, we just pile on stuff on stuff on stuff. That's not good either.

So in order to make space for the future that you want, there has to be room for it. This requires purging, or what I call editing. When you think about it as this flow, it makes sense. You want things coming in. Because of that, you also need things going out. I think that this makes sense if you think about it, and yet how often do we not do this?

I was preparing for this podcast as well as for the class inside Grow You. I was amazed at how much more I could be purging. I consider myself super organized and a middlemilit, and I'm kind of purging all of the time. Yet, I have drawers of paper files. Why? I don't need them. They could all be digital and organized. But instead, I keep putting papers in these drawers. They're taking up space.

Our garage is another space. It's organized, but there's so much stuff in there. Or I'm looking at some books in my office that just aren't a part of my future. They could be donated, sold, trashed. Just they would be better not in my space. I think that without having the awareness that there needs to be a consistent process for editing, you will keep stuff and even think it's a good thing. Then your default will be to bring all of it into your future.

If you're in Grow You, I give you specific steps for how to do this. But where you can get started in this episode is to jot down the areas of your life just to get some awareness around where you want to be editing. So I made a list here, but by no means is this exclusive or exhaustive. It is just sort of what was on my mind for things to edit.

Kids toys and clothes, your clothes. That includes your shoes, your jeans, your underwear, your shirts, all of your workout clothes. I have a drawer full of t-shirts, and I probably wear a quarter of the shirts that is in that drawer. I

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could have 75% more space in that drawer. I just don't. So there's no room for future shirts to come in. Interesting, right?

All of your closets, and you could kind of tackle them individually, but you could do this with rooms as well. Instead of thinking of the items, you could think of the rooms. Like your basement or the pantry, closets, as I mentioned. Books, photos, this is a big one, whether it's on your phone. Again, this is an area I could totally improve upon. Editing photos. I don't need 10 versions of RJ eating sweet potato fries for the first time. I need one, right? There's just thousands of photos on my phone. Easily I could cut out half. I'm like 95% positive about that. At least a quarter of them.

Social media, this is what I'm pretty good at. It's unfollowing, right? You may follow someone at a time, and then months later not even have a clue why you followed that person. Unfollow that person. Make sure that you are having in your environment, including on your phone, things that you want to be in your future. This includes accounts that you're following. I can think of tons of baby accounts that I follow now that I'm sure in five or 10 years I won't be following anymore. That's okay. That's the purpose of it. You want to be making new decisions for what is in your future.

Electronic files. Do you have a really organized system? Do you have a clean desktop? Do you have files in your email? I have zero inbox in all my inboxes. Super easy because I set up systems where I have folders in my email that are sort of like categories. I just sort of drop any emails in those categories. Your garage, the attic, any sort of place where you put like knickknacks or gifts. I want you to be thinking about all of like the stuff on the fringes, right?

It's easy to see oh, our couch is kind of old and shoddy. So we need to get a new couch. I'm not talking about that. I'm talking about all the stuff that just comes in. What we do with our kid's toys is we have sort of the Montessori shelf, and we rotate toys. I love this system. It works really well. It's works great for our family for the home space. It also works really great for RJ.

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So I think in the short term, it does take a little bit of time and an effort. There's some decisions that you need to make. But it's so worth it. The benefit is like exponential. You have the system that works for you. I always like to think that your home should be working for you, not the other way around.

So here are two questions to ask yourself as you consider editing out things in your life from the past to make space from the future. Does this item belong in my future? Would I rebuy this? I love these questions. I think there's a tendency to just to reaffirm past decisions, even though we wouldn't remake them in the future just because we want to validate the fact that we made that decision.

Interesting, right? Like, if you bought a house or you took a job or maybe you're in a relationship or something like that where you made a decision, and at the time, that was the best decision for you. Then it's a year later. Do you hold on to that thing even though you wouldn't remake the decision today? I know so many people in jobs like this. Why? Why are you remaking that decision for your future when you wouldn't consciously remake it if it was presented to you just because you did in the past? So interesting to think about.

Take this example. Let's say you go to the zoo, and halfway through the day one of your kids wants to leave. Do you leave, or do you push through until the end of the day? Often, we want to stay as long or as late as possible thinking that leaving would be a waste.

I'm not sure what we're wasting here. I guess like a waste of money or a waste of opportunity or waste of the day. We just think that because we made the decision earlier that we were going to come for the day that only staying half the day is now all of a sudden a waste. But I want you to question that. What if that's not true? What if staying the exact amount of time that you and your family wants to say is good enough?

So if you apply this to stuff, what if holding on to something for a short time is actually what's best? Then donating it, selling it, or trashing it is the best

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thing. For example, if you wear a pair of jeans for one season, and then the next season, you don't want to wear them anymore. It could be for any reason. They could be out of style. It could be that they don't fit very well anymore. For whatever reason that next season, you don't want to wear them anymore. Will you hold on to them just because you bought them in the past and you quote unquote haven't worn them enough, even though you don't see them in your future?

What's interesting is that they then just sit in your closet. You don't actually use them. Someone else could be using them. You could put that into the marketplace and sell them or donate them and someone else could use them. So it's just fascinating that we sort of have this attachment that we think is good. I just want you to question that. In some instances, the answer might be I want to keep this. But I just want you to have the tools available to you to question all of it.

I think that there is a skill here that you can get really good at to your benefit, and that is ruthlessly editing your life so that you have space for what you want more of in the future. Myself included, I could get a lot better at this. I think that what stops me and a lot of us is not having a system to do it regularly.

So I'm pretty good with my clothes in this way. Like if I bring new stuff in I always, almost always, like 95% of the time will, at the same time, purge things. Typically I donate them. But there's lots of other things in the house like books or just stuff in the garage or in the office or the files, the photos like that I don't do that with.

So I think the reason is we just don't have a system or a process for it. We haven't considered the downside that we are creating, which is that we don't have room for more of the future that we want to bring in. We haven't consciously thought about that. I think about the future self-identity that I want to have and how she dresses and how she acts and what she wears and kind of the home decor that she has. That part I do pretty consistently.

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But when I think about the food that she eats and the products that she consumes, this is actually something I'm working on this year. It's been totally new for me. I have been swapping out lots of foods and products to have a more mindful product selection. It's just not something that is natural and intuitive like it's been for me with clothes or home furnishings.

So, for example, I ditched my laundry detergent, some other products for I think I have now Molly Suds. It wasn't until I really thought about what do I want the products to be in my home in my future instead of just continuously buying the same laundry detergent? Or food. I'm swapping out a lot of foods. Same thing. It's so easy to just buy what you've always bought.

Instead, question it. Question all of it. I really think questioning every single thing is important. Now that sounds so overwhelming. What I don't mean is to question every single thing at once. So what I'm doing is I'm just doing one thing at a time. It seems so inconsequential. Yet it's not. I've already made like 10 to 15 swaps, and it's only February. I'm just going to keep doing it all year.

I swapped out the traditional style peanut butter for peanut butter that is a much healthier option for our family. I swapped out fruit snacks for dried fruit. I am not eating fried food. I stopped buying candy. Like we would just have some chocolate in the refrigerator. So instead, the type of chocolate that we're buying, if ever, is much better for us. Just learning about ingredients.

Again, it's something that I have to really train my brain to think about in a way that isn't overwhelming. Because it seems like oh well, this is just so overwhelming. It's not even worth it. What I want you to see is that little step by step changes can actually be very powerful. But I think just having the overarching mindset that editing your life by purging, by decluttering, by making different choices, by redeciding what you want in your future will add so much to your life. It allows you to create the future that you want to have.

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I think that thinking from your future is the first step, but I always like to point out it's not just about mindset. You have to do something with that. I think the second part is bringing that mindset into reality. It's making new decisions from your future instead of your past so that your environment, your world, the outcomes in your life, the results that you have, they actually change.

That's how you know if you're actually doing the mindset work effectively. You will have different outcomes, you will have different relationships, you will have different results. Your house will look different. You will have actually made changes, and you'll feel different as well.

So with that, this is my invitation to you to question your stuff. Be willing to let go of it and don't anchor to past decisions just because you made them in the past. Instead, remake them from the future so that you make space for the future you that you are growing into. All right my friends. That's it for this 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.