

# What Your Kids' Behavior Means About You



## Full Episode Transcript

With Your Host

**Natalie Bacon**

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## What Your Kids' Behavior Means About You

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. We are talking about what your kids behavior means about you. I have been coaching so much on this topic lately. So I thought that was a sign to bring it to you here as its own podcast episode.

I've been coaching on it specifically inside Grow You a lot. I want to let you know that it's the first of March, which means I just released a brand new class inside Grow You. This month's class is called Clean Thinking. I am teaching you how to become aware of your thoughts, how to question them, how to change them, how to create better outcomes in your life because you have a new mindset, and how to, at the same time, feel your feelings. This is what I would describe as the mental and emotional wellness for moms.

So if you want to have tools to help you feel more empowered in your life regardless of the circumstances, come on into Grow You, give it a try for one month, and see what you think. You can join us over at [nataliebacon.com/coaching](http://nataliebacon.com/coaching).

With that, I want to talk with you today about what your kids behavior means about you since this is something that has been coming up a lot recently in my coaching. Specifically, I'm referring to when your kids push boundaries, when they're rude, or when they have problem behaviors. The crux of what I want you to take away from this podcast is it isn't at you. It isn't to upset you. It isn't about you. It really has nothing to do with you.

So I have seven examples that I jotted down that I've coached on recently so we can ground this in kind of what I'm even talking about here. Example number one, a child's meltdown. A child's meltdown isn't to manipulate you. Example two, a child hitting or biting isn't to hurt you. A child's rude

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language isn't to disrespect you. A child not doing their chores isn't to make you mad. A child lying isn't to take advantage of you.

A child is struggling at school doesn't mean that you are a bad mom. A child not liking sports or having friends means nothing about you. These last two examples aren't what we would call problem behaviors, but I still kind of included them here because I noticed the tendency to make that struggle or what they're not liking or not having friends mean something about mom.

The best way to really see that their behavior isn't about you is to understand that thoughts create feelings and feelings drive all actions. So your child's behavior is an action. Behind that action is a feeling. The reason that they take the action they take is because of that feeling. That feeling is created by their thoughts.

So even if they say this is to disrespect you, it's actually not true. Right? They typically don't say this, but even if they did. What's true is that someone says rude language because of what's going on internally for them. They are having a big negative emotion, not feeling seen or having negative thoughts, and that creates the negative feeling and it comes out as rude language.

So shifting your mindset is actually going to help you, and it will have the benefit of helping your kids. The mindset shift is just reminding yourself it isn't about me. This isn't about me. This comes from seeing that it's not your fault. You didn't cause this behavior. Also, you can be a part of the solution to help your child. Both things can be true. It doesn't have to be your fault for you to help them. It can just be that they are struggling with something, and you're going to step in as mom and help.

I think that it's human nature to take things personally and want to kind of defend ourselves. So I think that it takes conscious effort to change this. But I promise you the upside is so worth it. You end up staying empowered. Not only is that better for you, which is what you can control, but it have the

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added benefit of then being able to help your child with whatever they're going through.

So their actions means something about them, what they're thinking, and what they're feeling. Instead of making their actions mean something about you, take their actions as a cue for you to go inward on them. So what are they thinking and what are they feeling that's creating that action for them?

So, for example, if your child says I hate you so much, instead of taking that personally and taking it as disrespectful language, take it as a sign that they're feeling really hurt. Right? When would you ever say I hate you to someone? Not if you're really happy, right? It's when you're feeling really strong, big negative emotion. So if you can not take it personally and say, "Wow, you must be feeling really mad right now are really upset right now." It's normalizing feeling the feelings.

Now, that doesn't mean that all actions are acceptable. You might have a rule or a boundary in your home that we don't say the word hate. So what you want to make sure you're doing is separating out feelings, right. You can feel really upset and mad and then have boundaries around how you permit expressing that. But the key to even getting to that place is you have to be able to see that it's not about you. It's that they feel how they're feeling because of what they're thinking. So you're empathizing with the feeling and supporting them. You're not taking it as personally.

I'm telling you this is such a game changer. I really don't think that it is just the natural way that we think. We tend to think that other people's actions means something about us. Sometimes I call this centering ourselves. We center ourselves in other people's behavior.

So when our child does something, we think it means something about us. Instead, we want to realize we are not the center. It has very little to do with us. It has to do with what they are thinking and how they are feeling. That's what's driving their actions. Just like what drives your actions is how you're thinking and how you're feeling.

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When you make their behavior about you, it puts you into judgment of what your child's behavior means. Judgment blocks you from understanding and helping. Judgment is disconnecting. It sounds like I know why they did that. This is against me.

We're sort of in this negative judgment where we can't get to I wonder. I wonder is curiosity. I wonder what's going on for them? I wonder why they would do that. I wonder what feeling motivated that action. I wonder why they're so upset. I wonder what it feels like to be them and feel so dysregulated right now. I wonder what they're thinking. Right?

Getting into I wonder is not only connecting, but it really helps you kind of be the investigator. That mindset will help you support your child in a way that is really effective. Judgment just blocks all of that. You'll have to take action from wanting to control them.

Something else to just keep in mind that I've noticed in some of the coaching I've been doing recently is to question why you need something from your child. So I was coaching someone recently. She said that my child just isn't taking me seriously. You just want to question why is that a problem? Why do I need that from my child? Why do I need them to take me seriously? If I take me seriously, isn't that enough?

So instead of needing that from them, we can then feel fulfilled ourselves and kind of go back into curiosity of taking care of them. Like what's really going on for them when they are not doing their chores? Like what's that about? Do they need some one on one time? Some special time. Do they not feel seen?

So you're sort of approaching it from this mindset of I have really good kids, and they're struggling right now. I want to figure out what that struggle is really about knowing that it always has to do with what their experience is like. That's why I call it doing the inner work. So normally, we're doing it on ourselves. In this case, you're doing it on yourself insofar as you're shifting your mindset to be sort of complete in knowing that what they're doing is

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not about you. Then you can shift into thinking about what's going on internally for them.

I think this takes a certain level of confidence and certainty in oneself that often is challenging to have, particularly in motherhood. We care so much about our kids. You know that at the end of the day, there is no validation from them. They don't say thank you so much mom for doing all these things for me, for taking care of me, for loving me. There's none of that. So we have to validate ourselves.

Then on top of that when there are challenges or a child is struggling or there are some behaviors that we don't like, it can feel like a hit to the validation that we would normally give ourselves. What I want you to do is validate yourself and see that your role and your responsibilities as mom have to do with what you can control. Your thoughts, your feelings, your actions, how you show up and validate yourself for that.

There are certainly areas of improvement for all of us, of course. Give yourself grace for that, but don't look to their behavior for validation of how you're doing. Because then it becomes a little bit performative. Almost like they need to perform in a certain way for you to feel like you are good enough. That doesn't help anyone. It doesn't help you, and it doesn't help your kids either.

I think it can be helpful to have some go to mantras for some behaviors that repeatedly come up. So if you have toddlers or kids in a meltdown phase, you might have some mantras that you can say to yourself so that you don't make it mean something about you. It might sound something like this isn't about me. This is about my child. My child is feeling very dysregulated. Just kind of detaching from making it mean that it's at you can help you feel so much better. Then from that better feeling place, you will show up in a way that's much more helpful.

Or let's say that you have an older child who isn't doing their chores. Typically you think that it's to make you mad or it's to upset you. You might have some mantras like this isn't about me. This is about my child. This is

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about what's going on for them in their mind and in their body. Then you might have some questions that you want to ask. I wonder what they're needing. I wonder if they feel seen. I wonder how I might connect with them more out of the moment and see what's going on for them.

So you know your kids. You know what kind of phase that they are in the key is to notice first and foremost when you make their behavior mean something about you. Then do your own kind of thought work to get to the place where you are feeling confident and certain that it's not about you. Also then being interested and curious in what's going on for them so that you can help support them.

I want to talk as well about the examples where it's not necessarily a problem behavior, but it's something that they're struggling with. So your child is struggling at school. Again, we have a tendency to make this mean something about mom. Like I did a bad job. I should have done things differently. I should have worked with them during the summers more or after school more. Again, it just centers you and it doesn't help solve the problem.

So if you can get to a place of my child is supposed to have challenges, and I can help support them to come up with solutions. Even just that mantra I think can be so empowering. How often do we think that our kids shouldn't have challenges and that any challenge they have is a reflection that we're doing a bad job?

So you want to just notice what those thoughts are that are getting in the way of you really helping your child. I think any thoughts that centers yourself and makes their behavior mean something about you really can get in the way of you showing up as the mom who you want to be.

I experienced this, gosh, even from a really young age when I would fly with RJ. I think we flew like seven times the first year that RJ was born. It was fascinating. Because if he would have a flight where he wasn't upset and he was just peaceful and calm, at the end of the flight, people would tell me what a good job I was doing.

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If he had a flight where he was really dysregulated and upset and sort of melting down, people were generally kind, but it was so interesting because the commentary would be totally different. They would share their stories and kind of commiserate with how hard it is and all of that.

But I just remember coaching myself and really making sure that I would tell myself the truth that helped me be so empowered. Which is whether he is happy or sad or mad flight has nothing to do with me. So when I would get those compliments of me doing a really good job, and that was why he was calm, I made sure not to take those personally.

Sometimes when someone would say, "Oh, he's doing so good. You're doing so good." I would say back yeah, he's good until he's not like it was just sort of a joke. Because I wanted to stay in the groundedness that he would be upset if you wanted to be upset, and that that's okay. That didn't mean something about me.

So the reason I bring this up is because oftentimes when kids excel, specifically when they excel like externally whether it's in sports or activities or piano or ballet or gymnastics or academically. When they excel externally, it can be tempting to make that mean something about you as a mom. I think instead shifting to prioritizing the internal and how that's so much more important can be so helpful for you and for your kids.

Like yes, it's cool. Let's celebrate their wins, but let's not take it so personally for ourselves and for them. Like what is the most important thing that I want to teach my kids is what's on the inside. How did you show up? How hard did you work? How was your attitude? Were you kind? Focus on the internal where we have so much control and rewarding that, I think, can be something that helps our kids so much with their own self-confidence, and also maintains that separation between their performance and our performance.

We are doing a good job as moms based on our thoughts, our feelings, and our actions. Whether our kids are struggling or not struggling has to do with what's going on for them. So when you make it about you, it just puts you



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into judgment and prevents you from being able to help them and show up as the mom that you want to be.

So just notice the default tendency to make it about you, don't make the positives about you and also don't make the negatives about you. Instead, when those negatives do arise, have the mindset this isn't about me. This is about my child. I can help them. I can support them. I wonder what they're thinking and what they're feeling. I wonder what caused them to do that. I wonder what it's like to be them. I wonder what I'm missing.

So when you get into curiosity and you make it about them, and you take you out of it, I'm telling you not only can you show up with more confidence and feel better about the job that you're doing, but you also have that ripple effect where you do make a greater impact in being able to help them with whatever is going on for them internally.

One last thing that I want to mention here is that we have a brand new toolkit inside Grow You. It is the motherhood toolkit. It includes topics on mindset, self-compassion, holding boundaries, validating feelings, yelling, tantrums, listening, mom guilt, mom rage, having more connection with your kids and in your family, how to identify your top emotions in motherhood, and use mindfulness activities for kids, and really evaluate how you are doing so.

So if you want more tools to help you navigate the challenges of motherhood, you get this right when you join Grow You. It's brand new inside the library. I know that you are going to love it. So many of our members already are using it. So if you want more on motherhood, join me inside Grow You over at [nataliebacon.com/coaching](https://nataliebacon.com/coaching).

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](https://nataliebacon.com/coaching) to learn more.