

Who's To Blame?



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With Your Host

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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 talking about who's to blame. Doesn't that sound fun? I promise you, you are gonna get some nuggets of wisdom in this one. I have been using this tool in my life and it's been really, really helpful for me to see progress in navigating some challenges. Before we dive into that, goodness, are you coming to see me next week? I want to help you. I want to apply these tools to your life. I get asked a lot, what's the difference between therapy and coaching? And coaching is very much present and future focused.

So I can't help you with trauma or childhood issues or anything that requires like a diagnosis. I'm very pro therapy. This is just not therapy. Coaching is a set of skills that I've been professionally trained on in, in several ways, that I can help you take your life from where it is now to where you want to go. So if you want to work on mom guilt or overwhelm or time management or anxiety or creating more fulfillment and purpose in your life or marriage challenges, whatever it is that's kind of challenging for you right now, the tools that I use on myself and with my clients can help you and I would love for you to experience that firsthand. You can get all the information and grab your seat over at nataliebacon.com/asknatalie, I would love to see you there. Now let's talk about blame.

Are you ready? Who is to blame? What do I mean by that? When we are hurt or disappointed or upset in whatever way, we often want to hold someone accountable, whether that's a specific person, whether that's ourselves, whether that's a company or society. We want someone to be held responsible. Why is this? I think it's because if someone else is held responsible, there's a sense of relief that our feelings are justified. So for example, if I miss my flight, my brain on default is going to start looking to whose fault it is. Is it my fault? Is it my husband's fault? Is it the traffic's fault? Is it the airline's fault? Is it someone else's fault? My brain on default

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will ping pong back and forth trying to answer the question, why did this happen? Whose fault is it? And it will look externally and internally for someone to blame.

And I started doing work on this about a year or so ago, and the more I notice it, the more pervasive I have found it to be. So it may be something that you don't even know that you're doing yet, and that feels very justified in the moment. And yet you can still navigate a challenge without blame. And the beautiful thing about that is you act less of a crazy person. So when you are trying to figure out whose fault something is, it sort of puts you into crazy person space. At least it does. For me. My brain is like really committed to finding someone to hold responsible for what happened, even when no one can be held responsible for it. It's just a thing that happened. And what's happening there is that my brain is resisting accepting reality. My brain doesn't want to accept the fact that I just missed the flight. And in that resistance, I'm looking for someone to blame and it feels terrible. Why do I do this? Why do we do this? Because it feels good in the moment to blame someone, it feels sort of powerful. It excuses our emotions.

The problem is that blame is actually very disempowering because we're not just really looking for someone to be held accountable for actions, which we want to hold other people accountable for the actions that they take. But what we do on default without these coaching tools is that we want them to be held responsible for how we feel. That is where it crosses the line. So I teach a process called Clean Thinking where we separate out what we're thinking and feeling and doing from what other people are thinking, feeling, and doing. So when it comes to blame, what happens is that we feel really upset and we assign responsibility to someone else for our feelings. So if I feel frustrated and I look outside of me to blame someone on my frustration, if I say my kids are frustrating me, my spouse is frustrating me, what's happening in our neighborhood is frustrating me.

I've delegated responsibility of my feelings to someone outside of me. The reason that this is disempowering is because if they're responsible for how I feel, then they have to change and act a certain way in order for me to feel

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good. And this is where you get into acting crazy land because you will try to control people to feel better and it never works. It's exhausting. It leaves you miserable. And trust me, I'm speaking from experience. So notice this. Notice if you are assigning and delegating your feelings to anything outside of you or to yourself in a blaming sort of way, it's okay to feel angry. It's okay to feel sad. It's okay to feel upset. I never want to send the message that your feelings are invalid and you shouldn't feel that way. The subtle but extremely significant difference is accepting your feelings and validating your feelings.

Yes, I feel upset. Yes, I feel angry. And it's because of what I'm thinking. That and is everything. Because when we say and it's because of you, then we're blaming our feelings on something outside of us. And I think again, we want our feelings to be justified. Instead, we can. And I would encourage you to do this, just accept that our brains on default sometimes go to feelings that aren't always useful. And it doesn't mean we didn't create them. So if I feel frustrated, it's okay that I feel frustrated and I want to talk to myself like almost like a, a loving mother. Like, I got you. It's okay that you're feeling frustrated. I love you. What do you need? And allow myself to process that feeling going inward when you are feeling upset, frustrated, um, overwhelmed is such an important skill to cultivate.

When you are in blame, you will likely mix up other people's actions with your feelings. So if someone lies to you, you probably don't wanna be happy about that. You're not like, oh yes, this is great, I want to be lied to. Of course not. But you also aren't going to help yourself by blaming your emotions on them. So you may want to feel sad or disappointed or upset, and that is because of the story you're telling yourself. And it may be a story that you want to keep. The story may be, I'm really disappointed that I can't trust this person anymore and that they lied to me. Those are legitimate thoughts that you want to have when someone doesn't tell you the truth. Now, what you do want to assign responsibility for is the actions that the other person took. But you wanna separate out.

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This is that clean thinking part. You wanna separate out your feelings from their actions. Their actions don't cause your feelings, even though it feels that way. We know this is true. If you think of just 10 people being lied to in the exact same lie from the exact same person, you're gonna have 10 different reactions. Why? Because we have 10 different brains telling 10 different stories based on life experience, based on what our brains do. And there isn't a right or a wrong. The most empowering thing to see is that the feeling that's created in your body is always coming from your mind and your feelings are valid. And we can hold the other person accountable for their actions.

So for example, let's say that your spouse lied to you about credit card debt. Your spouse should be held accountable for his actions and the consequences of those actions. But any emotion that you feel because of that is because of the story that you're telling in your brain. And you may want to keep that story. You probably don't wanna be excited and happy about it. But when you view it through this lens of I'm taking responsibility for my feelings and I'm going to help hold spouse accountable for their actions, you don't seek so much validation or closure or, or any of that stuff from the other person because you're managing your mind and your emotions yourself. This can be applied to the biggest of things like you know, um, infidelity or um, a spouse lying to you in another way. It could be applied to small things like the example I led with in the beginning. If I miss my flight, if I'm looking for someone to blame. So start by separating out the actions that someone else does from your feelings.

Hold other people responsible for their actions, but hold yourself responsible for your feelings without blame. So for example, my son is in the biting phase, little toddler, if he bites me, he's responsible for that action and I feel physical hurt from that action, right? My body literally feels hurt from the biting. Now if I feel sad after that, he's not responsible for my sadness or maybe mad, right? You could imagine that lots of different moms in different situations are going to feel differently, and that is going to be based on our thoughts. So we can hold our children responsible for their actions. So in this case, what I've been doing is I won't let you bite mommy,

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but you can bite your blankie so he has that urge so he can bite the blankie. Okay? So that's how I navigate it. And then any emotion I feel, I know it's about me and I know it's coming from my thoughts, it's not coming from what happened.

And I promise you this is the most empowering way to navigate the world because you get so much authority and control back from how you navigate challenges. Let's say that you have a friend who constantly shows up late whenever you are supposed to meet her somewhere like 30 minutes to an hour late. If you get really upset, it's because of the story that you're telling. And that story is creating the upsetness that you feel. Now she's still accountable for showing up late, but you get to decide who you want to be. So instead of looking to blame her or maybe even blame yourself, can you say to yourself, gosh, yeah, I'm feeling upset and that's okay. And also, who do I wanna be in this situation? Maybe you want to have a boundary where you share that because of your schedule. After 20 minutes of waiting, if she's not able to show up, then you're going to leave. And it can be a boundary in a really loving way when you take the blame out of it. What we do on default is we want to hold other people responsible for our feelings. And the brain sort of looks for this as a way to feel secure and justified.

Let's say that your child is struggling with their friends at school. This is something I coach a lot on, and as mom, it can be tempting to want to fix this. And we're looking for someone to blame. Why is my child struggling? Something has gone wrong. We should blame the friends, we should blame the parents, we should blame the school. Just notice your brain want to go to looking for someone to blame, or then maybe you try to blame yourself. Maybe it's my fault. And it's just not a useful framework to navigate the challenge. Instead, if you can navigate the challenge from a place of I am going to love and support my child through this challenge and work with them together to figure this out, you will show up in a supportive, loving, connected way. Now of course, if things are happening where kids need to be held accountable for any actions, that can be done as well.

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But typically, in fact, in all of the coaching that I've done with many, many, many hundreds of even thousands of clients on this topic, it hasn't come up where it's an action situation. It's normal friend challenges that are hard for the kids. And so as a parent, the question is not how do I fix this? And who's to blame? The empowering question is who do I want to be as a mom helping her child navigate challenges with friends and really reminding myself that challenges with friends are normal and a part of growing up and this skillset is one that they will use for the rest of their lives. There's no point in time where we graduate from challenges with friends. So it's not that the challenges don't exist when you understand this practice, it's just that you will feel calmer and more grounded and more confident and stronger when you approach it from who do I want to be?

And when you take responsibility for your feelings and when you set boundaries and you use these tools because you're not coming from it at a place where you're thinking someone is to blame something, is to blame the school, the government, the world, the spouse, the friends, the parents. Just notice I think that if you just notice your brain wanting to blame others or blame yourself, it really solves the rest of it. At least that's been the case for me. I've found that the more I'm looking for someone to blame, the more disempowered I am because I'm looking for someone to blame my feelings on. And of course there is no one to blame my feelings on. I just have feelings and that's okay. And I can allow those feelings and know that nothing has gone wrong and get into acceptance and then decide who I want to be.

I coach a lot about challenges in the morning routine, getting kids out the door as well as in the evening routine, getting kids ready for bed. So take an example where your kids are not getting ready for bed and you've asked them to, but instead they play video games. They are responsible for their actions, but they're not responsible for your feelings. So if you feel frustrated, it's because of what you are thinking. You're thinking something like they should listen to me, they should know better. They shouldn't act like this. Some form of mindset that is creating the resistance and the frustration. And that's just good to know because as you know, we cannot

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control other people as much as we might try. Now we can influence them and we can seek cooperation, but if we do it from a place of respect and collaboration and I'm on the same team as my family, that leads to very different outcomes than if it's from a place of control.

I promise you this is true. You probably already know this and I for sure am speaking from experience. So the more you try to control your kids, the more disempowered you will feel. Step one is to take responsibility for your feelings. Know that it's not bad, you're feeling how you're feeling. Totally understandable. Process those feelings. And then you can hold your kids responsible for their actions in whatever sort of parenting form that you wanna do that. And then ask yourself the question, who do I want to be here? And this gets you out of thinking that there is someone to blame for this. When you are in the space of wanting to blame someone or something, you disempower yourself. You don't show up as your best. And oftentimes it just simply makes things worse. And I think part of this is that we have some shame around our feelings.

We think on default it's bad to feel angry, it's bad to feel mom rage, it's bad to feel frustrated, it's bad to feel overwhelmed, it's bad to feel anxious or upset and it's not. It's just what it means to be a human. As human beings, from time to time, we will feel sad and angry and frustrated and overwhelmed and anxious and upset and there's no one to blame for it. And that's okay. We can love ourselves. If you're in Grow You, you know that we have the new weekly mantras that are published every single week. You can grab those mantras to help with that self-validation and self-acceptance because so many of us weren't taught this. This just wasn't even thought about, let alone talked about when I was growing up. And so I know that it's a new skill for so many of us in this community, including myself, and it really has made the difference in my life from a place of accepting those feelings.

You can accept whatever is happening and decide what you want to think about and how you want to focus your attention and who you want to be. This way of shifting your mindset out of who's to blame and into what do I

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want to bring? Who do I want to be here? How do I want to show up, will put you into a much more empowered place to solve any challenge. If it's a big challenge or if it's a small one. For example, if someone stole from you, you probably don't wanna be happy. You probably want to be upset and you probably want to hold that person accountable for their actions. But you can do this in a really confident, sturdy, strong way without blaming them for your feelings. You can still feel upset, disappointed, mad, frustrated, and allow it and hold them accountable for their actions.

When you do it this way, I promise you, you will feel so much more in control when we hold other people responsible for our feelings, when we blame them for how we feel, we feel very out of control. Because if this person who stole money from me is also the creator of my feelings, oh my goodness, now this person who I don't trust at all is responsible for how I feel, which is terrible and thankfully it's just not true. So hopefully this situation doesn't come up. But I wanted to use an example that is quote unquote big and we wouldn't wish on anyone to see that You can still apply it in a way where you show up accepting what is the fact is that it, it happened. And now what? Who do you want to be? You can take care of yourself and your thoughts and your feelings and validate your own emotions and hold that other person accountable for the consequences with respect to whatever they stole and with respect to how you want that relationship to be going forward.

A smaller example, let's say that your child throws their book bag and knocks something over and you feel some mom rage. You are responsible for the mom rage and for the feelings that you are creating with whatever you're thinking. And you're not wrong for thinking and feeling that way. You have a good reason for it. And yet you can separate that out and that's your work to do from what your child did, your child threw their book bag, they're going to be held accountable for their actions. And you as mom get to decide what the consequences are. I really recommend going into curiosity about what's going on for them. This is probably something you'll have to do out of the moment if you're feeling mom rage in the moment. But going into curiosity kind of helps you explore why someone would throw their

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book back when they know they're not supposed to and knock something over or break something.

Curiosity helps you understand the feelings underneath the action, which are always created from our thoughts when we focus solely on controlling our kids. And sort of like that behavior modification, it works in the very short term, but it doesn't work in the long term cuz it doesn't build the skill that's required cuz it's always our thoughts and feelings driving our actions. And it also isn't helpful for the relationship because then it becomes this correction, control based relationship instead of one focused on connection and love. So practice taking responsibility and processing and allowing and validating your feelings and separating that out from other people's actions. Now in this episode, I gave a great mix of kind of things happening that were are quote unquote wrong or that we don't wanna see happen again. And then some things just happen, right? You miss a flight. And so I think that the brain is sneaky in that it likes to blame in a wide range of challenges.

And again, I think it goes back to because of how we're feeling. So regardless of if the challenge is something that just happened, like we missed our flight, or if it's very much because someone did something to you like stole from you or lied to you or something like that. Either way, if you are feeling frustrated about it, it's the very likely that the brain is looking for someone to blame. And again, if you take responsibility for your feelings and then if there is someone to hold responsible for their actions, but separating those out, all of that is going to be helpful. And sometimes when you miss the flight and there's no one to hold responsible, it's just a thing that happened, you can shift into who do I want to be? In all of these examples, once you process the feeling shifting into who do I want to be will get you out of blame and into such a more empowered place. If you enjoyed this and this is resonating with you, tag me on Instagram and let me know your thoughts about this podcast. I would love to hear from you and connect with you and see if it is as helpful for you as it has been for me. And with that, I will talk with you next week. Take care.

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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.