

Episode: Courage Without Shame



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Welcome to the Design Your Dream Life podcast where it's all about designing your life on your terms and now your host, Natalie Bacon.

Welcome to the podcast. At the time I am recording this, it is June, 2020. We are coming out of some very tragic race related events in our country. Just last week, a white Minneapolis police officer murdered a black man, George Floyd.

What I want to teach you as a life coach is how to manage your mind beyond what you think is possible right now. What I've personally experienced recently is a shift in my own beliefs, beyond what I've thought possible. And this podcast is about giving you a new perspective and a new tool to use as you grow. And I'm going to use race-related examples in this podcast. It's very present and timely, but if you are listening to this at some point in the future, you can apply this to anything, anything that you want to do in your life, whether it's standing up for what you think is right, or whether it is applying to speak at a conference or something else that requires courage.

I want you to know how to do that without shame. And you might not know what I'm talking about yet. When I say courage without shame, but I will explain it. And I think it's really going to be a practical, useful tool. I want to mention that if it's not obvious yet I am not an expert in anti-racism. I am a student. Okay?

So in different areas of my life, I'm a Sage, I'm a Sherpa and I'm a student. I am a Sage when it comes to being a certified life coach, being a lawyer, being a certified financial planner, I am a Sherpa when it comes to paying off student loan debt and being an entrepreneur, I am a student of many things. One of those is anti-racism. So if I say something that is wrong or a mistake or incorrect I'm with you, I in no way mean to present as anything other than I am.

I want to use what's going on right now as an example, so that you can take your thought work so much deeper so that you don't avoid doing the hard work, which I think is really tempting right now, a lot of people who I've been coaching in Grow You of all races and particularly both black and white among others have been experiencing pain in different ways. And there's a little sense of wanting to get through that pain quickly, like wanting it to go away.

And what I want to encourage you to do is to allow it, to be in it, and to not try to use what I teach, to think happier thoughts and make everything just be okay, kind of from this naive way. Instead, I want you to do the opposite and I want you to lean in, and I want you to look at your self and your life and see how you want to show up personally, and you know, on a larger level kind of in society.

So for my own work right now, just so you know what I'm doing, I just read the book, White Fragility. I recommend it. I just started reading How to be Anti-Racist. And after that, I am going to read Me and White Supremacy, watched a few documentaries, listened to probably over 10

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podcasts. I am definitely information overloading right now on purpose so that I can speed up some of the education part of this while also knowing that this is lifelong work that I do care about.

So that's kind of where I'm at with it. I think it's helpful for you to know what matters to me and know that I know I'm not doing it perfectly or from a position of knowing everything, but I am willing to have these conversations and I want to lean into them. And I think as a life coach, it's my responsibility to do that. And I cared deeply about that. So that's where I'm at.

Let's start actually, by talking about something slightly different that I will tie in to this concept that you can use called courage without shame. So I want to start by thinking about how you are conditioned, if you're a female to grow up and really care about how you look. Now, I'm generalizing here because it's useful in this example, certainly not all women grew up thinking that how they looked really mattered, but I did.

And a lot of women, especially a lot of women probably listening to this podcast did. So if that's not you, then that's okay, but you know what I'm talking about, right? You can at least identify with that. So I grew up caring a lot about how I looked and at the time that that was happening, I just thought that girls were one way and boys were another way.

Right? I can think of one of my guy friends right now who doesn't really care how he looks at all, right. And I care a lot. So growing up without knowing more, I just thought this was how girls were and how guys were okay. Didn't really think much about it. Now, I know and it's really good and important that I know that it comes from how I've been socialized and not just how I've been socialized in school, but how my parents treated me immediately.

And not only that, but generations of ancestors who also had that mindset. Okay. So having this awareness of why I care about my looks is important because from there I can see, Oh, it's not just that I'm this way. I've been conditioned to be this way. And now what, from there I can decide, right. I really like caring about this stuff.

And I don't like do it as my profession. So to me, I care about it in a way that I only give it, you know, the time that I think it's worth in my life. You know, I don't want to be a fashion designer or something like that, but I do care and I want to continue to care. And I know the reason why I care, right?

So only after I have the awareness of my own social conditioning, can I make the decision of how I want to be and what I want to change, if anything, right. Without knowing this, I might just say, Oh, women are just like this. Right. So I don't, I hope this isn't a controversial topic. I'm actually just using it as an example so that we can talk about conditioning a little bit and socialization, right. Because the same is true about other aspects of our upbringings.

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So one example is race, right? So as a middle class, lower middle class, white woman growing up, right. I had white privilege, right. I have been studying a lot about privilege recently and growing up, I did not have other privileges. Right. My parents were divorced. We didn't have a lot of money with my mom. My dad lost his dental practice and was actually in and out of jail. Right.

So I didn't have privilege in that way, but I had white privilege. I have white privilege. Right. And so what I've learned in the last week, honestly, from my reading and studying is that I also have subconscious racist beliefs that I've been conditioned to think that I don't even know I have. Right. And so what I want to offer to you is that we all have been conditioned to have beliefs, right? That we don't actually consciously want to believe.

So my whiteness has afforded me the opportunity to learn about racism instead of to experience it. Now, consciously I think racism is horrible. Right. I know that black lives matter, but subconsciously I've been conditioned to reinforce institutional racism that before reading the book I read and going deep into this studying and only a very short time, I am now aware of something I wasn't aware of before.

And it's through that awareness that I can change. And this is what is talked about in How to be an Anti-Racist it's that we need to take a broader view of racism. And it comes from not thinking that your thoughts are inherently good or bad. So this is where the life coaching comes in. So what I teach is to look at your thoughts and to notice your thoughts and what I've realized with this work, with anti-racism work that's particularly uncomfortable is that a lot of us think that the thoughts that pop into our heads make us a good person or a bad person.

And if you believe that, if you have a thought that pops into your head, that leads you to believe you'd be a bad person, you will avoid looking at that thought, you will ignore it and kind of run away from it, right? Because no one wants to be a bad person. So what happens is that we don't look at our socialized racist thoughts that we don't want to have, because we think it means that we in our humanness are bad and wrong, right?

That is shame. So what I want to teach you today is that you are 100% worthy. You are not damaged, right? You are a human being. You are 100% worthy, 100% lovable, and you have thoughts. And a lot of those thoughts are subconscious that you've been socialized to believe that you don't even have awareness of. But if you believe in self-education as a lifelong practice, you can bring awareness to what you don't know.

If you believe in coaching yourself, you can bring awareness to what you don't know, and you have to be willing to use courage without shaming yourself. Okay? So again, I want to point out that I am new to anti-racism work. And I thought about whether bringing this up would be

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helpful at all. And I decided that in integrity, with being authentic and wanting to help and be a part of the solution, that it was a good idea to bring this up to you.

I am still a student of this work, so I'm sorry if I'm getting it wrong and making mistakes. I want you to know that I am using courage without shaming myself here. And I want you to do that, knowing that you could be doing it completely wrong, but being willing to go all in and look at yourself and how you show up in the world and what your beliefs are without beating yourself up about it.

So any time you embark on something different and new, you're going to risk comfort, and you know, this, I've talked about this a lot with respect to goal setting or starting a business, or, you know, it can be something like stopping eating meat, right? So it can be anything that really is a big change. Your brain is very nervous about it. So it requires vulnerability because your brain doesn't know what's going to happen.

And so the survival mechanism kicks in and it just wants to make sure you're safe and keep you alive. And it's much more safe. And it's easier if you just keep continuing to live, how you've lived. And I want to challenge you to do the opposite. I want to encourage you to really lean in to yourself and to what you believe and what you want to believe and what you want to learn.

And that requires courage. So I looked up the definition of courage and there were two definitions and I combined them cause they work so good. Courage is the strength to do something in the face of emotional pain. Courage is being brave at the risk of experiencing exclusion, unpopularity, embarrassment, fear, disappointment, loss. It means making a decision or taking action where a risk is involved.

And it's not just, Oh yeah, that's risky. But it probably won't happen. The risk is real, right? So courage is something that doesn't feel good, right? It's an emotion. It does not feel good. But I want to remind you here that it requires strength. And if you are listening to this podcast, I know you and I know that you are strong and I know you're stronger than you think. And I know you can do hard things. Courage takes intentionality because without the intention, you won't do it because it requires experiencing that emotional pain.

You know, it's not just this imagined pain, it's real emotional pain. You might actually not be accepted by your community anymore. You might actually feel embarrassed. You might fail and you might get it all wrong. So courage is something that feels horrible that you do right for the greater good. And I don't just mean for the greater good of other people for the greater good of yourself as well.

So I want to give you an example of using courage in the realm of being anti-racist. So let's say you learn about a police incident that you think is wrong. It is going to take a lot of courage to do

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something about it. Especially if you are a new student of anti-racism, you'll feel very uncomfortable. You're going to not want to ask questions, but if you do, and you use courage, you're going to feel extra uncomfortable doing, you know, whatever you do, whether it's signing petitions, emailing your government, whatever the action is that you do to practice courage, it is going to be uncomfortable.

You will feel resistance and maybe fear and maybe be anxious. So this discomfort is required for you to follow through with living a life that you want. And in this example, it would be one where you're trying to advocate to fix the system, right? And you've decided that, and it's worth it for you to use courage here. This will require you to understand how to process your emotions. Right in Grow You there is a course if you're in grow, you go through the processing emotions course. If you're not in there, read my free content on this or listen to it.

It is hard to do new and different things and your brain freaks out and that's okay. Processing your emotions is part of it. So I say this because it's easy to give you inspiration and say, yeah, go do it. It's going to be great.

But what's more useful is that, you know, that it's going to be uncomfortable. And that, that discomfort is worth it. If you're doing it to live your life, how you want in integrity with what you believe and what you want to contribute to the world, where the shame comes in is when we do hard things. And we use courage, we often are met with shame. Okay?

So let's say that you decide to talk with one of your black friends about race and you end up saying something that is racist and you both agree that it's racist right? At the time you said it, you didn't even, you weren't even aware you had that thought. And so after that conversation, you end up hating yourself, beating yourself up, thinking how could you even think that thought? And basically thinking that you as a human are morally wrong, right?

When you do that, you are shaming yourself. And what that's going to do for you is to discourage you from leaning into those conversations again. I want you to have those conversations, get outside your comfort zone, use courage, be willing to get it wrong. Like I'm probably doing on this podcast, right?

And not beat yourself up. Your thoughts don't make you moral or immoral as a human being. Your thoughts as they pop into your head, aren't moral or immoral. They're not right or wrong in and of themselves. So you are worthy. And shame is thinking I'm not worthy. Shame is I am wrong. Shame is always a choice. Shame is an emotion that you create by your thinking. So no one else can shame you. Right? A lot of people will kind of throw around, Oh, they're shaming me. People are trying to shame me.

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Right. And when you think that thought you resist and you close up, all right. And so the problem with shame is that you lose awareness. You kind of run, you avoid the work that you need to do. If you think you're bad, you're not going to look at what's going on. You'd rather live in ignorance. Right. And just think that you're right.

So you can't create the change in yourself or in the world. If you are in this shame cycle. What I know you can do for sure is that you can examine your thoughts, discover thoughts that have been subconscious to you, particularly, maybe after reading something totally brand new, examining those thoughts that you have discovering thoughts that you have, that you don't even want to have. And you can do that without thinking that you, as a person are wrong, right? So we're just not taught to do this.

We're taught to think that we are bad if we have a racist thought. So we avoid looking at the thought to avoid thinking we're bad, which only perpetuates the problem because we avoid looking at it instead we defend ourselves. Right?

And so this is just an example, and I think this is part of the problem, but it doesn't just apply to race. It could be with anything that you're uncomfortable looking at. So take the cue of discomfort. That it's time to look at yourself with curiosity, because instead of you said, Oh my gosh, I didn't even know I had that thought. I don't like it. I think racism is horrible. I want to change. I wonder where that thought comes from. Where can I learn more? What can I do? Right? And these are questions. You're asking yourself as you're self coaching and you're coming from curiosity that is going to help you.

It's going to help the world, right? It doesn't just give you a better life and help you grow. It also helps change whatever system you want to change. So I want to encourage you to look at your thoughts, have tough conversations, take it upon yourself to learn and grow. Right?

I do this just as a lifelong practice, take responsibility for my own learning. And I want you to do that as well. Right? You can go on Google or Amazon or wherever audible get reading. There's so much power in education. And from there you can take action and live how you want to live. And I want you to do that without beating yourself up. You don't ever have to think that you are wrong as a human, right. You might think, Oh, okay. That thing I did was wrong. Or that thought isn't one that I want to keep anymore.

But you don't have to think that you and your humanness is wrong. So I don't think that anyone is wrong in their humanness. I think all humans are worthy in and of themselves just by being human. That's why I teach that everyone has 100% self worth. If you have a low opinion of yourself that has to do with self confidence. Okay?

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So going forward, I want you to see that it's possible that you may have been conditioned to think thoughts that you don't actually believe. And the solution is to approach yourself with curiosity and have the courage to lean into figuring out what's going on in your own mind without shaming yourself, okay?

You are not wrong. You are worthy. You can learn. You can change. You can feel empowered and motivated and determined, right? This is heavy stuff. It's good stuff. I am glad I could bring it to you through the lens of life coaching. I am still learning and I look forward to growing and what else I can bring to you? All right. I'll talk with you next week.

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