

Episode: How To Live An Intentional Life



With Natalie Bacon, JD, CFP[®], Certified Life Coach

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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.

Hi friend. How are you doing today? I am just sitting here, it's the middle of winter in Chicago and I'm looking down at Penny sleeping and it is just a gorgeous day outside and the sun's out. Yes, it's cold, but I just could not be happier. And a part of that is how I've designed my life to be. And I did a lot of prep work for this episode because I think that intentional living or how to live an intentional life gets thrown around a lot and I really want to give you a better, more useful way of thinking about intentional living so that you can really, really set and achieve your goals and live the life that you want.

And I think it's worth remembering kind of where I came from in terms of this work. I was a philosophy minor in college and that's pretty much the only experience I had with personal development. I loved personal development books, but before I really found life coaching and started applying this to my life, I was more of a consumer of personal development instead of a creator of it. So I read a lot of books, I studied a lot, but I never really knew how to apply it to my life. And then I hired a life coach and I joined life coaching programs and I became a life coach and now I help so many women in Grow You apply this work to their life. So I'm constantly upleveling my life and living very intentionally. And then that's what I do for other people as well.

I had nothing in my life that would have said this would be what I would be doing. Right. I was an attorney and I was in a ton of student loan debt and I didn't really know that any of this was possible. I thought that people were really born into it and it just was out of my reach. And a lot of it is, you know, what I'm referring to is the career, the flexibility, the money, the great relationships, the health, all of it. It's so easy for me to kind of forget about how I felt and how I lived in the past because I'm so future focused. But the reason that I'm bringing it up now is I think it's hopefully going to be really helpful for you to know kind of my life and what it was like five years ago.

It is unrecognizable and I say that so seriously. Not just the career transition, although that is the one I talk about most. But I also lost weight. When I was in college I was 25 pounds heavier, so I've lost that weight and kept it off. I, you know, went through a spell of bad relationships or relationships that kind of led me to my own relationship journey. And now being in a really, really, stable, healthy, loving, committed, like amazing relationship that I really didn't know was ever going to be possible for me. I spent all of this time and energy learning about money and I feel so abundant with my money. I love my money. I think that the abundance is in me and not my money. I've been able to get out of debt and create a life that will be so different than I ever thought was possible five years ago. And a lot of it is because I had the student loan debt initially. That's sort of what propelled me to start a blog and to kind of dive head first into all this personal development.

So I say all about before I am going to start teaching you how to live an intentional life because I want you to really, really get that you have created all of your life right now and that if you want it to be different, it can be. So I like to say it's not better over there, but it is better in some ways and it's not better in other ways. So I have a lot less suffering in my life right now because of this work that I do. So I don't blame the outside world. I don't feel like I'm a victim of my life. I take

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responsibility for how I feel and how I live, and because of that, I'm able to process negative emotion, be present, and create the results I want. It doesn't mean that it's easy. It certainly doesn't mean that it's problem free or fail free. In fact, I'm constantly failing and having problems and working through them and doing my own growth. But what it does mean is that there isn't an added layer of suffering on it that I used to do. So the suffering on it would be like, this shouldn't be happening to me. This isn't working the way I want it to work. Something's gone terribly wrong. Like there's this added layer of suffering that I used to do that I see a lot of my clients doing that I want to teach you not to do.

And I think that that's one huge way that my life is better because I live intentionally and when I'm talking about living intentionally, I'm talking about you deciding whatever your version of your dream life is. I think that's the biggest reason why you should live intentionally at all. It's so that you can live your life on your terms. If you don't live intentionally, you won't be able to live the exact life you want. So some people will want to live life at the highest level. I like to think of pro athletes or you know, leaders of state or top executives or business owners, but other people won't want to do that at all. And there's not one right way. You're not better because you achieve more. But when you decide on purpose to what extent you want to achieve, you are in control of your life and you are taking responsibility for it and you get to decide on purpose what that dream life looks like.

So it's not that I want you to hustle and achieve more, it's that I want you to learn how to create the exact version of life that you want. It's really about you designing your life from your future instead of repeating your past. And I've talked about this a lot, but I do want to mention that by achieving more and doing more and upleveling your life, you are not more worthy. You don't have to do anything at all to be worthy. You're just worthy as a human being.

When I coach a lot of women in Grow You I'll have a set of sisters or let's say a sister and a sister in law and one of them will be really goal achievement oriented and the other will be more laissez faire about her life. And they will create conflict in their relationship because each wants the other to behave differently. And what I say is you don't have to behave differently. Either of you, doesn't have to behave differently for you to have an amazing relationship and neither of you is right or wrong, right? It's your version of your life. The one who is achieving more isn't more worthy than the one who doesn't want to set goals at all. The point is just to decide on purpose what your dream life looks like. Is it where you're growing and upleveling and setting goals or is it not? But without awareness of this, you can't create an intentional life.

So basically I think of intentional living as the learning the rules of the game of life so that you can create it exactly how you want. And most people are just completely unaware of the game, for lack of a better term. So if you think of life as a game, right? Think of the game of life, not the actual board game, but just life. You think of that as a game and there are rules, there are things that work and don't work and most people are not aware of the rules. They are acting as if their life is happening to them. So they create more of their past. And this is the same for me as well. This is what I used to do. I used to blame my parents. I used to, you know, blame the education system for my student loans. I even blamed my acts at one point for ruining our relationship. It was like all of these things were happening to me and I was just completely unaware of how I was the creator of all the results of my life.

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So the first step that I want to teach you and tell you to do, to create an intentional life is to become aware. Now, awareness as the first step is the most important step. So most people will live a life, a full life, even if they live to a hundred and they will never be aware of their life and that they're the creator of their life. And I don't just mean results, right? They will of course be aware that they're alive, that they have a certain weight, that they have a certain job, that they make a certain amount of money, right? In that sense, they're aware.

But I'm talking about awareness from the perspective of the watcher. So you take responsibility for all the results in your life. You look at your life with intention and you say, how did I create this? What did I create? You know, what values do I have? How much money do I make? Am I kind? You know, you have this awareness of your thoughts, of your feelings, of your actions and of your results. And you're also aware of your circumstances, that being different from your results. Your results are what you create, like you create the amount of money that you make. Your circumstance is something outside of you that you have no control over, and you have to understand that you don't have control over it without judgment.

So it's like a circumstance would have been my dad was an alcoholic. That's something outside of me. I didn't have control over it and I did not judge him for it. This level of awareness is so hard because we are naturally prone to blaming other people for how we feel and for the results in our lives. So I cannot tell you how many times I've coached people on money and how they are blaming the education system for their student loans, or they are blaming their husband for how they feel. And that's not to say that you don't want to feel disappointed or negative emotion, but it is to say that you want to bring awareness to the fact that you're the one creating the negative emotion, right?

So most people will live a life of unawareness forever and you cannot create an intentional life. You cannot design your life from a place of unawareness. So if nothing else from this episode, I want you to really, really focus on step one, become aware, become aware of where you are in every single area of your life. You know, do you take responsibility for how you think, how you feel, how you act? Do you blame other people or things outside of you? Ask yourself, what am I thinking? What values do I believe in? What am I feeling? What actions am I taking or not taking? What results am I creating? What circumstances exist outside of me that I cannot control, and am I judging them?

I just really think that there is so much work to be done in step one, that if you just do this, you will drastically change your life just for this entire year. If you're like, this is the year where I'm going to become aware of my life, you will transform it. Because what most people do, what most of us do before you're exposed to this work, is we think that because of things outside of us, we have the results in our life, right? I had to live in a crappy apartment because I had student loan debt. I used to tell that story, right? So what were my results? I had student loan debt and I lived in a crappy apartment. It's not until you become aware of what your thinking and how those beliefs create your results that you can ever change them.

So I want you to, you know, set your goals, pursue your goals, but notice that you are a person who has created results based on who you've been up to this point. And in order to change your

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results, you have to become someone different. But before you go about doing that process, I just think there's so much power in you becoming aware of who you are being.

I went through this, gosh, about a year ago when I was drinking and going out and I wasn't drinking too much by my own standards of what I think too much is like I wasn't getting arrested. I wasn't waking up in places. I didn't know where I was. Like it wasn't that I was creating a result in my life that I didn't necessarily like, but I noticed that I wasn't aligned with who I wanted to be and where I wanted to go. So I had to bring awareness to the fact that I was living a life that was not necessarily taking action in the direction that I wanted to be headed. So I stopped drinking, right? And I felt more aligned with who I wanted to be, and then I became that person. But it took awareness. That was kind of hard for me to see for a while because it's really easy to think like, oh, you're single in Chicago of course you're going to go out and drink with friends. But what I realized was that the life that I wanted to create wasn't a life of going out and drinking a lot with friends on the weekends. It just wasn't it. Right? I want to create a life where I get married or have a loving partner and husband and I have a family and I have a dog, right?

So I'm working my way there. I'm shifting who I am. But before I could do any of that, I had to become aware of who I was being. So become aware of what you're thinking. Become aware of what you're feeling, become aware of what actions you're taking or not taking, and take ownership and responsibility for the results that you've created in your life. That is step one to living an intentional life. It's awareness. And this is why I think life coaching is so important. It's we like to say that you can't read the label from inside the bottle. I've had so much of a faster transformation in my life because of the life coaching that I do. I self coach, I have a one-to-one coach and I'm a part of membership coaching. So I really, really believe that you can speed up your progress if you work with a life coach, and I love doing this work and helping my clients in Grow You. That's how I help people bring awareness to their lives. So if you want to do that for yourself, I highly recommend coming into Grow You so you can kind of jumpstart that for your own life. Doing it yourself will work to the extent possible, but it just won't be as fast as if you work with whole life coach and you may miss some things.

Alright, let's talk about step number two for how to live an intentional life. Step number two is to decide where you want to go and who you want to be. This means that you choose what kind of life you want. You choose the outcomes or the results for every single area for your health, for your relationships, for your career, for your money, for your hobbies, for your family. You decide on purpose and you question everything, right?

So I was coaching someone in Grow You and she was talking about all of the things that she had to do. She was a mom, stay at home mom. She was talking about making dinner and how she had to do that. And I stopped her and I said, well, you don't actually have to cook dinner. She was like, what? I was like, you don't have to cook dinner. You don't have to do anything. And it was a moment of pause for her so she could bring awareness to everything that she was creating in her day and she could decide on purpose whether she valued it and wanted to continue to do it from a place of wanting to do it, not from a place of feeling like she's a victim of her life and like she had to do it.

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So what I want you to do is I want you to question everything. Who cares what your circumstances and results are. Right now you have student loan debt or you didn't graduate college or you're in a job that you don't love right now. I don't want you to focus on that for step two. Step one is about the awareness kind of of where you are now. Step two is deciding where you want to go and who you want to be thinking really, really big. If anything was possible, right? So if anything was possible, what would you do for work? Would you even work? A lot of people just want to make millions of dollars quickly and not work at all, but the reason that they want to do that is so that they can over pleasure themselves so that they can eat more and drink more and sit on the beach. And what I want to offer to you is that it would kind of be boring and unfulfilling. Certainly you can continue to buy and spend and seek external pleasures to create a false sense of pleasure, but it will never be internal wellbeing.

So I kind of say like, let's just skip that part where we think having millions of dollars and not working is a better life, I really don't believe that it is. I think that if you decide on purpose, how much money you want to make, how do you want to make it, how much or how little you want to work, what kind of hobbies you want to have, what kind of relationships you want to have, what kind of person you want to be. When you do that, that is how you live an intentional life.

So for me, yes, I want to make millions of dollars. No, I don't want to stop working. I love my work. Do I want to work a little bit less than I am now? Yes. Do I want to take more trips and do more adventures? Yes. Right. Do I want to have a family? Yes. So thinking about that for me is like really, really exciting because I get to do it from the place of abundance and from a place of already having so much and no matter what your circumstances are now you can always find evidence for having enough. And I want you to think really, really big. I want you to decide where you want to go with your health, with your career, with your money, with your family, and your relationships and your hobbies and your community and all of it. And I want you to go there in your head and imagine having it right. And this is where goal setting kind of comes into play. You set goals for the result that you want, but you got to make sure that it is in line with the type of life that you want. So losing weight without it being part of a deeper why is kind of pointless. Losing weight should be a part of a greater health vision for where you want to go in your life, right? It's like that vision of the life that you want to live, the outcomes and results you want to create, the type of person you want to be, the type of values you want to have that sort of like the umbrella. And then the goals are like the pegs.

I was coaching some women earlier this month on their impossible goals and a couple of them were in between setting a weight loss goal and setting a money goal. And I always say set one goal for the year, one big impossible goal for the year, but know that you will have a future with all of it. So it's not like either or you can only have one or the other. It's like in my future I'm debt free, I make millions of dollars and I've lost a hundred pounds, but this year we are just going to focus on money. Right. Do you see the difference there? It's like we don't need to rush it. We are going to set one impossible goal for the year and both of them fall under the umbrella of what I've decided that I want for my life. So that's step two. It's deciding what you want.

And this is kind of when I was doing this outline where I was really proud of myself, I think I really do this unapologetically and even in small ways, right? Steve, my boyfriend was just saying a couple days ago how impressive it is that I just decide what I'm going to do and then I

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just will it to happen. And he was specifically referring to getting Penny and I said, yes, I always do this. And I just think that we underestimate our own ability to do it. So I don't have a special talent other than I have learned how to manage my mind to get what I want.

And that's what I want you to do. At first it was much harder, right? I started off on my journey wanting to get out of student loan debt and make \$1,000 extra a month, and now I'm talking about making seven figures. I'm creating my dream life. I don't drink. I have amazing relationships with friends and a loving boyfriend. Like really thinking about where I was five years ago. I love who I was then because she was going through so much and I wouldn't have been able to get to where I am now without her. But also I'm so proud of who I've become.

I say that, but I don't want you to think that I don't have problems now or that my life is easy or that in some way that by making more money and creating the exact life you want, you don't experience discomfort. I experienced discomfort all of the time. I experience negative emotion and always will as a human right with this human brain of ours. I just now have the tools to manage my mind and to create the exact life that I want. When I was first starting, this was slower, the winds were harder to come by, but it was worth it. Right? I never once thought about quitting and I've done this for my career, for my health, for my relationships, and I just want to offer to you that you can do it for every area of your life. You can live intentionally and you can just start little by little moving forward. Something I started doing recently is thinking about the values I want to have in my life. So I've always had values, but I haven't always decided what they were intentionally. And I think as you do step two and you decide where you want to go, I kinda just want to give a side note here that I don't want you to just think about outcomes and results.

I want you to think about the type of person you want to be. So I want to be someone who is really good at feeling love and appreciation and gratitude and generosity and commitment, right? Among other things. And it takes intentionality because it's easy to complain about things. But when I live a life of appreciation and I practice beliefs that create that feeling, and I do it in the way that's through causal coaching, which is what I teach and coach on in Grow You, it's really transformational. And I've seen such a shift in my own life. It's taught me how to want from abundance. So I can love my apartment right now and want more from a place of having enough. It's super, super fun. So decide on purpose what your intention is for all of it.

So step one is the awareness, right? You have awareness of your life. Step two is deciding on purpose what you want. It's kind of where you want to go and who you want to be. Step three is to create a path to get there. This means that you think about the steps it will take to get you from here where you are now to where you want to go. But I say this with caution. You don't need to know the how. You just need to know the next step. I talked about this in the Direction Versus Intention podcast episode. Everything that you think that you say that you feel and that you do must be aligned with the life that you want. Let me repeat this. Everything that you think say, feel, and do must be aligned with the life you want.

This is why for me, I quit drinking, right? It wasn't aligned with the life that I wanted. Now, again, super easy to just continue going about how I was going about having a few cocktails here and there, especially on the weekends with friends, right? It wasn't creating a problem in my life, but it wasn't aligned with the future that I wanted. So those really small instances and habits and

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processes and lifestyle things that you are doing right now, they are what's getting you the results that you have and they will be what keeps you from getting the results that you want.

At the live event, which by the way, if you have not signed up yet, I think we're almost sold out, but you can go to NatalieBacon.com/liveevent, it's one word to see if tickets are still for sale the time this comes out, but I am going to teach something new that I've never taught before called vision commercials and you basically map out the steps that it will take for each area of your life that you want to see new results. This is so powerful because you are creating the programming in your mind, right? With words, with images, with the videos so that you create in your neural pathways so that you change your identity. When you change your identity, you will change your life, right? Because your identity is just what you think and feel about yourself right now and what you think and feel drives what you will do and what you do will create those results. Step four is very similar, but I kind of wanted to break out step three and four because of the details and step four. Step four is taking enough action to get results. So in step three, it's kind of like the high level, like what you need to do. You need to create a path that gets you from where you are now to where you want to go and you need to make sure that everything that you're thinking that you're saying that you're feeling that you're doing is aligned with the life that you want, right? And you create that path. And I don't think I mentioned it yet, but you do this from a place of not knowing how and you fail forward. Okay?

Step four is you take enough action to get results. I'm talking about taking massive action, not just a little action of frigging lot of action. K, listen to the massive action episode. You take action to get the results that you want, and this means that you're doing massive thinking along the way. It means that you're changing who you are. You're changing your identity, you're changing how you're thinking. When something doesn't work, you have to examine what you did wrong and how to do it differently in the future, right? And this means that you're going to process a lot of negative emotion because there's going to be discomfort because there's going to be failures because there's going to be rejection, right?

So let's just say that you're in a job right now that is fine, but you don't really feel like it's your dream job. You'd like to make more money, you'd like to work less, right? And you're like, okay, well I'm aware of this. I went to college, I did everything everyone said to do, and here I am right? Already, that sort of awareness is a little bit victimy and I say that because I want you to notice it in yourself. You created and chose the job you have. You created the income that you have, you created the work hours that you have, and it's actually great news because it means you can change it.

So let's go with example. Let's say you know you created it and you decide that you want to go in a direction where you have this job where you're more passionate about it. You are making double what you make now and you work fewer hours. Let's say you work 30 hours a week instead of 60 hours a week. Now step three, when you're creating that path to get there, your brain's going to freak out and it's going to tell you you don't know how and it's impossible and you're going to have all these reasons why it won't work. But if you just ignore that part of your brain and you create the path any way you can do step four where you take massive action to make it happen.

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But here's the thing, your going to fail. You're going to apply to jobs. You're not going to get them. You're going to find evidence for what you really think is true, which is you can't do this. The people who succeed are the ones who believe they can create exactly what they want. So I had no business creating a multiple six figure business online as a life coach who was a lawyer in a ton of student loan debt. Okay? I came from divorced parents. My dad was an alcoholic. I struggled with relationships in the past and now I have the healthiest, most amazing relationship. I created that instead of repeating my past. I lost 25 pounds. In college, I weighed 25 pounds more. I created that and I say that because I want you to know that you can create it too, right? Paying off student loans, being able to quit my job as an attorney and a financial planner, all of it. It's not because anyone told me how.

I took a course, took some action from that course, figured out what worked, figured out what didn't work. Had a lot of failure along the way. Right? How many guys do you have to go out with before it's right. Okay. So for me, I had to go through that. Go through the ups and downs of dating, I had to go through the ups and downs of blogging and then an online business and then a life coach and all of the things. It was not easy, but I never thought about quitting, right? I want you to really comprehend that, that if you take enough action to get the results you want, there's no rush and you will get the action.

So in that other example, if you want a job that you're more passionate about, that you are able to make more money, double the money that you make now and work fewer hours, you have to start taking action as if you truly believe that that's true for you. Because whatever you repeat, you reinforce, whatever you repeat, you reinforce. So if you're repeating to yourself that it's not possible, then that is what you will reinforce and make true.

I like to think of someone else jumping into your body, so it's like the same body but someone else's mind jumping into your body. What would they believe to create the result you want? Like if Oprah's mind jumped into your body like what would she do in your body? It creates a level of separation so that you can see that you are actually in your mind creating your results.

Listen to the Alter Ego podcast episode as well. This will kind of help you make that identity shift and also breaking the habit of being yourself because I'm talking about action in this step, step four, but it's so much more than that. To live an intentional life means you have to give up the identity of the person who got the results that you currently have. I have had to give up the identity of a lawyer, of a financial planner, of a blogger, right? It's like it's not that it gets easier, you just kind of say, oh, here we go again. Another identity, right? It's like for me this year, right? I more than 1.5 times to my income, my revenue, and it wasn't even really a revenue focused year for me. I did a lot of processes and team building and all sorts of stuff, but I'm always ready to shred my current identity for the next one because I want to live a life at the highest level.

So when you do this, when you become aware and you bring awareness to who you are and where you are, and you take responsibility for that and then you do step two and you decide where you want to go and then you do step three where you create a path to get there and then you do step four and you take enough action to get the results, you will live an intentional life and it means that you will uplevel your life and create it exactly how you want. And this is why I believe that everyone needs a life coach. You can uplevel your life so much faster with these

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steps when you have a life coach. This is why I hire life coaches and I always will. This is why I am a life coach. This is what I help my clients do in Grow You. These women are changing their lives with this work and you totally 100% can too.

I now have so many options. I can work from wherever I want, whenever I want, and this wasn't given to me. I had no business doing this. No one handed me this career as a life coach. No one handed me my business. I earned it and I had to go through all of the fails and the discomfort to get here and it was not easy and that's why I share that story because I want you to know that if you're at the very beginning of your journey, don't quit. There is no rush. You 100% can get the results you want. You can be the person you want to be. You can live an intentional life and it's so worth it.

I absolutely love when I see my students tell me that they are deciding to live a life on purpose that is so different than mine. I have a really good friend who makes over a million dollars a year from her business and she is very frugal and she loves it. She does this from abundance. She travels the world with her husband. She does it from a place of having enough. She lives a life so different than mine and I think that that's the point. When you live intentionally, when you decide on purpose to create your life, you can do it however you want. It's such a beautiful thing.

Especially, you know, in 2020 we have so many options. What I see most people doing is they don't even bring awareness to themselves. They have no idea how they're feeling on a daily basis. They have no idea that their beliefs about the world is actually what creates their reality and not the other way around. So I don't want to inspire you to live a life like mine. I want to inspire you to decide on purpose, what kind of life you want to live, and then pursue it with grit, with commitment, and with love. It will absolutely be hard and messy, but it is so worth it every step of the way. I love you and I will talk with you next week. Bye bye.

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