

Episode: Input Vs Output



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[Design Your Dream Life With Natalie Bacon](#)

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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? I hope you are doing well and I hope you are managing your mind. I am in the middle of creating a mastermind. It's going to be a high level mastermind. I don't have the details yet, but it is going to be a place where you can have a lot more access to me and work really closely with me and it will be a higher end offer that will be more expensive, so I'm really excited to bring that to you. For those of you who have been waiting for this, I know some of you are really excited. You've heard me talk about it in Grow You and have already asked for information on it. I will get that to you as soon as I have it.

Today I want to talk with you about input and output. I talked a little bit about this in other episodes. I've talked about it in the massive action episode where I talked about passive action which is consuming versus massive action, which is taking enough action until you get the result you want. I've also talked a lot about constraint where you put rules in place in your life to basically optimize the likelihood of success in any area. So one constraint I have in my life is I only wear neutrals. This makes it really easy for me to look nice, have nice new clothes that I love and also not spend a ton of time on what I'm going to wear. You know I also don't eat meat. I limit my dairy like we all have constraints in our life, right? If you haven't listened to that episode, I highly recommend it. And I've talked about thinking time and massive thinking and all of those kind of go together in different ways and what I want to bring to you today is a different way of thinking about the topics that I've covered a little bit.

I think this is going to be really helpful, especially with what we just kind of went through and are going through with coronavirus, particularly with the media. I just love that this happened because it's such a good example that I can use to talk about with you and you'll be able to understand it so easily. And there's kind of two parts to this. So there's the input part and by input I'm talking about consuming anything that you let into your mind. It's the learning, it's the TV that you're watching. It's the podcast that you're listening to right now. It is the Instagram scrolling or the books you're reading or the youtube videos you're watching or the news that you are watching. Anything that you consume, right? It's feeding your brain ideas. You are allowing it in through your senses. Okay? That's input in general.

Output is the opposite. It's anything that you do, it's what you produce. It's creating, it's taking action and getting your results. So it could be that you're starting a business and you are producing a YouTube video every week or you are creating jewelry and selling that in an Etsy store or your giving a speech, but it doesn't just have to be about business, right? If you're a stay at home mom, you are producing a household, you are watching your kids, you are doing activities with them, you are helping them, you are feeding them right. You are maybe also doing the laundry and the cooking and the household management like it's not just business. It's anything that you produce. Okay. What you do. So it's kind of easy to see, right? Input versus output. I think that in general just having this awareness will help you, but input also includes things like telephone conversations, right? Or group text messages, right. Anything that can even be personal. It's not just from the news, it's anything that you're allowing in.

Episode: Input Vs Output

I talked about this in the massive action podcast episode and I said, you know, you can't just take passive action because that means you are just learning. It means like your just consuming, your input is just consuming and you won't have new results in your life. So I can really relate to this. When I first started getting into personal development, I'd say after college, so I was a philosophy minor, so I've always been interested in life's deepest questions, right? I'm a deep thinker, I love that sort of stuff. So I have a philosophy minor and I got into personal development after college and then definitely after law school, that was all input. It was me passively learning and consuming, but my life didn't really change from that. I had all of these new ideas, but they were just in my brain. And in the massive action podcast episode I talked about how you actually have to take action on that and create and that's a lot harder for your brain. You have to use that information. It doesn't do anything in your head like consuming doesn't create results.

So you have the input part of it and you're learning. And I think that's so important, right? I love to learn, but I have put constraints in my life. I talked about this in the constraint episode where you want to learn one and implement one so that you're not just bingeing on all of the awesomeness that is out there for passive learning. And I think we have this fear of missing out, especially the way that marketers offer different things, right? It's like if I don't get into this now, we'll never be able to get into it ever. And there are reasons why you might want to buy a couple of courses at once, but then you want to make sure you're doing everything in that course before you're going into the next one. So I do this with teachers as well. I only learned from one teacher at a time pretty much. Now there are some exceptions, right? Like I have a one-to-one coach right now and I'm also in a group membership program. So a lot of people will be in Grow You, there'll be grow you members, but they'll also take like a course on the side. Now that makes sense because Grow You is a membership platform like the gym. It's like you're still going to have your gym membership, but on top of that you might add either a personal trainer or you might add group classes. Okay. It's knowing that you're constraining intentionally in a way that maximizes you applying what you're learning to your life.

So when I first started my blog, I really went from being a consumer to being a creator and it was really life changing for me and I'm just now realizing as I'm doing this episode that it took me from input focused to output focused. And this was so transformational for me because it gave my brain something to do that was so productive and really fulfilled one of my deepest desires, which is to help other women and help them design their lives. What I see is that we're not really aware of the distinction between input and output at all.

So that's kind of like number one is I just want you to be aware that there's all the input you let into your life. The news you watch, the TV you have on the books, you read the scrolling, you're doing the people you regularly have conversations with. All of that is input, right? And then there is the output. There's what you're doing, the actions you're taking, the results you're creating. I want to talk with you about input first. In particular, I think that this is where we have been spending so much of our time, especially kind of coming off of this time that we're in right now with coronavirus, right? It's like I saw on a new scale that I had never seen before, the amount of input we are all allowing into our lives without any constraints at all.

Episode: Input Vs Output

The thing about input is that it's external information that you're offering to your brain as thoughts to believe. So if you watch the news, you are offering all of those ideas that you get from the news to your brain as things that it can believe. Now, if you've been doing this work and you've been coaching yourself and I'll talk about it a little bit later in this episode, you can kind of create space and decide on purpose if you want to believe what you've just been offered. But what I see most often is that we are not restricting what we consume and we are not even having the awareness that what we're consuming is just an idea that we get to decide deliberately if we want to believe or not.

What's even more important for you to kind of know right now is that certain media, actually a lot of media particularly, um, the news, is designed to trigger your primitive brain. And that's not necessarily a bad thing. It's just good for you to know. Now I am pro journalism, I am pro information. I just want you to know that the news companies are companies that need to be profitable and they have tried to give us positive news, but our brains don't actually want to see it. The views go down, the listeners, the watchers, you know, all of those ratings go down. So the advertising money goes down, right? So the news is giving us what we want and then you know, viewership goes up, advertising sales go up, they make more money and you are watching more.

Now this makes sense if you understand how your brain works, and I want to kind of talk about this right now. Your brain, right, in the most simplest terms has two parts that are relevant to what I'm talking about here. It's your primitive brain. I also call it your toddler brain and your prefrontal cortex, your most human brain. Your primitive brain is very animal like it is focused on survival, which means that it is constantly scanning for what's dangerous in order to keep you alive. So the amygdala, which is part of your limbic system and it is responsible for your emotions and your survival stinks and memory is kind of where this is all taking place for simplicity. And if you're anything like me, you just want to understand this in a way that applies to your life. I'm just going to call it like your primitive brain. It's the survival brain that is scanning for danger all the time in an effort to keep you alive. And this is not a problem in general, right? It's like necessary for evolution and for us to continue as a species. If there was a bear in front of you, it's really great that you have this fight or flight instinct. It's also great that you look both ways before crossing the street and that you don't drink and drive, right? You naturally want to stay alive. Your brain is constantly looking for anything that's dangerous and it's going to avoid that. Whatever it thinks is dangerous, it thinks is very important and it needs to know everything about the bear so that it can avoid it and keep you alive.

Okay. And in history, this was even more important. Now in modern times it hasn't been as important because there isn't typically a bear in front of us. Yeah. So the other part of your brain, your prefrontal cortex, that is the most human part of your brain. Right? And as humans we have the biggest prefrontal cortex. We are able to plan our futures and our next vacation and think critically about our jobs. This is why your dog is thinking about eating, sleeping, and pooping, and you are thinking about you know, your future and what you want it to look like. Okay, so your prefrontal cortex is slower thinking. It's very thoughtful. It makes the best decisions for you and it's not that primitive oh my gosh, I need to keep you alive right now. It's very rational. It's

Episode: Input Vs Output

the part of your brain that says, let's plan on eating vegetables, eliminating our sugar, and getting a lot of exercise, right?

When you go to the restaurant and you see French fries at the next table, your primitive brain is like, that looks yummy and that is pleasurable. I need to eat it now. Right, and we all know this and that's kind of why I like to call your primitive brain, your toddler brain. It's kind of harmless, but unsupervised it can get in a lot of trouble. The problem is that when your primitive brain overrides your prefrontal cortex and your prefrontal cortex goes offline. Now again, in modern society, this doesn't happen very often, especially if you are kind of part of my target audience. Yeah, and you're listening to this podcast, you are likely not in a state of emergency all the time.

What makes this time so interesting and such a good example is that there was this new virus, coronavirus, and it made it seem like not only is coronavirus in front of us, but we have access to text messages and news articles and podcasts and social media and all of the media input telling us where the coronavirus is, how many people have it, is it getting closer to us? How many people are dying? It's kind of like thinking of the bear analogy. It's not that the bear is in front of you, it's that you have access to input that tells you everything about the bear, the bear's location, how the bear has harmed others, the likelihood of the bear harming you, all of the things at your fingertips. And most people don't have the awareness that it's important to regulate that simply from a brain perspective.

So I think just personally, my thoughts are, I want to be informed. I want to be educated, I want to know what's going on, but I want to get my information at the source closest to what's happening. So I want to read the CDC's website, I want to read the governor's website, and I want to limit my input from opinions of others. Okay? So I'm onto the fact that my primitive brain is going to think that death is imminent and that this topic is so important and that I should watch it all day and night. Right? And this is kind of what we saw most people doing. So it's such a gift to know that your brain is just being a brain. It's just doing what it's designed to do. And it's your job with your prefrontal cortex to limit that, to put some constraints in place, right? It makes sense that your brain wants to see all of the news all of the time, because it thinks that danger needs to be avoided at all costs, and you need to stay alive at all costs. And that if you focus on the danger, you're going to be safer.

So for your input, what I want you to do is distinguish between the positive input you allow in and the negative input you allow in. So the positive input would be anything that you listened to, watch, or read that offers you thoughts that feel really good. So listening to this podcast, right? Reading a book about how to improve your relationships or watching videos about how to start an online business or you know, parenting or something that aligns with what you want most in your life. Something that feels good to you. When you offer all of the positive input to your brain, your brain will pick up those thoughts. Your brain will kind of look for evidence of what you just read or listened to or watched, right? You'll feel better and you'll move toward what you want in your life, your highest self with your prefrontal cortex, kind of in charge.

Basically, positive input just makes it easier, your brain to think positive thoughts. Now contrast that with negative input, which is going to be anything that you're listening to watching or

Episode: Input Vs Output

reading that offers negative thoughts that feel bad for you. So if you are watching the news all day, that's literally designed to say danger, danger, danger and then you're going on Facebook and Twitter and Instagram and talking with all the people about what they also saw, heard and watched, right? And how bad everything is, you will feel bad and your brain will be very obsessed with it and you'll kind of be stuck in this negative input place basically.

When you allow something into your mind on repeat that's negative, your primitive brain thinks that's a very important because it could be dangerous for your survival. So it wants you to pay attention to it. And I'm saying all this kind of using the positive and negative input, but really input doesn't mean you have to think positively or negatively about it. So the input itself is neutral. So for example, you could have read a news article about a bear and think that it's not true and that you are not going to believe it or feel bad about it, but the more input you have about that bear, the harder it is for you to manage your mind around it. If you're constantly reading about the danger of the bear, eventually you're going to believe it.

So this is why I created the one-to-one rule and I talk about this in the constraint episode and I really do this for anything that I think it will serve me in. So for my teachers, right? I just learned from one teacher at a time, I implement from that teacher and then I move on. All right, I did this when I was a blogger. I do this as a life coach. I'm constantly learn one, implement one. I think it's super important for you to consider using this rule in your life for positive input versus negative input and doing the one to one rule. For every 30 minutes of negative input, you listen to 30 minutes of positive input, right? It's for every one hour of the news that you are watching, you listen to an hour of a podcast or an audio book. This way you are making it easy for your brain to take a step back from that fight or flight mode. This includes the text conversations, the group chats, the scrolling on Instagram, anything that's input that leaves you kind of feeling bad and in scarcity and in fight or flight, I want you to match it with the one hour of positive input that offers you completely different thoughts.

Now notice what this rule is, right? It's a way for you to change your input to give your brain the best shot at living from its highest self. So again, you don't even have to believe that the input from the news is stuff you want to believe, but it's just going to be a lot harder, right? If you have that on for 12 hours a day, it's going to be really hard to think those thoughts versus if you limit it and say, okay, every day I'm going to have one hour of the news and one hour of this motivational podcast.

An even greater step that you can take beyond the one-to-one rule is to get really clear about separating the facts from your thoughts. So everything that you read, listen to or watch is a circumstance and you get to decide what you want to think about that circumstance. So if you read an article from a doctor who says that coronavirus is 10 times more deadly than the flu, the circumstance is that this doctor said the coronavirus is 10 times more deadly than the flu. You can decide if you want to believe that or not right. Or the news reporter said, this is a dangerous pandemic. You can put that in, you know your facts column. I recommend writing all this down and the fact is not that it's a dangerous pandemic. The fact is that the reporters said it's a

Episode: Input Vs Output

dangerous pandemic. Take a step back and say, hey, do I think that's true? And a lot of times I'll say, is it useful for me to think that way?

Now I'm of the belief that inciting more fear isn't useful. So I don't want to call it that. Yeah, I want to be informed, but I don't want to add to the fear. This takes a lot more thoughtfulness on your part. So if you're using the one-to-one rule, it will be a little bit easier as long as you're not in that fight or flight mode, you can really separate out the facts from the thoughts. And this is why thinking time is so important. If you haven't listened to that episode, listen to it because it creates space in your life for you to decide what you think about the input that you just took in.

So it's like not only do you want to have a balance of negative input and positive input, but then aside from that, you want to create space for you to decide, hey, what do I think? Do I agree with that or not? Right? That information that I just got, do I want to agree with that or not? What do I think? And part of it can be true and part of it can not be true for you. You get to decide no matter what.

This was really transformational for me when I was getting out of debt. I used to think that I had to believe that my debt meant something bad about me and that my debt was a huge problem. And through this work I learned, oh no, I can decide I want to get out of debt and pay off my debt and I can decide that I still love me and that my debt means nothing about me and that my debt is just something that is giving me an opportunity to grow my business and to have a business. Right? I loved my debt and I got out of it. So that took a lot of thoughtfulness on my part. It would have been a lot easier for me to just adopt whatever I was reading. So create that space to decide on purpose what you want to think about the input.

Okay. Now I want to switch over to talking about the output, right? So we have the positive input, the negative input and we want to balance that out and we also want to decide on purpose what we want to be thinking about the input and then we want to make sure that we are outputting, that we are producing, that we are creating. I used to be such a consumer and such a shopper really and now I am such a creator and I'm so thankful for that because it feels so much better and more on purpose than I ever imagined was even possible for my life.

One thing that I want to offer to you as a new idea is that there is positive output and negative output. So you're constantly creating results in your life. I love the example of thinking in the last year. Let's just say that you didn't gain any weight. You stayed the exact same way as you were a year ago. That's a result that you created. So we're constantly creating results. A lot of times when I talk about creating results, people assume that it has to be positive, but you're creating results all the time. They may be negative, they may be neutral, they may be positive depending on how you want to look at them. But it matters for how you want to lead your life. It matters based on your deepest desires.

So if you gained 25 pounds without knowing more, I don't know whether that is a positive results for you or a negative result. If you need to gain weight and you want to gain weight, then that's a really amazing positive result for you. If you want to lose weight, that's a negative result for you. So when you are thinking about positive output versus negative output, I want you to think about

Episode: Input Vs Output

it as anything that you do, create or produce that leads to the result you either want in your life or don't want. k?

So I was listening to Andy Stanley a long time ago and he was talking about going in the direction of your intentions. And I actually did some content on this as well. And one of the examples he gave, which I just loved, was that if you are taking action right now and let's say you're having a lot of one night stands and you're kind of rationalizing it as well, you know, I'll just be with one person when I meet the right person, you are actually taking action and producing and moving in the opposite direction that you want to go in. So this would be negative output, assuming that your actual value and desire in your life is to be with one person and get married, right? Having one night stands would be going in the opposite direction of that.

So I want you to think about the output that you are currently doing in your life, right? Is it positive, is it negative? And just bring some intentionality around it. Now, this doesn't mean that you won't fail. So when I talk about positive output, I'm talking about anything that moves you forward, even if it's a fail. So let's say that you have an online business. If you produce a webinar and only five people show up and your goal was to have 50 people show up, that's still positive output even though you missed your own mark. It's you taking action and producing in an effort to move forward in the direction that you intend to go.

Contrast that with saying, oh no one wants to hear anything from me and I'm just not going to do it. And I'll just put that off till sometime in the future. And instead of working on your business or your webinar, you end up kind of using your time after your day job to watch Netflix or to kind of just hang out and waste that time. Now someone else could just hang out and that wouldn't be a waste of time. Maybe they want to create more space where they're doing nothing. So it just depends on what the result is for you. What's your deepest desire? And then look at your life and ask yourself, what kind of output am I creating? And this isn't just for business or career or health, you know, if you're a stay at home mom, are you kind of looking at the hours and hoping that they pass quickly or are you thinking of what you can produce that day? When you focus on what you can produce, it's so much more energizing. So are you coming up with activities for the kids or maybe even it's cleaning the whole house. That's something that you want to focus on producing. Instead of focusing on, hey, I want to do this activity for two hours and then you're kind of focusing on the time.

So think about your life and the output and the time that you are spending creating and make sure that's also following the one-to-one rules. So for every one hour of input, it's one hour of output. Now it might actually not be hours, right? You might take a whole course and then implement the whole course and the whole course might take one month to go through and then you spend one month implementing or something like that. You may even take a course that's one month to take and then a whole year to implement, right? The point is that you balance your input, you balance the positive and negative, and you balance the input with the output.

What I see is so many of us don't have the awareness that we're spending all of our time in negative input and I want you to look for ways that you're doing this in your own life. So it's really easy to think about the other people in our lives who are doing this or that we see, but I

Episode: Input Vs Output

want you to really personalize this, and I'm doing this for myself as well. So something that I could probably do less of would be scrolling on Instagram and the way that I want you to kind of use your prefrontal power here, your prefrontal cortex, is to plan ahead of time. That is the magic of prefrontal cortex saying, for lack of a better word, you can plan ahead of time what you're going to eat, how much alcohol you're going to have, where you're going to go on vacation, how much money you want to make, and when you plan this, you give your brain something to focus on, something to produce, and when you put it on your calendar, even better. You're like, tomorrow I'm going to produce a clean house. Tomorrow I'm going to produce three loads of laundry. Tomorrow I am going to cook two meals and I'm going to intermittent fast. Right? And you're planning and that's from your prefrontal cortex.

Now the problem I see most is that people are all on board with this and they think it's super fun and then they go to do it and then they don't do it. Yeah? Can you relate to this? I want you to notice that it's a lot harder to take action than it is to consume. Your brain loves to consume. It feels safer to consume information than to produce, especially if it means producing something that you've never done before. So be onto your brain and expect resistance.

So if you decide that you are going to go on a meal plan, let's say, and only eat two meals per day and have one glass of wine, let's say you plan it all from your prefrontal cortex, you plan your output for your health when you're going to exercise all of it and then you go to do it and you're not doing it. What you should do there is meet yourself where you are and change up your plan. You're like, okay, that resistance was too much for my brain to handle at once. Like that's the end goal that I only eat two meals per day, that I'm intermittent fasting, that I'm having one glass of wine. That's the goal. But right now I am eating all day and night. I'm having two glasses of wine per day and I'm eating a lot of sugar so it's just too big of a jump. So let's change the plan and let's just meet myself where I am and say, okay, I'm going to start by just eating everything I'm still eating, but I'm not going to start eating till 11:00 AM or 10:00 AM right. And you incrementally plan to adjust so that you move in the direction that you want to go. You can do this for any area of your life. You can plan your output, your positive output just by meeting yourself where you are and moving a little bit forward.

So I hope this information was really, really useful for you. I find that one of the ways I'm able to be successful with what I want and to create what I want is I have an awareness of what's going on in my brain. So I try to make it really easy for my brain to succeed. I can't tell you the last time I've turned on my TV, literally, I cannot even tell you. I don't know that I've turned it on in this house except to stream my music through it. You know, once in awhile I will watch now that I'm thinking about it, some kind of funny episodes at night, but just kind of relax, but it's never consistent. It's not often. So I just have that as a constraint in my life and it makes it easy for me to move forward and grow in the direction that I want to grow.

So I think a lot of people think they need help with time management when really they need more awareness of what's going on in their brain and how they can put constraints in their life to make it easy for your brain to win. So I highly suggest implementing the one-to-one rule wherever you can, especially for balancing positive input and negative input and also balancing

Episode: Input Vs Output

input in general with output in general so that you are setting yourself up for success in the best way that you possibly can. All right, I will talk with you next week.

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