

Episode: My Year Without Drinking



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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.

Hey friend, how you doing? Welcome to the podcast. I have to say I had a rough weekend. You guys, I'm telling you life coaching when you have had a rough weekend is like having a magic pill that helps you feel better in a really authentic way where you're not covering up your negative emotion, but you're actually like leaning into it and being open to all of it. So helpful.

So my business is growing. I have had the highest revenue month ever. I am looking at this month. And if I just look at this month alone, this is a seven figure month, which is really, really amazing. And at the same time, there is an equal amount of problems and kind of downs that I just didn't see coming. And I share this with you because I know a lot of you listen, who have your own side hustle or want to start your own side business, or even if you're a full time employee and you just want to create a lot of money.

And you often think that the money is the answer to whatever it is that you're struggling with to your problems and money does solve money problems. But, you know, as the saying goes Mo money Mo problems, that's really, really how it is. They're just a different set of problems.

So I am going through so much growth in my business, and it's so interesting because to me it's happening so fast, but I look back and it's been years, right years in the making where I've been doing this. And I just want to offer to you that the more you enjoy the process and the more that you're all in, the more likely it is that you will get the success that you're looking for because the problems don't end.

So I have a new set of problems now, and a new set of growth, and it just requires new skillsets. So I just signed up for a new coaching program. I was thinking back to when I shared, when I hired my one to one coach last year, I told you guys, I invested 10,000 and that one, I just invested about half of that for a three month group membership coaching program with an amazing leadership coach. And the program is all about how to be a CEO.

And it's specifically for female entrepreneurs. So of course that is a perfect fit. And I am just excited to grow in this way. It's something that you really just don't think about when you're starting your business. And so you get really good at the skills of email marketing and creating programs, right? I'm so proud of Grow You. We have the Creator Program coming out. Like I love creating programs and I really have dialed that skill.

So next up for me is getting the skill of CEO and manager really down so that I run my business in the way that's best for the business and for my life. And for my team, you guys know I have

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the best team, right? We're growing so great. We are actually hiring right now. So if you're listening to this in the future, you know, kind of ignore this, but if you're listening to this at the present moment, we are hiring a customer service manager and a social media manager.

So if you want to email the team@nataliebacon.com, you can get information on how to apply. We'll send you that job description and application cause we're growing. And that's so fun and exciting, which leads me into today's topic, which is all about my last year without drinking. I've wanted to do this podcast because it's a year ago that I stopped drinking.

Now, if you listen to the podcast from last December, I think it was December, 2019. I did a podcast called I Quit Drinking. If you haven't listened to that, go ahead and give it a listen. It was about nine months ago that I released that because I had shared with you what it was like after three months of not drinking. So here we are, nine months later, that's 12 months of not drinking and I'm doing it now sort of to reflect and look back.

But as you guys know, I don't identify as sober or, you know, an alcoholic or anything like that. I don't think this is good for anyone who does identify as an alcoholic or an addict. This is more for the person who liked me, just was socially drinking and is curious about maybe not drinking or what that's like. And I want to talk with you about it.

So what it's been a really hard about it is things that I didn't expect. So a couple months ago, Steve and I went up to Door County, Wisconsin, and there were a lot of like wineries and even little breweries and opportunities where drinking would have provided a lot more activities to do. So that was something I didn't really think about. And I sort of have this thought like, Oh, I'm missing out on that.

Especially if you know, it's in town and my friends are going, like, I just don't have a desire to go on a wine tour or to a winery or to a brewery anymore. Right. Otherwise if I'm going to a restaurant or any other establishment, like commercial business, there's always other things for me to eat and drink, but wineries and breweries in particular, I'm pretty much out on.

Another thing that's been kind of hard about this has been my relationships that were primarily based on the circumstance of going out and drinking. They don't really exist anymore and they sort of faded out. And so those chapters have kind of completed. So sometimes we have friends for 20 years and sometimes we have friends for a season or somewhere in between, and sometimes it's circumstantial.

So I really found that, you know, over the last year, some of the relationships that I had that were just based on kind of going out to happy hour and nothing else have really naturally just completed because I don't really do those things anymore. I don't really have a lot of nights out. I

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know right now we are still sort of in the middle of COVID, but our establishments, at least in Chicago are pretty much open even at a limited capacity, the bars and kind of clubs aren't, but I wouldn't be going to those anyway, that sort of chapter is complete and I love to dance.

And so I sorta miss that part of it, right. Because I don't go to the clubs or even if they were open, I wouldn't really be going. And I miss that. And I think that's okay to miss that if my hip hop class was back open, I would be going to that. And I think I would get that from hip hop class, which I do plan to do in the future post COVID.

The hardest part about not drinking over the last year is what you're left with when you quit drinking, which is yourself. So this past weekend is a perfect example. It was kind of rough and it was rough because these things happened unexpectedly. And I had these thoughts, like I didn't expect this. This is really hard. And there were things that I wanted to be kind of bummed about, and I could just see the transition and the growing pains and how much my business is growing.

And I had some wedding things come up that were unexpected. And so that was also turned out to be a little bit of a bummer with the venue and with the rooms and all of that. And so normally like a year ago, prior the 10 years proceeding that 15 years really I would have had wine maybe, or a drink to kind of quote unquote, take the edge off and feel better.

So put in life coach speak, I would have escaped my negative emotion sought that external pleasure and felt better in the moment. Now I would have felt worse the next day. For sure. Even if you just have one or two drinks, you're not going to feel as good as if you don't have any, but that's a perfect example of how it's a little bit harder because you don't have that escape that you go to.

Now, certainly there are other escapes that you can go to. Some of them have a net negative, some don't you can escape by working out and listening to music and things that are more positive or produce some natural pleasure. Or you can escape with things that have a net negative, like eating a bunch of sugar or Netflixing and tuning out.

And what I prefer, especially when it's something where I'm feeling a lot of negative emotion about is to just be with it, right. And to write about it and to process the negative emotion. And that requires discipline and consciousness and releasing that judgment of yourself. So to kind of know, like this is happening, how it's supposed to happen and it's hard and that's okay. And to do that without those escapes, particularly without any wine is a skill. So you guys know that I talked about How to Become a Conscious Drinker in that episode from last year.

And I talked about the three steps. So you want to plan your drinks ahead of time. You want to follow through with that plan. And then you want to allow those urges. And the benefit of this is

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that you don't drink to escape anymore. You drink from your prefrontal cortex, you drink intentionally. So if you are drinking, that's how I recommend it so that you're not doing it to escape your emotions.

So what we do a lot in Grow You is we are building that mental and emotional muscle and getting stronger and not escaping feeling the 50% of life that is really hard. And that is supposed to be hard, right? It's not supposed to be easy and we're here for it. We're, we're strong. We can do hard things, right. That's what I like to say. And that's really what I believe. What's been a really unexpected through all of this is how easy it's been to actually not drink.

I don't know if you guys remember, but I talked about the reason I stopped was really just because all of my future self letters and my future self work had shown me that I was a nondrinker. And so I wanted to experiment with what that was like. And I really stepped into that role. I always sort of visualized not having a lot of alcohol in my home and as a wife and mom, not really being a big drinker and for me, it just meant not drinking at all. I know there's a lot of room in between, but I always just saw my future self as a non drinker.

So I think because of that, I, I was really comfortable stepping into that identity. And that's why it was so easy for me. So this really applies to anything. If you're trying to make a big change in your life, some of the best work you can do, isn't in the actions you take, it's in the mental work.

It's imagining being the person who has that result. So you're really like increasing your capacity to have this new identity. I compared it before to trying on a new outfit and it feels really weird at first, this happens a lot with money. We want a lot of money and then we go about creating a lot of money and then we don't know how to have it. The same is true with dating.

We struggle with men and dating, and then we create this great relationship and then we don't know how to have it. So any time we want to go from where we are now to a new identity, it just requires a complete identity shift that you can get better at and do that intentionally by really imagining what that's like on purpose. And I did that with drinking so much that it's really been pretty easy for me to actually not drink.

Another thing that's been sort of unexpected is some people's reactions. They're kind of funny. Even recently, my doctor, I went in just for a checkup and I told him that I don't drink. It was a new doctor. And he said, Oh, well, okay. To each his own. And he was sort of joking about it, but sometimes people's reactions are a little bit surprising and that, you know, of course, is my brain just sort of looking for that.

Cause I still have the thought that most people drink, even though statistically, that's not true. Only about 50% of adults do drink, which is fascinating. If you think about it. A lot of us, I know

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I, for sure used to think the thought everyone drinks, right. And that thought just does not serve you at all. If you're trying to remove or change your drinking habits. I have to say that what's been really great about the last year is having my mornings be amazing every single morning.

Like there's no moving things around with my schedule. There's no hangovers. There's no kind of feeling bad. There's just the amazingness and the grace and the preciousness of the mornings. I just love a good early morning. I love having my coffee and reading my book. I find so much pleasure in waking up before everyone and enjoying the morning. I really, really do so. Having mornings back 100% of the time is amazing.

Not having hangovers is amazing and really just feeling so in integrity in my life for me, I just didn't feel like I was in integrity when I was drinking. And integrity is something that you get to decide what's in or out of integrity for you. It's not for me to decide for you. So lots of people drink and are in total integrity with themselves. I found it hard for me to not feel shame about drinking, right?

And shame is always a choice where you can shame yourself all you want. I don't know. I don't recommend that it's not useful, but you just want to be in integrity and really own your drinking. I have a good friend from high school and she is a big drinker and she loves it and she has no shame about it. And she's in total integrity with her life and with herself. And if you're drinking, that's where you want to be at that's.

You want to own your decisions and your thoughts and your choices. And if drinking is a part of that, then that's great. But you just want to have that consciousness about it. A lot of people want to know about the day to day life. So I wanted to include that in here as well for you just to kind of give you some insights into what it's been like practically for me.

So when I go to a bar or a restaurant, or really anywhere where I would normally have ordered, Um, alcohol. I order a sparkling water with a lime, but I ask for it either if I'm at a restaurant in a wine glass or in a cocktail glass, if I'm at a bar, because half the time, if you do not ask for that, they will give it to you in like one of those plastic or glass, like tall water cups.

And it looks like I am a child with my seven up or something. So I just say, can I have sparkling water with the a lime in a wine glass now in downtown Chicago? I have never been questioned about that. It's it seems like a very common thing. Sometimes when we go out of town and I ask for that in a little bit more of a rural area, they kind of look at me like, what did I hear you? Right. And I just say, yes, I don't drink.

Can I just have that in a wine glass so I can cheers or something like that. So I just remembered, always say that. And if I forget, then it comes in that tall glass that you know, is not the cocktail

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glass. And I just like it. I just like having something to hold. I have a story about feeling more connected that way with everyone else who's drinking. And I just love sipping on my sparkling and my little lime.

And that's how I drink when I am at a restaurant or a bar. I also always have non-alcoholic champagne and wine in my home. We have alcohol in our home as well. Steve still drinks and we host people. And so we provide alcohol that way. Um, there is a lot of really good non-alcoholic champagne. That is not just the grape juice kind that I first had when I first started this.

They have really great options. Now there's sort of this sober, curious movement that I also haven't really got into, but it's a really good time because there's a lot more options for mocktails and for nonalcoholic wine and champagne, that tastes pretty good. And it's just another option. So right at my wedding, they'll have that for me, you know, not a problem. And then they'll have regular champagne for everyone else.

I do like to try and order a lot more mocktails at restaurants, just for fun. And just to try something different. I like to experiment with a lot of different types of drinks and different ways of ordering. And it's kind of an evolution of seeing what I like best, but you know, my Go to is that sparkling water with lime in a wineglass. And if I ever have the desire or the urge to have a drink at night, which I don't really have right now, it would be more of a thing of like, Oh, you know, yeah.

I don't really want to go to that winery cause I don't drink or Oh yeah. It's, you know, so-and-so's wedding. Like I'm not drinking. Obviously I don't drink. So that's the only time where it ever crosses my mind. And I always tell myself, I can redecide. And I typically decide that I'm going to read aside the next morning, because in the moment my mind is like, well, everyone else is drinking, right? That's a story.

Everyone else is not drinking. Some people are drinking. Some people are not drinking, but my brain is like, well, everyone's doing it. So you should be part of the pack and do it too. And I always just tell myself, well, I can wake up tomorrow and I can redecide and I've never woke up and wanted to start drinking again. Now I don't mean to start drinking in the morning, but I mean to redecide that, yeah, I'm going to drink because we've been so conditioned to drink at night that that's when the desire is.

So I know that's my primitive brain seeking the pleasure. And so I want to make sure I make the decision from my prefrontal. So I make the decision in the morning. And so far, I've never decided I want to drink again, but I'm open to it. And I just have to tell you, it is so freeing and I

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feel so empowered knowing that I'm the decision maker. I don't think alcohol has power over me. I don't avoid it. It's in my home.

And it's always an option. Right. And by option, I don't mean the actual alcohol is an option. I mean, the decision to drink again is an option, but I just like to make my decisions really intentionally. So I'm just not going to do that kind of Willy nilly every day. I'm going to thoughtfully decide, okay, do I want to drink or not?

And if I ever did start drinking again, I would do it in the way I described it before, by really being a conscious drinker, planning my drinks ahead of time sticking to that plan. And then, you know, if I have the urge to drink more, I would allow those urges because then I'm doing it not to escape my life. I'm really doing it in integrity. And so far, like I said, haven't decided that I want to bring it back in my life, but I'm totally open to that.

Right, right now, no, but it just feels really empowering to know that I can always decide. I feel the same way about food, kind of a side note. One of my friends is doing this all meat, lifestyle, diet. I don't know what it's called. And I found myself really leaning in and curious to what it was about because I have been doing so much reading and living in the opposite way.

Right. I eat a lot of vegetables and I eat seafood, but I don't eat land meat. And so for a really good friend of mine, I respect her so much to do the exact opposite. I'm so curious about that. And I never want to think that I know what's better or that I am better. I'm curious. I'm like, maybe I'm totally wrong. And that allows me to continue to grow instead of thinking that I'm always right, because who knows, maybe I'm doing all of this wrong.

Maybe alcohol is the way to go. So if you're open to that and you're really dedicated to growth and to learning and to trying new things, then it's okay to have been wrong in the past. And it's okay to redecide in the future. Like maybe I'll eat meat again. One day. Maybe I'll drink alcohol again. One day. I don't know. We'll see.

Right now so far, I'm still out on the land meat and I'm still out on the alcohol, but having this mindset of wanting to learn more and to grow and to make decisions intentionally and really consciously allows me to live as my highest self, make the best decisions that I know how to right now, and to really lean into my future and stay in integrity.

So if you are thinking about taking a break from drinking, I want to encourage you to try it. Not because I think that not drinking is right and drinking is wrong. That's not it at all. But I think that anytime you experiment with something like alcohol or food, or, you know, a new job, whatever it is so much comes up for you.

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So if you eliminate one of your main escapes, which is alcohol, I want you to see what comes up for you and what comes up for you is going to be your life, right. It's probably going to be harder. And at first, especially, and you're going to have the opportunity to coach yourself, come to Grow You and get coaching and to really look at your mind and see what's going on in there and do it for a quarter, at least do it for three months.

I don't think 30 days is enough because the people who I've talked to, who've done 30 days. They're like counting down, right? So if you do it for a quarter and it's three months, at least you can redecide at three months, but this way you're going all in enough. And for a long enough period where you can really evaluate what's coming up for you and a longer timeframe than just 30 days. And like I said, you can always go back. No decision is ever final. So if after 90 days you're like, yeah, this is, this is enough. This is not for me.

You will have grown and you will have pushed yourself. You will have gone to that mental gym in a way that you've never have before. And that's so fun. I think it's just an opportunity for you to experience life in a different way and to challenge yourself and to show yourself that you are stronger than you think. That's what I have for you today. I will talk with you next week. Have an amazing week.

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