

Episode: Thinking Time



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

Full Episode Transcript

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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 there! How are you doing? I hope you're having an amazing, amazing day. I am so grateful for our time together. I was just preparing for this episode yesterday and I was just thinking about how much I look forward to this time together and it's so funny to think back to last year, this time when I knew I was going to start a podcast, but I was really nervous about it and I knew that it would be a whole new thing for my brain to undertake and I'm just so glad that I did it and I really appreciate this time that we have together and I just really look forward to it.

It's super fun to see that growth, so it's kind of a fun exercise actually. See what you were thinking about last year at this time and if you've grown, it's just really fun. It shows you kind of what you're thinking about, which we are going to talk about today, but before I get into it, I really also just want to give a shout out to being a lawyer and thinking back to when I was a lawyer I, there were a lot of ups and downs in that career, but I'm so appreciative of that time and I'm getting more appreciative of it as I grow in my business.

I really learned a lot about leadership as an attorney and I really learned about how to be an employee and how to overdeliver. I am so grateful that I understand how to work. I've always worked, I got a job when I was 15 I was a hostess at Donatos pizza. It was super fun. I always wanted to work. I really loved it. And I think that when you want to work, because you like working, you bring about a different type of energy and it's like a giving energy from abundance versus like the scarcity mentality where you just like want to get money and you want to get paid and you want to leave and you want to take vacations and you're just like very concerned about all of the benefits to you versus like what you're giving. And I didn't really understand it in terms of like articulating it in that way as an attorney, I wouldn't have been able to say that, but that's really what I did.

I remember getting a new job at a law firm and all of my girlfriends were going on a Vegas trip and law firm life. You might take a vacation the first year at the end of the year, maybe one, maybe after a year of working like you don't just like start a job and take vacation. Right. It's just like not how the world works. Looking back on that. I remember like I didn't even think about it like going and I remember kind of being bummed, but I was super excited about my new job and I just now notice that my work ethic a lot stems not only from how I was raised and just having this growth mindset, but also like my experience as an attorney. And people love to talk about me having like a plan B or a fallback as an attorney, which I think is really funny.

But I don't think that, but I always think that everything is kind of happening for me and my career, my job, my time as an attorney served me in so many ways. And one of those ways was definitely knowing how to get to work. So just think about that.

You know, in your own life, like are you showing up and over-delivering in your job or in your work? And that can be anything. If you're a blogger, if you're a virtual assistant, if you're an employee, it does not matter. Are you showing up and over-delivering and are you being proud of what your giving and your contribution as someone who's working like I always feel really

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proud of the work that I do and I think that that builds confidence, right? So do that for yourself. All right.

Today we are going to talk about something totally different that just happened to be on my mind. We are going to talk about thinking time. This is so important and I was nervous to name it thinking time because that's what it is, but I'm hoping that all of you listen to it and share this episode and the headline, the title is compelling enough for people to listen because it doesn't really sound like anything that's going to be life changing but it really, really is.

So I've already talked about how to coach yourself and that is the practice of looking inside your mind and you know moving from where you are now to where you want to go. And I've talked about question leadership so you should listen to both of those episodes. Question leadership is about how to answer your own questions. And you can use both of those tools in thinking time, which is what I want you to start doing effective immediately.

And if you're not really convinced, I really suggest that you try this for 30 days at a minimum, even though you're going to be met with resistance because your brain doesn't like to do anything new. It's super fun when you get to the other side of it because you can see the results. So I really encourage you to commit to doing this for 30 days. And I love the analogy of taking a shower.

So we take a shower every single day, right? Took a shower this morning. I got already cleaned my body. You know, I feel good. I'm ready to go. Thinking time is the equivalent of what you do in a shower for your body, but for your mind. So I want you to spend time thinking every single day where you clean out your mind and this will enable you to manage your mind. It's like taking a shower for your brain.

We use showers daily, we work out daily. We take care of our bodies daily. I want you to do this as a daily practice for your mind and what you're going to do is you're going to look inside your mind. You're going to look at what you're thinking, and then you're not only going to be able to coach yourself, but you're going to be able to see like what you're doing on default and decide if that's kind of what you want to keep thinking. This is something that you need to do with no distractions, no computer time, no podcast time, no music. You can take notes. I actually do recommend that you write down what you're thinking. I think that's the most powerful way to do it, but if you find that you really enjoy going on a walk and just thinking in silence or a run, you can also do that as well.

Just to make sure your thinking time isn't when you're on the treadmill at the gym and you're blasting music in your ear, it's just like a lot harder to think during that time. So give yourself at least 10 minutes in the morning of just sitting down with a pen and paper and thinking. We have over 60,000 thoughts in our head per day. This is something that if you are not aware of or you're not taking the opportunity to kind of optimize, you will be at the effect of everything that you've been conditioned to think up to this point.

So what I mean by that is the first seven years of your life you formed the strongest neuro pathways, the way that you experience the world, the way your parents raised you, all of that

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happens, right? But they're not fixed. You can change your neuropathways as an adult, which is super fun and amazing.

And this wasn't something we always thought was possible, but it is. But it just takes a little bit more work versus, you know, when you're teaching something to a three or four year old and it's just, they're interpreting it like instantly, they're not judging it or thinking about it, right? You know this, if you've talked to a four year old before, it's pretty fun.

So if you do nothing and you're an adult and you just keep living and you're kind of in busy mode and you're in default mode, you're going to repeat what you've always thought because your brain loves to be efficient. It loves to constantly repeat old thoughts because it's trying to keep you alive. And this makes sense when you think about having a survival brain, your brain just wants to keep you alive and it knows that you've stayed alive thinking the thoughts you've always thought.

So if you want to create a new and different future, if you just want to feel better, if you want to achieve goals, if you want different results, if you just want to be a mindful person, you have to give yourself time to think. And most people will not do this. And it's not only because they're not aware of this thing that they can use this new tool, but it's also because we've not only been taught to think certain ways, but we've also been taught that everyone else has the answers and that we should study and we should learn their answers.

So we do this in school, right? It's like studying for the test and the exam we memorize and we regurgitate and there is a place for that, right? I really want my surgeon to have memorize everything he needs to know. But I also want my surgeon to have spent time thinking for himself, right?

Because that's that leadership. That's that next level thought work. And when you do this for yourself, you will be able to problem solve, you'll be able to coach yourself. You'll be able to kind of reprogram your brain just like a computer. You know? I love that analogy. It's like getting the computer, getting the programming and the programming is just on default and you get to optimize it. You get to reprogram it.

But you can't just do that by consuming. And I do think there's a place for consuming, I talk about this in the episode on constraint where I learn from one teacher and then I implement from one teacher and I always rotate in that way. That way I'm not just consuming and passive action. So for this, what I am encouraging you to do is you might learn from someone, let's say like after this episode or if you take one of my courses, people do this a lot in my Personal Development For Her course actually.

They will take it and then they'll spend time thinking about it and that's what I want you to do. I want you to learn and then I want you to come up with your own thoughts, right? It's like super inspiring to learn from all of these books and podcasts and courses. But what do you think? And the way that I want you to do this is I want you to set aside time in the morning, even if it's just 10 minutes. If you can work up to an hour even better.

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But I think just starting with 10 minutes in the morning where you write down what you're currently thinking. And this first step is all about just awareness. So you're just going to do in coaching what I call is a thought download, but it's just a brain dump. You're just going to write down anything you want about anything.

And when I say that, you know, people think, well, I should write down really important things. No, write down what happened yesterday and what you think about what happened yesterday. Or if there is a specific issue you're going through, like that's an easy one. Or you could write down what you think about the day or how you're feeling. Anything you want.

Just write down and free write and don't judge the thoughts. Just write down almost for like five, 10 minutes. And then step two is to read what you wrote and look at your thoughts with curiosity, right? Ask yourself, why am I choosing to think this or do I like this thought? What I don't want you to do what new students in Grow You have been talking to me about is that they're really beating themselves up and they're being really hard on themselves. And that's just not useful.

It doesn't help you solve the problem. It just makes it worse. It adds like a layer of self pity. You like feel sorry for yourself. So what I want you to do instead is I want you to look at your thoughts and just be curious about them. Just notice them. Just notice whether this is what you want to be thinking. And if you're going to give a thought, meaning, make sure it's meaning that supports you, right?

So I love to think that not everything happens for a reason, but everything happens how it was supposed to happen. That is something that I think like serves me really well. So if I go through something that's kind of hard and I really like don't to give it meaning and I think it shouldn't have happened or something, I'd say, Oh no, of course that was supposed to happen.

Even though it was hard. And even though it was part of the negative experience of my life, it was always supposed to happen that way. That's just a good thought for me to have. I feel good about that. But if that doesn't work for you, don't use it. Just be very careful that you give meaning to your thoughts that supports your best self, that supports the meaning you want to give it. So don't be hard on yourself.

And then the third step is to decide what you want to think instead. So you have these 60,000 thoughts per day. I want you to write down what you're thinking. I want you to look and see what's going on in your mind and decide if that's what you want to be thinking. You're probably not going to like what you find, at least a lot of it.

And what I want you to do is decide what you want to think instead and come up with a thought that is believable and then practice that new thought until it becomes unconscious. Now you cannot go from, I hate my body to I have the most beautiful body. So if you're writing down something about health and weight and fitness, a lot of the coaches who I work with do weight loss.

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They're amazing coaches on weight loss and they will talk about how they'll have a client who will be beating themselves up about not being able to lose weight. And you can't jump from, I hate my body to I love my body. And it's so beautiful because what happens is if you try to repeat that over and over as an affirmation, you're not going to believe it because you really think you hate your body and it's ugly or whatever the case may be.

So what I want you to do is just shift. Just come up with a new thought to think instead that's softer, that's a more neutral thought. So you might think, I have a body, right? That probably feels a lot better than I hate my body. And so you can practice the new thought. Now it's not just enough to come up with one new believable thought. You have to tell your brain what to think on purpose.

You have to tell your brain to think that new thought over and over and over. It takes a lot more work to create new neuropathways as an adult than it does when you're a kid and this is why this work is, is tough, but it's so worth it because when you do this, even when you do this a little bit, it's really fun because if you do do it, you'll see new results and then you'll see that it works and then you'll keep doing it and it's super fun.

I've done it in my business a lot. I do it in my personal life now. It's really, really life changing. But you do have to put in the work because your brain wants to go back to that neuropathway from when you were a kid where you said, you know you're ugly or whatever the case may be. Wherever you came up with that thought, it's programmed in your mind.

You have to reprogram it and you can't just come up with, Oh, I have a body and expect to feel better all the time. This is the part where I think people think the work is done I even see this with people who've been doing this work for a while. It's like they have this new thought, they believe it and then they think the work is done. Like all of a sudden they should have the results like, no, you have to practice this and give yourself time to think.

I have a client who I adore. She's in Grow You by the way, Grow You is up and running. It's super fun. If you are not in there yet, get on the waitlist. It's NatalieBacon.com/apply. We are accepting members on a rolling basis a little bit at a time just to make sure that there's not too many people in there at once. It's super, super fun. I was coaching this client, she's amazing and she wrote me this email first before I coached her live and she said an email. She's never finishing anything on time. She's always running out of time. She's always taking too long. She doesn't, you know, believe she's going to do it in the right way and she's feeling really stressed. And it was crazy because after I had read her email, like I felt stressed, like all of her thoughts of course led to feeling stressed.

And when I was coaching her live on the call, I had to show her that all of those thoughts were totally optional. So the circumstances, she had been doing something in her business and she was giving herself an allotted of time per week and she was going over that time every single week. And she was beating herself up about it as she would go over the time. And that is so unnecessary.

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And what I coached her to do was just to look at what was happening, right. It's like we're in such a rush to get a different result. Like she wanted me to fix it, right? We all want the coach to fix it. But instead what good coaches know, it's like, let's look at what's going on in your mind and how we can solve this problem from the root cause. Because when you solve it from the action line and you just say to take a different action, you're still going to have the same programming and you're still going to think there's not enough time when you're doing it this new way.

So you have to look at your thoughts and try on the thought. There's always enough time. And that was just like mind blowing for her. She's like, what? There's always enough time. You have to practice that thought. And when you come from a place of abundance, you solve the problem. You say, Oh, I always have enough time now I'm going to give myself, you know, one hour and I'm going to shorten the work I'm doing and whatever the case may be.

But you have this new thought and that creates a better feeling for you. And then you create the actions. It's not enough to just think a new thought. It's to actually believe it and feel it. And then you will take action from that place and you will get different results. It's been super fun to watch her do this and I highly recommend that you do this for yourself.

So how I do this and how I spend time thinking, it's really hard for me to do because I have to make sure I am really constrained with this because I love to consume. I love to learn. I love coming up with new ideas for you. I'm so passionate about it, but I have to give myself time to think.

I start off my day, I give myself five minutes of silence, meditation, kind of, but when I say meditation, people immediately are like, yeah, I'm just not going to do that. So what I do is I just sit in silence. I sit up for five minutes. I just sit there. I think nothing. If I have a thought, I let it pass. That's meditating. If you want to do that, I highly recommend it because it just gives yourself a clean slate, but don't get super weird about it and feel like you're doing it wrong.

It just gets easier over time. Just keep doing it. And then when I'm done with that, I coach myself. I think I write, I look at my thoughts. I decide if I want to think what I'm thinking. I do not beat myself up. I'm like, Oh, that's so interesting. Why would I choose to think that? And I say that from like a playful place. I'm not like, Oh, that's so stupid. Why would I choose to think that? I'm like, Oh, that's so interesting.

Of course I feel like I'm in scarcity and like there's not enough look at my thoughts and then I decide what I want to think instead. I love doing this for the day. I love coming up with thoughts that helped me feel really productive for my work day. Right? And then I switch for the weekend. Like how do I wanna think today?

What do I want to feel? What am I thinking on default? So I don't just do this as a daily practice. I also do this for my goals and for my business. And this is where I'll spend a lot of time thinking really big. So like the last year I've been implementing changes in my business, that all came from thoughts that I had about how I wanted to create more revenue in my business and provide more value.

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So I wanted to create a podcast. I wanted to create a coaching program. I wanted to move my courses to a new platform. You know, there are really big things that I did that took months to implement and I was never in a rush. When you think big, when you spend time thinking and when you choose what to think, you know you're doing it right. If you're not in a rush, if you're in a rush to achieve your goals, it's because you think that over there is better than right now.

That's a lie. If you think about what you wanted five years ago or think about what you were thinking five years ago and look at your results now, and I love doing this for myself, I'm like, Oh my gosh. A year ago I decided I was going to move to Chicago and start a podcast and go through coach certification and a year later I live in Chicago. I have a podcast, right? That's super successful. I have a coaching program that's the bomb. I am a certified life coach, right?

I am literally creating my results and so it's super, super important for me to be really careful about what I'm thinking. I'm scaling my business income, right? I want to get to seven figures. I know I'm on the right track because I know that income is increasing every single month, but what got me to six figures isn't what's getting me to seven figures and I have to be really, really careful and really, really intentional to think on purpose from my future.

I'm in the present moment but I'm thinking from my future. It's super fun but it is also hard, but when you get used to thinking in this way and spending time thinking, you will likely grow to enjoy it. Like I don't know what it's like to just sit and not want to grow and evolve. I think it's kind of like the kiss of death. I think that's where we get into binge eating and binge Netflixing and binge spending money. It's all like the overing.

This is different than like downtime. I love having downtime. I spend time with my friends. I am dating, I enjoy my life. I go on trips, I travel. But that is all time that I've intentionally carved out. That's different than living my life on default and just kind of following what I've always done without thinking about my life intentionally is actually really interesting.

Another example I have of this, I was on a date recently and this guy was talking about how he had made a conscious decision years ago to limit the amount of input of sports information. So he was in the habit from his programming, from growing up in high school and college of consuming so much sports. It was on TV all the time. It was on his phone all the time. He would go to games all the time, like all of his downtime was spent with sports and he was obsessed with it and he said he remembered winning a fantasy football league and winning like \$700 and he said he had a moment where he didn't even enjoy it because it was so much time and effort that went into it that he thought he could have used for something so much more meaningful. So for him, what he decided to do was he still enjoys sports and he still likes it. He just limits it and instead of being kind of obsessed with it and having it take up all of his downtime, now it only takes up 10% and now he's carving out other time for cooking and working out and spending time with friends that isn't sports-related and like he just.

It was just very interesting to me to hear someone else talk about that who's like not a life coach or anything like that and just talk about how he's living intentionally and using time to think

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consciously and that's kind of what it comes down to, right? It's like the herd mentality versus taking the time for you to think about what you want for your life. Like have you taken the time to think about what goals you want to set short term and longterm, what values you have, what direction you're headed, what your intentions are.

You know like your goals matter, your future matters, what you think matters because your future only exists as sentences in your head. And if you don't direct your mind, if you don't choose what to think on purpose, you will continue to think what you've always thought.

And I want more for you. I want you to know that over there isn't better, but that a life of consciousness and intentionality is better. It is so much better because you don't add the suffering on top of the pain. You just experience pain as is without that dirty pain, that suffering on top of it, that loathing, that feeling sorry for yourself. You're like, Oh this sucked and that's totally fine and you learn how to direct your mind forward and you have this confidence and this strength and it's super fun. So I just want you to know that what you choose to continue thinking matters and that when you give yourself thinking time, you will rely on yourself for answers.

Use question leadership. Use the coaching yourself, right? What I teach is the self coaching model and you can do this as a daily practice. Give yourself time to actually decide what you want to think. Your primitive brain is going to think on default from all of that wiring and all of those old neuropathways. But you can create new neuropathways. You can decide what you want to think for your life.

Yes, it will take some discomfort and some intentionality and practicing new thoughts. But I want you to do that for yourself and I want you to see the results. So I say for the next 30 days, at least give yourself at least 10 minutes every single morning, every single morning. Just write down what you're thinking on default and then look at those thoughts, right? Look at those thoughts. And I love asking the question, why, right?

Why am I thinking that? Be careful to ask supportive questions, right? You know, don't write down a thought like I don't have enough money. And then ask yourself why and then answer it with, I'm so broke, right? That's not useful. If you're in scarcity about money and you're writing down, I don't have enough money, I'm worried about money, all this stuff, and you're looking at it and you are bringing awareness to it.

Notice that your thoughts are causing you to feel worry. It's not the money. Right? And ask yourself, what else could I think? What's another option, right? I don't like my money right now and that's okay. I think that's good. You know, just be really kind and compassionate with yourself, but bring awareness to what you're thinking on a daily basis and choose what to put back in your mind. Make sure that the thoughts you choose to put back are thoughts that you believe and practice those thoughts.

I recently like, I love just thinking the thought. I have plenty of time. I have enough time. I'm not in a rush. This has brought so much joy and abundance to my life. You can do this for any area of your life, whatever area you want to focus on.

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Health, money, business, career, relationships. Notice what you're thinking. Ask yourself if it's serving you, if it's not serving you, decide what you want to think instead and practice those thoughts over and over until it becomes an unconscious practice for you. An unconscious thought, that belief that you think on default, and then from there you can do it again and again and again.

My coaching program is 12 months, but people will stay in it long after that. This is a lifelong practice. So funny because when I first learned this, I was like, Oh, now I'm done until like the next thing happens. And you're like, Oh, better go back to that. This is a lifelong practice because in my opinion, the whole purpose of this life is to grow and evolve into the next version of yourself. So that is my hope for you. Put time on your calendar, 10 minutes at least every single morning in silence for you to spend time thinking it is so valuable and I cannot wait for you to implement this in your life. All right, I'll talk to you next week. Bye bye.

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