

Episode: Uncovering Your Purpose By Removing Escaping



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.

Hello, my beautiful, lovely friend. I cannot tell you how happy I am to be with you today. I'm really, really looking forward to this episode and I don't know how it's going to go. I mean I know it's going to be amazing because I love connecting with you in this way, but I am hoping that you really get so much value out of what I'm about to teach you. I have been putting in a lot of time and effort into researching this topic and I really think that it can help you if you do what I'm going to teach you and if you really go deep with this work. And I took a lot of time naming this episode because I had so many different things that I wanted to name it, but I think that for what you've told me you want help with the most, it's kind of like figuring out how to get the most fulfillment and purpose in your life while doing this thought work and taking your life to the next level and growing. And that's all the work that I am teaching and coaching you with.

So we're gonna come at uncovering your purpose from a totally different angle today we are going to come at it from the angle of removing escaping from your life. And I will tell you what that is and I'll give you my hard sell on how to do it. But it's going to be very different than the other episodes where I've talked about finding your purpose and passion. If you haven't listened to those go listen to them, especially the one where I specifically give you steps about how to create more passion in your life and how to look within yourself to come up with thoughts that generate more passion and purpose. And this episode is going to be supplemental and it will compliment it really well, but it's going to be from a totally different perspective.

So instead of talking about how to seek opportunities and look for ways for you to figure out what you really enjoy and what you want to do, I want you to consider removing what I call escaping from your life as a method of figuring out what your true purpose is. And I've never heard it described in this way. So come along for the ride. We're going to do it.

So let me talk a little bit about what I'm, what I mean by escaping. So escaping means it's like overing, it's when you do something to avoid negative emotion. So I like to call it overing because it's like overspending over eating, over drinking, over working. It's doing something where typically a net negative consequence, and there doesn't have to be a net negative consequence necessarily, but we're just going to go with that for now cause it's easier to understand, especially if this is your first time learning about it.

So you're basically trying to escape some sort of negative emotion that is coming on and you don't even realize this is happening. And I'll give you some examples, but there's a negative emotion that's about to come on. So instead of allowing the negative emotion, you try to avoid it, which is just human nature. It's a survival mechanism. Your brain wants to avoid pain, even if it's just emotional pain. Avoid experiencing that pain and seek some pleasure. So instead of allowing some fear or rejection to come up and just being with it or stress or anxiousness or whatever the negative emotion is, you will try to escape the negative emotion by doing something. So it's kind of like you might eat sugar, right? Some candy, or you might have a glass of wine. On an extreme level, it would be like doing a lot of drugs or people who are addicted to sex or pornography.

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But for most of us in our day to day, we're doing it and we don't even realizing. So I like to think of social media as one because you will find yourself scrolling to get a little dopamine hit or just to get a hit and feel better instead of not doing that and allowing the emotion. And you won't really think of it as a way of escaping, right? You're not consciously like, oh, I want to escape this negative emotion and go on social media. You're not like, oh, I want to escape my stress, so I'm going to pretend it's not there with a glass of wine. What you're going to say to yourself is something to the effect of, oh my gosh, my boss is the worst and I just need to decompress with a glass of wine and a little bit of Real Housewives like, and everyone will agree with you.

And what I want to challenge you to do is I want to be your life coach and older sister and say, let's put down the wine for a second, turn off the Netflix, and learn how to process negative emotion. Now the good news is that when you do this, you will find your true thoughts and feelings that you have about your life and that is going to enable you to access your authentic and deepest desires. You're going to uncover what you want most in life and what you think about your current life. So you're going to see your life for the reality of what it is.

The bad news is when you remove that escaping, it's going to feel terrible, and I know this for sure because you wouldn't be escaping if the thoughts and feelings were positive, right? It's that motivational triad where your brain is constantly avoiding pain, seeking pleasure, right? And wanting to be efficient. This is just what brains do and it was really great to get us here, but in modern society, we have all of these ways to kind of pleasure ourselves, for lack of a better term, with food and alcohol and even like quote unquote positive things like working out, right? And that you would say, okay, well I want to work out after I feel stressed. It's not necessarily that I don't want you to stop working out, right? It's not that I want you to stop taking away the pleasure from your life. It's that I want you to plan the pleasure ahead of time so that you know you're doing it as part of optimizing your life and not as part of escaping negative emotion. And the difference is really important.

So I work out five times or more per week. I have it on my calendar and I know that that is how I'm going to optimize my physical health. I think that the more that you plan your pleasure ahead of time, even if it's pleasure like eating cake or ice cream or wine or whatever it is, there's so much power in planning it at least 24 hours in advance because you're planning from your prefrontal cortex, which means it's like your most human part of your brain versus in the moment doing it based on the desire that you've created, which in part is this false desire due to the way that you've conditioned yourself. And it's kind of like you're unconscious about your own life. It's, it's a hard sell, right?

And I'm doing this in my own life right now, and I have to tell you, after a year, over a year actually, a year and a half of doing this thought work and growing, it's amazing to me that I am now just uncovering the depth of this work. And I know that in another year I'm going to be saying the exact same thing. It's kind of like going to the gym for a year. It's not like you stopped going to the gym, right? You take your workouts to the next level and this is a lifelong practice, which is what I love about it so much. It's never ending in the best way and as long as you know that ahead of time and you're not looking for some end result for it to be finished, then you'll be on board as well. That's kind of how I try to let people know when they first join Grow You, the

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membership coaching I have is this is like going to the gym for your mind, for your thoughts, for your brain, for your emotions.

So when it comes to uncovering your purpose, I actually looked up the definition between uncover and discover and I went with uncover because it means to reveal and to expose. So what I want to convince you to do is to figure out how your escaping your life so that you can stop escaping so that you can uncover your true desires. Now, like I said, it's going to feel terrible and I really mean that and I want you to know that it's okay. And this is the work that I've been doing recently. I've been practicing experiencing negative emotion. And now when I first learned this and when I first started doing this work, I didn't realize that I was still resisting it.

So let me give you an example. Let's say that you are used to eating something sweet to kind of make you feel better, whether it's a cookie or just something to take the edge off that helps you feel better about whatever is going on. And it might not even be that it's causing you to gain weight. So sometimes it's very obvious that there's a net negative consequence. Meaning if you're eating cake every night and you start to gain weight, you can see that that's causing a negative consequence in your life. What I want you to look for is how you are escaping and how the net negative consequence is in fact that you are kind of going numb to what your purpose is. So it's not necessarily that you are gaining weight, but it's that you're telling yourself, I don't know what my purpose is.

Okay. And what I want, I tell them, members in Grow You, I say it's totally fine that you think you don't know, but we're just not allowed to say that here. You're not allowed to say, I don't know because it's another form of escaping. So it forces you to come up with something, some idea of knowing. And what I want you to do is look in your life and see how you're escaping and see how that is blocking you from uncovering your purpose.

So look in your life and you know if this is you, right, it could be sweets, it could be shopping, it could be social media-ing, it could be like whatever it is, what's your form of escaping? And I want you to try to stop it. So if you're someone who is doing it with sugar and you're eating a lot of sugar, even if it's not causing you to gain weight but you're still eating that sugar when you get home, let's just say it's like cookies or something like that. I want you to notice this and I want you to stop doing it.

Do one method of escaping at a time because it's funny, I used to think that I didn't really escape it all and oh boy, I was wrong. So if you tell yourself that you're not really escaping because you don't really see it manifesting in a way of a lot of weight gain or some sort of problem where you feel like you're drinking too much or something like that, look a little bit closer and it might be in a way that you don't notice as much like social media, right? That is one for me a little bit. Maybe having a glass or two of wine on the weekends and just being in the habit of that. And you'll notice if this is escaping because the thought of taking it away seriously if you really think about it, you will have thoughts that it's absolutely impossible. You don't want to do it. I remember when I first thought of doing this with food, I learned it from my other coach and I had the thought, I hate you. Like it just came to my mind. It was so funny. Of course, I don't hate her, but it was so interesting to me because that told me exactly where my work was to be done.

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So let's say that you eat with sweets, you eat a lot of sweets and you're escaping with sweets and I want you to consider stopping that and I just want you to know what is going to happen. Stopping eating the thing or overing is is easy. If you think about it from an action standpoint, it actually takes more effort to pick up food and put it in your mouth than to not do anything. Like if you just look at the action of it, right? That's the easy part. The hard part is managing your emotional life, feeling the emotions that come after that. So it's like you stop eating the sweets, the physical action is easy, but what comes up for you is going to be a challenge. It's going to be your real thoughts and your real feelings and you have to be willing to feel them. All of those negative emotions that come up.

I will see new students talk about ways to quote unquote manage fear and it's all seemingly innocent, but it will be like I'll go do this instead or I'll go do that instead or I'll avoid the situation. And what I say is, no, I don't want you to avoid the situation. I want you to be in the situation, allow the emotion of stress, and not run from it, right? Because then you will have the consciousness and awareness of what's really going on. And that's where you build emotional strength.

It's a tough sell if you're not used to allowing emotions, but there's a huge difference between resisting and allowing. So I want you to practice it and start small. So it's like, let's say you think that there is a situation that is stressful, right? And what's really happening is that there is a circumstance and then you have a thought about that circumstance and that thought causes the emotion of stress. I want you to be in stress. It sounds funny, right? I don't want you to feel terrible. I gotta, but I don't want you to resist it. I want you to allow it.

So what works for me is to say something like, I can do stress. This is stress. How do I feel it in my body? Where is it? Right? All of those things. I want you to name the emotion. I want you to notice how it vibrates and feels in your body. I want you to describe the temperature. I want you to be present with it instead of being afraid of it. So a lot of times when I hear clients talk about feeling anxious about something, that will be the secondary emotion and they will feel fear or rejection and then they will resist it so much that it will cause them to have this layer of anxiety on top of it. Not always, but very often.

So what I am trying to convince you to do here is to be present with your emotions so that you stop running from them. Because when you are present with the negative emotions and you bring this awareness to them, these negative emotions, you will start to see that the worst that can happen to you is a negative emotion. Now of course the exception is physical harm. I'm not talking about that. I don't help people who are physically abused or who have been attacked and most of us aren't talking about being afraid of walking outside and being physically attacked. Okay? I'm talking about all of the other stuff. Stress, overwhelm, fear, anxiety, all of those feelings are negative emotions. And the worst that can happen in that sense is the emotional pain. And what I want to offer to you is that you can feel negative emotion on purpose and allow it.

And here's the benefit, right? When you do this and you actually do it correctly, you will be with it and it will feel bad. But the more that you allow it, the less meaning you give to the emotion, the more likely you are to move forward through it. Because what I know for sure is that when you uncover your deepest desire for your life, it is going to take you feeling the negative emotion

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and the discomfort of moving from where you are now to where you want to be, right? Because your brain doesn't know how to be this new version of yourself or how to do the things you want to do. So you have to feel really uncomfortable in the getting of it. And if you are escaping it, if you are escaping your life, then you will never uncover what's really going on. You will not reveal the truth about your life.

So I like to have fun with this because feeling fear and rejection is super fun. No, I mean, I like to have fun with it in the sense of I like to keep it light and remind myself that this is like going to the gym. It doesn't make me better. It doesn't make me worse, but it helps me live my life on purpose and with intention and I prepare for it to feel bad. But I'm telling you, if you really have a desire in your life and you want to uncover your purpose, this is the best way to do it because all of your stuff is going to come up when you remove whatever your escaping of choices, when you remove the overeating or the overspending or the overworking or the over whatever-ing, it will all come up.

And I always find it fascinating when people tell me like, oh, I've never really had to go through anything. Or oh yeah, like I don't really have any problems or my life is pretty easy and I don't hear this often, right? I hear a lot of the worst stories because of the line of work I'm in. But in my day to day life, I actually do have people who who've said this to me and it's a very apparent to me from their actions and the results that they have that they are escaping their life away. So their life might seem easy because they are not growing on purpose and they are overeating, for example. That's one I see a lot, right? They'll be like, oh, life is kind of easy or it's just everything's good. And if I was coaching them, I would say, okay, let's remove some of these methods of escaping such as overeating or over social media-ing and see what comes up for you. Then how is your life? Just for fun to see what comes up. Like I'm inviting you to the gym to grow on purpose. And when you learn how to experience negative emotion without pushing it away and noticing it and being with it, it will pass and you will get stronger and then you will have done it from a place of awareness. And the value of this is not only that you see what's really going on in your life, but then you have this added self confidence on top of it where before you were pushing it away and now you're leaning into it and now you can use that to go forward and pursue, and set and achieve impossible goals. It is where the magic happens.

And I want to encourage you to look at your life and look at where you want different results. It's going to be different for everyone, just like your method of escaping will be different for everyone. So do you want to lose weight? Do you want to make more money? Do you want to just figure out what you want to do with your life? Right? And I've talked a lot about how that's such like a daunting question. So I don't want you to add this layer of pressure like you're trying to figure out the major of your life. But I want you to consider this as an experiment. Ask yourself, how am I escaping negative emotions and how can I reduce that escaping so that I can figure out the truth of my life and what I really think and feel about it so that I can decide if this is how I want to continue living and so that I can uncover what my deepest desires and purpose is for my life.

What's likely happening for you right now, which is what people do typically before they're introduced to any of this thought work, is that there is some level of discomfort, which is a negative emotion and it comes on and you will immediately escape it before you've even felt it.

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So what really is happening is that there's some unconscious thought and you immediately want to go unconscious from it. So you take the action of escaping before you even feel it. So you like you'll start eating or having a glass of wine or jumping on social media before you even know what you're feeling. But for sure if you're doing it in the moment without planning ahead of time, you are doing it to kind of seek that pleasure and avoid the discomfort and the negative emotion. When you stop and when you plan your pleasure ahead of time, all of that drama will come up.

I remember when I first started doing this with food and that's kind of what I'm doing right now. It was really terrifying for me. I just added how to change your eating habits forever, which is a bonus in Grow You. So I did a lot of work on myself for this and when I started doing this work, I realized that I didn't have over hunger. Meaning I don't have this problem where I'm gaining weight. But when the thought came to my mind about planning all of my food at 24 hours in advance, I realized that I had all of these negative thoughts that came up, which told me that I had over desire. And what was happening was I was only eating when I had the desire to eat in the moment, and it wasn't real hunger. Right?

So I'm not going to go into the details of how you can tell the difference on this podcast episode, but I am going to say that for you, if you're not really sure in what ways you're escaping, pick one method of pleasure seeking that you do and just try to plan it out 24 hours in advance. So let's say it's social media. Plan today what you are going to do on social media tomorrow, meaning you're only gonna check Instagram two times tomorrow and it's going to be at, I don't know, 10:00 AM and 6:00 PM and then follow through with that. Are you guys getting anxious with me at the thought of that? That is a method of escaping then for you and you know this is true and don't overdo it, right? If that just seems impossible to you, then decide ahead of time that you're only going to do it on the hour for five minutes. Meet yourself where you are and do one method of escaping at a time. So maybe it's that you plan ahead of time when you're going to have that glass of wine or that cookie.

The key is when you plan ahead of time, you're not doing it based on some sort of level of wanting to escape your doing it from your future focused brain, right? You don't have that desire 24 hours ahead of time. So do this and then you're going to have the urge. And the urge is just this intense desire caused by your thinking, right? And the more that you reward the desire, the more intense the desire gets. And it turns into this cycle. And the answer is for you to allow it, for you to notice the negative emotion, for you to not resist it, right? Not run from it. I like to say I can do rejection. I can do anxiousness, I can do fear, right? It's not going to kill me. When you do this work, you will reduce the desire and it will give you this new awareness and consciousness and confidence that I've never experienced on any other levels. So I really invite you to try this.

It's when you react and give into that urge that you perpetuate it. So really, really notice when you have these urges and don't give it so much authority. It's so funny we think that because we have the urge to do something and the desire to do something that we have to get into it and we don't. We can allow it without responding to it, but it does take practice and I want you to as always, approach this with compassion and curiosity because now after listening to this, you are going to have the awareness of it when you do it, and even if you try it and you miss the mark, meaning you don't do it and you give in. I want you to not ignore it and try again. Not beat

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yourself up and talk negatively to yourself, but meet in the middle and say, okay, that's so interesting. I tried to stop escaping and I gave into my urge. I wonder what I was thinking and feeling. It's approaching it with compassion and curiosity so that you can see what's really going on so that you can try again.

Okay. All right. I hope that you really take a lot from this episode and that you try to approach uncovering your purpose in this new way by allowing the discomfort of negative emotions by stopping escaping your life. And it's a lifelong practice. This isn't going to happen all at once, but if you start now and you just start with one little thing at a time, imagine where you'll be a year from now. I know that that has been 100% true for me, especially with respect to food, and social media as well. So that's my hope for you. Start small and let me know how it's going. I'm sending you lots of love this week because I know if you do it, you're going to be really uncomfortable. So go about your week, feel the discomfort and know that you can handle any negative emotion. I'll talk to you next week.

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