

Struggling As A New Stay At Home Mom



Full Episode Transcript

With Your Host

Natalie Bacon

[Mom On Purpose](#) with Natalie Bacon

Struggling As A New Stay At Home Mom

Welcome to Mom On Purpose, where it's all about helping moms overcome challenges and live their best lives. My hope is by being here, you are more inspired to become the mom you are made to be. I'm Natalie, your host, a wife, boy, mom, dog, mama, Chicagoan, and former lawyer turned professionally certified coach. If you're here to grow, I can help. Let's go.

Hello my beautiful friend. I am so excited to be here with you today. I always think about all of you who listen, whether you have been around for years and you are deep into the work that we do, part of the membership and then I think of the person who just randomly found this podcast and is brand new and how we're all doing this work together and changing our lives. And I just have so much appreciation for you and for this work and how helpful it is and I think you're going to find that's exactly what you experience after listening to today's episode.

It is from a newer listener who is sharing her challenges with motherhood and feeling tired and struggling to come up with better thoughts, feeling kind of stuck in those negative thoughts and how that's impacting her experience as well as her marriage. Um, I think there's a little bit of something for everyone in today's episode. Before I dive into that, I do want to invite you to take my brand new free course. All you have to do is head on over to momonpurpose.com/freecourse. That's all one word free course and you will be able to sign up for the four part video series there where I deep dive into the tools that have been the most helpful for me as a mom. That includes the victim mindset coming up with an intentional identity, the becoming her process, how to stop shoulding on your kids, all of the things that I've found to be the most impactful. I have put them together into a free course in a way that's really doable, where I believe that in the next 30 days at most, you will start to feel so much better like you are truly living into becoming the mom that you want to be. So head on over to momonpurpose.com/freecourse and you can take that free course right now. With that, let's dive in to today's episode.

Struggling As A New Stay At Home Mom

Hi Natalie. I am a relatively new listener and I'm so thankful for you for all that I've heard so far. So thank you for what you are doing, um, with the podcast. So I have two questions and I will be so grateful if you can answer either one at all. Um, I'm 41, just had my first baby, been married for 10 years and transitioned from working as a financial planner to staying home with the baby. So most of my struggles are around that. Uh, but my first question is what to do when you can't come up with the next believable thought. Example is when the baby won't go to sleep. All I can think is why can't you go to sleep? You're tired, go to sleep, what's wrong with you? And I can't seem to come up with anything helpful as my next thought when situations like that happen.

And then the second thing is I'm not sure what to do when I can't sort out my thoughts and feelings about a situation. Example is my husband and my relationship has been struggling since we had the baby and I've been staying home with the baby and quit my career. And I can't really seem to pinpoint what our struggle is. I can't seem to sort out my thoughts and feelings to talk about it or sort through it in my brain to help. Anyway, any advice you have, I'll be eternally grateful. Thank you so much for what you're doing.

Let's dive in to the first question, which is what to do when you can't come up with a next believable thought. So this is actually a thought. I can't come up with a next believable thought. Anytime you say you can't do something specifically that you want to do, it's going to feel very stuck. When you feel stuck, it creates a lot of inaction. A very simple way to shift out of this way of thinking is to add a qualifier word like yet. So instead of saying to yourself, I can't come up with a next believable thought, simply shift to I haven't found the right next believable thought for me yet, or I haven't figured out the next believable thought or I can't come up with it yet. Anytime you sort of add some momentum to the stuck thought, it gets you out of feeling stuck.

So saying, I can't come up with the next believable thought is going to block you from any creativity. If you say, I haven't figured out what the next

Struggling As A New Stay At Home Mom

believable thought is going to be yet, that's going to open you up to possibilities. So even the kind of summary of your experience of trying to do this work, if that is creating an action and stuck notice that and just intentionally shift out of it. Like, oh, coming up with the next believable thought is harder than I thought and that's okay. I'm still figuring out this work. I'm new to this work. I can keep trying. Do you see the difference there? It's so important. I think that's a really important distinction that'll be really helpful for so many people listening. So let's now dive in to the actual specific example here. One of the thoughts that you gave was why can't you go to sleep with respect to your baby?

Whenever your brain offers you a thought, that is a question, answer that question, right? Because you're really not asking the question from curiosity. You're not sitting there wondering like, huh, I wonder why this baby can't sleep. Do you see how that's very different? The way that you're saying it isn't from curiosity, it's actually kind of like a little bit of a whiny mom tantrum. I call 'em like, Ugh, this baby should go to sleep and they're not. Or the question, what's wrong with you? What is wrong with the baby? Nothing. The baby is just being a baby. And so when your brain is offering you kind of more stuck thoughts like this shouldn't be happening is essentially the title of the story. The baby should be sleeping more. The baby is doing it wrong. The baby shouldn't be like this. All of those thoughts are rejecting reality.

And the problem with that is it's not helpful for you and it also obviously doesn't change anything with the baby. And so what I just want you to see is that whatever is happening, the quicker you can get to acceptance, the better you will feel. You'll still feel tired, but it won't be so miserable. It won't be tired plus frustration. It won't be tired plus irritation, it won't be tired plus resentment, it'll just be tired. So I want to give you some next believable thoughts that you can try on just to see what's possible here. What I like to do, whenever I think something was going to go a certain way and it doesn't, I like to remind myself that I was wrong in like a very fun, playful way. Like, oh, I thought my baby was going to sleep all night. I guess I was totally wrong about that.

Struggling As A New Stay At Home Mom

Or we just for me personally, we just did the uh, three day potty training method a couple months ago and I'm like, who marketed this? This is not three days, right? I'm like, I thought it was going to be a three day event. It is much more of a process and you know, now we're sort of on the other side of it mostly, but I just told myself instead of this shouldn't be happening, this should only take three days. I just told myself thoughts like, oh, I guess I was wrong about that. It's not a three day event. So in your example, instead of there's something wrong with the baby, the baby should be sleeping more, which are the answers to the questions? Why won't the baby go to sleep? And what's wrong with you? Shift into, oh, I was wrong. I thought my baby was going to sleep more.

I guess not. I can offer my baby sleep but I can't make them sleep. What I like to do for next believable thoughts with predictable circumstances. So whether that's a season of potty training, whether that is a season of your baby waking up in the middle of the night, whether it's a season of your spouse coming home irritated at work. If you know that you are going to be in a set of circumstances that are pretty predictable, we'll go with the baby waking up at night for this example, come up with thoughts where you expect that to be the case. So I think on default what the brain does is kind of do the opposite like hope and just pray that the baby sleeps through the night. And what that does is it sets you up for kind of resistance and rejecting what the reality is.

So I suggest doing the opposite with next believable thoughts. Create thoughts like, I expect my baby to get up five or six times tonight. I'm planning on being tired. I can be tired. It's harder than I thought. And that's okay. Do you see how those thoughts are much more grounded in acceptance and reality? I know I've talked about this on the membership. I'm not sure if I've talked about it on the podcast, but I like to play around with imagining that I won the lottery. So if you were getting up in the middle of the night and you got a phone call that you won the lottery, you would still be just as tired, but you probably would have lots of other positive emotions. And the reason that this is a helpful mental exercise is it shows

Struggling As A New Stay At Home Mom

you that you have the capacity to both feel tired and feel some positive emotion.

So notice that there is the part where your body is physically tired and that is valid, but that's going to be there as long as you want to be a mom who wakes up with your child in the middle of the night. So let's not be tired and frustrated. Let's not be tired and annoyed. Let's not be tired and irritated. Let's be tired and content. Let's be in acceptance of it. And I think one of the best ways to do that with next believable thoughts is to expect it. This is the season I'm in. I thought my baby was going to sleep a lot more. I was totally wrong about that. My baby is going to get up five or six times tonight. That's what I'm expecting. Another next believable thought is to remind yourself that you want to be getting up with your baby.

I know it seems like you don't want to and it seems like you want to be sleeping, but you could sleep. If you physically think about your agency to act, there is no one forcing you to get out of bed. You are using your agency to get out of bed and to get up with the baby. So the truth is that you want to get up with your baby more than you want to sleep because you want to be a mom who gets up when your baby cries for you in the middle of the night telling yourself that truth can be really empowering to see that you're actually doing what you want to do. And then what helps me is just the follow-up thought, I want to do this, but it's just a lot harder than I thought. So you still validate your experience, but you're not blaming the baby.

You're not like a victim of the baby's lack of sleep. Do you see the difference there? So circling back to how you originally framed this question when you were kind of asking what do I do when I can't come up with the next believable thought? I gave you a lot of options here, but I promise you, for you and everyone listening, the more you practice this work, the more your brain will be able to produce new, better, believable thoughts for you. I like to give the analogy of like a handstand in yoga or baking a cake or something that requires some skill and some repetition. So you can watch a video of how to do a handstand, but it's going to take some reps before

Struggling As A New Stay At Home Mom

your body is actually able to do the handstand or you know, I like dance classes so I can watch a video of a dance, but it's going to take me some repetition to actually be able to do that dance.

I can watch a video or read a recipe about how to bake a cake, but I have to get in the kitchen and bake that cake probably multiple times before. It's the way that you know, I want it to taste. And in the same way you're building this skill. Another example that I like to give is teaching a kid how to ride a bike, right? You can demonstrate it for them and it's so easy for you, but until they practice and skid their knee and fall and fall again, eventually they'll get it. But it does take that learning process. It's the same with doing this work and that's why I love having the membership. If you're not in there, that's fine too. You can do this on your own. It just like you don't have that support system or kind of that feedback all of the time.

But the way that you do it get started at least on your own, is to brainstorm next believable thoughts. So you just ask yourself, what else might I think? And you might know that you know what, this is day one of me trying, so I'm not going to end up with the best cake ever. I'm not going to end up um, being able to do the handstand. This is practice so that eventually I can, I promise you that I was not born knowing about next believable thoughts. My default brain was always in the driver's seat. But over the years of practicing this, I now have this skill that I continuously work on and um, put to work in my life and it's amazing. It's so awesome, um, because of being able to navigate challenges like this. So I call it intentional thought creation, where you put your brain to work on better feeling thoughts.

It is a practice, it's simple, it's doable, and you can get more support with that if you want inside the membership. Hopefully some of these thoughts are helpful for you to get started with. Let's dive in now to the second question, which is similar but sort of on a different topic. And the question was, I can't sort out my thoughts and feelings essentially about your marriage. Notice how similar this thought is to, I can't come up with a next believable thought. Just notice, and this is for everyone listening, the thoughts that you have will likely kind of be reproduced in different topics.

Struggling As A New Stay At Home Mom

So if you have a tendency to have stuck thoughts like, I don't know, I don't know how I can't figure this out, I can't come up with a next believable thought, it's likely to be the way that you think about multiple areas of your life.

So in this way, um, it's just such a similar thought, right? That creates that stuckness. I can't sort out my thoughts and feelings about my marriage. Well maybe, but thinking that isn't helpful thoughts can be true, but if they're not helpful, there are so many other thoughts that you can think. So I would just shift this way of thinking about it to, I haven't figured out how to sort out my thoughts and feelings about my marriage yet. Such a simple shift. But it again gives you some momentum and it opens you up to possibilities and puts your brain to work on that versus kind of shutting it down and just saying like, well, I can't do it right? You can, it's just maybe harder than you thought, or you don't have that skillset yet, but you're working on it. Do you see how there's that difference there?

With something like marriage, it can seem like this big vague problem that involves another person, but really it's all about what's going on for you because that's what you have control over. So make it really simple and go inward. Ask yourself, what is the feeling that I'm feeling? Maybe it's disconnection, maybe it's resentment, maybe it's annoyance, maybe it's worry, maybe it's fear, maybe it's anger, maybe it's frustration, I don't know. But it'll be a one word emotion that you feel when you think about your marriage. And then ask yourself, what are some thoughts that are leading me to feel that way? Now your brain is going to think that what you are about to say are the facts, but you can do a brain dump, we call it a thought downloaded coaching, and you can pull out the difference between thoughts and facts. This is kind of what we do inside the membership, but you're probably most likely going to be telling a story that is 95% with thoughts.

So the facts are you have a spouse, you both have a baby, the facts will be like, really boring. Does your spouse work? You live in a home, like there will be some other facts in there, but most of the narrative, certainly all of

Struggling As A New Stay At Home Mom

the story that is creating the feeling will be thoughts because thoughts create feelings. Now again, your thoughts might be true thoughts, but if you're describing your marriage as struggling and you want to "pinpoint" what the struggle is, it's really important that you notice what you're thinking. You also use the word our in your, um, voice message. And it's so important this goes for all of you navigating challenges with someone else, whether it's a challenging relationship or your marriage or whatever, that you take ownership of your part. So with coaching, I like to say we're not going to talk about our struggle because it's already going to disempower you because you're going to try to "get on the same page" or try to control him and it sounds so lovely and it doesn't work.

So we're going to focus back on you and just get some awareness around the story you are telling about your marriage. So I know that you're telling the story that we're struggling since we had the baby. Is that the story you want to tell? Now, I'm not suggesting to go to, you know, it's been amazing since we've had the baby. I'm not suggesting you do that at all, but I don't know if we've been struggling since we had the baby, is the way that you want to think about it. Alternatively, you could come up with 5, 10, 25 different ways of thinking that still feel true for you, but create, um, more of a connection, resilient, um, strong energy. So for example, if this was me, I might come up with a story title or thought next believable thought like transitioning to having a baby in our marriage has been harder than I expected and that's okay.

I'm figuring out how I want to show up as a wife with a new baby and transitioning to being a stay at home mom. Do you see how that gives you so much more ownership over your part and tells the story of working through this sort of challenge in your marriage? So notice that the way that you talk about the story matters. Something else that we do in coaching to kind of "pinpoint" what the struggle is like you're referring to, is to get really specific. If you're talking about your marriage in general, it creates this like vague problem and that's why it's hard for you to pinpoint what the struggle is. So you want to just take a a micro example and take a look at your thoughts and feelings. So if yesterday your husband came home from work

Struggling As A New Stay At Home Mom

and he said nothing to you and then went in the other room, let's just, you know, take that, what were your thoughts and feelings in that micro example? And so instead of trying to identify what the struggle is, I don't think that's a useful kind of goal. I would just shift it back to you and try to identify what your thoughts and feelings are on default so that you can come up with more helpful thoughts and feelings. I would be asking myself kind of consistently, what kind of wife do I want to be during this transition? What do I want to do differently? What do I want to keep doing?

Am I meeting my needs? Am I getting my needs met? Do I need more support? What is it that's going on for me? The more you take ownership about what's going on for you, the more empowered you'll be to show up as the wife that you want to be. And this doesn't mean you're going to be smiling and happy and you know all of these things while you're sleep deprived and going through this transition. It just means that you'll have that resilience. You'll feel so much more connected and empowered and that is available 100% through the work that you do. It does not take two, it does not take him. So part of this is not mirroring him and not expecting your partner to be a certain way. Just like with the baby, you know when I suggested having those next believable thoughts like, oh, I thought my baby was going to sleep, but I guess I was wrong about that.

My baby is going to get up in the middle of the night multiple times. You can do the same work with your spouse. Oh, I thought my spouse was going to be more helpful when we had a baby. I guess I was wrong about that. Now what, who do I want to be? You can make requests of your spouse, but doing that from love and connection and staying in your thoughts and feelings and actions is where your power is. Now I want to shift into giving you some final tools and ways of thinking about everything that you're going through. I really like to think of transitions as periods of time that will end on default. Your brain wants to kind of project what's happening now into forever. And we hear this from, you know, seasoned moms who say, oh, it just goes by so fast, right?

Struggling As A New Stay At Home Mom

And when you're in it, you're like, okay, yeah, but also I'm really tired and I need a nap. So to kind of help yourself through that, it's reminding yourself, I'm going through a transition right now. And transitions are hard because of the way that the brain likes certainty. It likes consistency. So you were married for 10 years, you worked as a financial planner, your brain knew how to do that really well, and you now are transitioning to being a stay-at-home mom with a baby. Of course it's hard and maybe it's just harder than you thought. Again, it's like, oh, I guess I was wrong. This is the part where this transition is hard and that's okay. Hard doesn't mean bad. Hard just means hard. But when you tell yourself, I got me, I can validate my feelings and I can do hard, it won't be such a problem that it's hard.

You will recognize it as a transition. So you know, it's like whenever I have a new baby, I'm like, oh, there's this transition period that we go through that I go through that our family goes through and I expect that, but I also know that it will end. There's also some identity work here that you can do. Again, you were a wife for 10 years in your role as a financial planner, and those were your main identities with respect to work and family. And now you have this new identity as a stay at home mom, as a mom and as a wife who isn't working. And so thinking for yourself, who do I want to be wearing these new hats? It's really important that you do this work because your brain on default will come up with identities that either it just suggests for you, like maybe I'm not cut out for this.

I'm an overwhelmed mom. I can't handle this. I'm going to be a resentful wife. Or it might be that someone else offers it to you. Maybe your husband says something off the cuff and you take that on as an identity. Either way, I think creating your identity on purpose and allowing space for you to feel your feelings is really important. So you live into who you want to be still while allowing space for the negative emotion. So it's, I feel tired, I feel exhausted, I feel irritated and allowing space for those feelings, but telling yourself who you want to be. I am an amazing mom and a really amazing wife, and I'm a connected, fun, flirty wife, even though this season has been harder than I expected. Come up with those thoughts that feel true to you based on who you want to be. That is really the work for all of this.

Struggling As A New Stay At Home Mom

With respect to transitions, becoming a new version of yourself, which you're doing and that's awesome. You just want to take more control over it with your prefrontal cortex so you feel like you're creating your life instead of being at the effect of your life. Make sure that you also give yourself grace and compassion and gentleness. So with the self-loathing and the self-pity and like feeling like you're of at a victim of motherhood, that sometimes is helpful to give yourself some of that stronger, tougher love. Like, I am capable. I can't figure this out, this is just harder than I thought. But there's also the part of it that I call like the softer love where you do want to validate your feelings and say, you know, I got you love. I'm doing this. This is hard and that's okay. It's okay to feel this way. And so you have this like yin and yang of the type of love that you want to give yourself all possible and available to you.

You are doing a great job, my friend. Use these tools and it will make a world of difference. For everyone else listening, be sure to call into the private podcast hotline at 8 3 3 3. Ask Nat. That's 8 3 3 3 2 7 5 6 2 8. I would love to answer your question on an upcoming podcast. Just so you know, it is anonymous so long as you don't leave your name and as soon as you call it goes directly to voicemail. So I will only be the one checking it. No one's going to answer the phone. You just briefly leave your message just like you've been hearing on the podcast. And not only do you get an entire podcast dedicated to your question, but it also benefits so many other women and moms in this community. I love you my friend. Thanks so much for being here and I'll talk with you next week. Take care.

Thank you for being here and listening. Now, head on over to momonpurpose.com/coaching to learn more about the Mom On Purpose membership, where we take all of this work to the next level.