

Mom Like It's Your Job



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Natalie Bacon

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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, 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 friends. Welcome to the podcast. I'm so happy to be here with you today. If there is one framework that has specifically impacted my motherhood, it is mom like it's your job. This is a framework that I first taught a couple of years ago and have since revamped and created such a more robust, clearer framework for you to be able to apply to your everyday life in your role as mom, with respect to your kids as a parent, with respect to your home and a homemaker, and with respect to yourself and how you want to show up for yourself. I love thinking about being a mom, like a high performance job, probably because I have always been in a high performance job and I identify as a high achiever. So thinking about motherhood in this way is very natural to me, and it's also most importantly very, very helpful. So I want to just pause here and I want you to pause, and I want you to answer this question to yourself. Have you ever felt like no matter what you do as a mom, it's never enough?

Like at the end of the day, there's this little whisper, like, should I have done more? I know I didn't get everything done, so that means I didn't do enough or some version of that. I think that is one of the telltale signs that you're a little bit more in reactive mode and your brain is in a little bit more scarcity than is useful. And I'm going to share with you how it really ties back to, you know, using motherhood as a way for you to show up like it's a high performance job as we go through, everything that I want to share with you about how to do just that. So I think that first understanding why this is important is so powerful because if you naturally are a go-getter, a high achiever, or maybe you've, you know, been a high performer in the past, and then you become a mom and regardless of the age of your kids, it could be right away or they could be older and you could feel like you're not doing enough.

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You are in reactive mode, constantly putting out fires. And even though everything looks fine on the outside, your personal experience of it isn't, you know, that great. So for example, I'll coach a lot of moms and they'll say, you know, I still show up. Okay, I'm, you know, I'm, I'm not off the rails with my kids. I'm not always yelling at them like I'm still able to kind of hold it together. It's just that, it doesn't feel so great. I feel kind of off. Or, you know, they'll tell me kind of in private, like, they feel a little bit miserable if they're being honest. It's not, it's not how they expected or it's not how they want to experience motherhood. They want to feel happier and more joyful. And while they are very appreciative and grateful for their lives, like on an everyday basis, if I, you know, was a little fly on the wall they wouldn't be, you know, exuding that from their energy.

It kind of feels like maybe they're winging it or they're constantly reacting or maybe, you know, falling behind. And then of course, as you and I know what comes next, right? It's like the self doubt and then the mom guilt and the second guessing. And there's really no like system. 'cause as you know, there's no boss I'm sure get feedback from your family that is unsolicited and also unhelpful. There's no real feedback, there's no real guide, there's no real set of expectations. You know, you just become a mom and then it's however you were raised tends to be the way that you will raise your kids. And then if you learn any other additional tools, you'll apply those. But it's just whatever you want, however you want. And you know this because you know, you see other people out in the wild at Target, at the library, at wherever, at the games, and parents are parenting differently.

And you have neighbors, some of whom are stay at home moms, some of whom work outside the home, some of whom work part-time. There's, you know, just like me, right? And, and you and, and we all have a different way that we mom in terms of our work, in terms of how we take care of our kids, in terms of who takes care of our kids. Like none of that is right or wrong, good nor bad. But because it's a free for all, it can feel like it's never enough. And that comes from wanting to do a good job. It actually comes from a genuinely good loving place. Like you want to do a good job at being

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a mom. The problem though is what does that mean? So we don't define it. No one tells us how to define it. You know, you're not giving a handbook or a manual.

You go based on your past, what you see your peers doing or what your parents did. Or maybe you decide, I'm just going to do the opposite of what my parents did. And either way, usually typically there's not some, point where you say, you know what? I'm going to define this. I'm going to define what it means to be a good mom and I'm going to have standards for myself and I am going to evaluate. And we just don't do that, right? It doesn't seem like that's what you do. And so we go about living and experiencing motherhood on default, and all of our defaults, yes, are different. Now, sometimes we go about motherhood and our lives on default, and we do that in a way that's really helpful. So for example, I am in the habit of showering every morning and getting ready every morning and kind of doing my own little morning routine.

And that is now my default automatic way of being. And it serves me really well. I have constructed that morning routine and getting ready and getting dressed and taking care of my mindset and maybe some personal development listening to coaching calls in there as well. Like doing all of that really serves me. And that's a habit. Now that's my default. It's not something I have to think about or plan for. So it's not that the default way is bad or problematic, it's just that when the default way leaves you feeling like you're not doing enough or you're questioning whether you're doing a good job or you're just experiencing a lot of mom guilt and like you're spread too thin, that's when the default way is problematic. And that's when we want to take a look at it, which is exactly what mom like it's your job is designed to do treating motherhood like a high performance job gives you permission to get clear about what you're even going after, what you're trying to do so that you feel like you are succeeding in motherhood.

Not like you are winging it and just surviving. I heard a quote once, I don't know who it's from that said, "some people have to survive and some people have to succeed. Which one are you?" And I love that, right? Apply

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that to motherhood. And I am not, again, speaking from my ivory tower here, because personally on default, my mind and my brain, they go to self-pity and thinking that, you know, my life is happening to me. And so using a framework like mom like it's your job, really gets me out of that because I can see where I'm disempowering myself and I can see where I'm making it mean that I'm either failing or succeeding based on something outside of my control. So if you only feel happy when your kids are succeeding, that's unhelpful for them. And it's also unhelpful for you. You will try to control them.

They won't feel comfortable sharing their challenges with you. It's ineffective for actually helping them through their challenges. And it kind of ignores the truth that kids are supposed to have challenges. And it doesn't mean you're a bad mom at all. And if you just, you know, take a look at either your own kids or other families you see that, you know, with the exact same parents in the exact same, you know, home kids will have very different life experiences. And I think that's by design. And where that comes up is if you are thinking that you're only a good mom or you're succeeding based on your kids' outcomes or their happiness, you really set yourself up for failure. And I think a much worse experience of motherhood because you're always going to be trying to control something that's outside of your control versus if you think of like a really good coach who is a little bit more, supportive in a confident way, not in like a worrisome way.

That's how I always think about how I want to show up as a mom. And it is not the default way my friends, I have to do a lot of self-coaching around that. But that's the power of doing a framework like mom like it's your job so that you have clear standards. And that's really what the entire process is about. It's about defining your role, giving yourself a title, and deciding how you want to evaluate how you're doing so that you never just say, oh yeah, I'm totally failing as a mom. Or, you know, wondering what that even means or wondering if you're ever doing enough because you have clear expectations for yourself and not just for you as a mom. And what does that even mean, right? It's like in the certain areas that you manage that you are

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in charge of, that you kinda attribute to your own motherhood, whether you do the work in it or you don't.

For example, you know, I always use the house, right? That's like being a homemaker. If you just, you know, take a look at Instagram, you see a wide variety. You could outsource everything or you could do everything. And then there's a spectrum and there is no right or wrong. Some people really get a lot of satisfaction on taking care of the home and other people don't. And other people you know, don't, and they still want to because they want to save the money and vice versa. Other people might actually like it, but they decide, you know what? I, have a lot of money and I want to outsource. And then a lot of us, myself included, you know, it's somewhere in the middle where I want to outsource as much as I feel comfortable outsourcing financially in our budget and then do the rest. And, I also do want to be someone who cooks for my family.

Now, do I want to cook all seven days? Eh, probably not. But I do want to cook some of the days. And I think this is important, not just, you know, to kind of talk about the routines of the week and, and what you're doing and not doing. It's a much deeper, decision-making process because it has an impact on how you think about yourself as a mom. If you know, okay, I'm going to make dinners five nights a week for my family, and then the other two days we're either going to eat out or have leftovers, or maybe your spouse really likes to cook and he takes on that day. It's a system for you to say, okay, this is actually intentionally how I want to show up as the person who is providing food and meals for my home and my family. And when you take a look at you as a parent, how do you want to parent?

And how can you define your success based on things you can control, like loving your kids and holding boundaries and validating feelings versus okay, if my kids are doing well in school, that means I'm a good mom. I give this example in the mom like it's your job course in the membership of how I, was traveling a lot with my family when I was a new mom and how a people would compliment me on doing such a good job as a mom when my baby who was like a month old or two months old would be quiet. And I

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thought, oh my goodness. Like, can we stop that please? Babies cry because they need something that's a good thing. It, it's not a reflection of me as a mom and my parenting when the baby is quiet. And you know, it just, it says a lot about the society that we live in, in western culture and in United States especially.

And I think that if from an individualistic perspective, if you can just clean that up for yourself, that will have an impact positively not just on you, but on your family and then ultimately on the world. Because the more women and moms who understand this work, the more this will have that ripple effect on families as well as on everyone in in the world. And I think that that matters because, you know, I want to, you know, have my work reflect normalizing kids being a part of society and kids expressing their needs. And, that doesn't mean we don't have rules and boundaries, but that does mean that it's a little bit uncomfortable when there's a crying baby on the plane. But that's not the mom's fault and it's also, you know, not something we praise her for when the baby is quiet, as if being quiet is like the gold standard, which is so interesting because, you know, then we grow up and we're people pleasers because we think that that, is how we get our worth, okay?

Topic for a different day. But it all comes down to kind of how we relate to ourselves, how we relate to our kids, how we relate to other people like other adults. And I think that on default, because we care so much about, you know, our families, our kids, our neighbors, our friends, like other people in the world, we can lean into some of those social norms, some of those people pleasing tendencies where we define our goodness as a mom just based on arbitrary things that people tell us. Like, my baby was quiet on a plane, so I must be a good mom. Well, guess what? When we, we flew a lot, that first year we were living in South Carolina, so we flew up to Chicago often, and there were many trips when my firstborn was not quiet on that plane and people did not comment and say, you know, you're, you're such a good mom or, or anything like that.

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And, and it is not like they were mean, but of course it's, it's a little bit uncomfortable when, when, kids or babies are, are loud and crying on planes and we all get that right? We would all love the most perfect environment for all of us at all times, right? It's, it's all about us and everyone's just thinking about themselves and I get that I am too. And yeah, if we can just pause and take a step back and think, okay, how do I actually want to define being a good mom? To me, I want to base it on things I can control. If my child is fussy and needs something, I want them to make a fuss, especially if they're a baby and they can't communicate. Now, you know, meltdowns and tantrums and older kids, that's a little bit different. But still oftentimes when they're really upset, they're doing the best they can and allowing space for them to feel upset without you making that mean you are a bad mom or you should be able to control that is so important.

So you don't end up like a crazy person speaking from experience, my friends, let me make this like more specific. If you have a child who is in the habit of throwing things and you make that mean something about you, you're sort of centering yourself. You're making their actions reflective of you as a parent, and it's just entirely unhelpful. It's not helpful for you as a support system and, as a parent, it's not helpful for your child because it's not actually why they are throwing. And you need to figure out what that is, which means you need to kinda remove yourself from the center of it and get curious about their experience, their thoughts, create their feelings and drive their actions. And so there's always so much more going on underneath actions. And so that's one of the parenting tools I'm constantly using with my kids is like getting really curious.

It's an art form and it's almost like studying your kids in a really helpful, healthy, attached way so you can learn about them because all of your kids will be different. And it's fascinating, right? If you just think about like, I had three boys in three years, so they're all the same sex, all the same parents, same household, you know, like basically all circumstances are the same and they're so different. And I just love that about parenting because it's an entire journey for each child with you as the parent. And one of the, you

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know, best perspectives that I like to take is to really study my kids and just look for what's underneath the action that they're taking, okay? Because it's, it's, you know, if it's an action that I don't like them to be taking, like hitting or something like that, then there's more going on underneath there that I need to uncover.

And if, if the whole time I am making their actions mean I'm a bad mom, I'm totally blocking the opportunity for me to see what's going on here, right? Like right now at the time of that, I'm recording this. My second son is like, he's two and he has developed so much in the last few months cognitively, and, and I can see this competition with his older brother more so than ever before when he was more like that baby toddler and they seem more like peers and, he's catching up to the older, my older son Robert. And so like Robert and Henry will have, you know, their fights and their dialogues and their challenges, and I'm so grateful that I get to be a part of that and influencing and impacting the way that they navigate challenging relationships. I was just talking about this with a private client.

We're talking about a challenge that she's having with a boss. And I said, it is the same thing with little kids. We're teaching them how to disagree better. We are helping them navigate challenging relationships. It doesn't matter if it's my, you know, almost 4-year-old and my 2-year-old. It doesn't matter if it's you as an adult grown woman and your boss, it's like, how do we learn to disagree better? It's it's relationship building. And so I think it's such a privilege as moms to be able to coach and mentor and teach and yes, it's, you know, it's hard, right? I'm not, you know, trying to make this sound like, it's like going to a keynote speech or something or a Ted talk. It's, it's very active, right? I'm holding boundaries, I'm validating feelings. There's upsetness. And kind of why I was even going down this road of, of sharing this with you is because if I made outbursts and the new version of Henry's tantrums mean like, I'm a bad mom or I'm failing, or, you know, this shouldn't be happening and you know, at the end of the day ended it with like, am I doing enough?

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And you know, it's such a middle child thing to I think in my experience, to, have thoughts like, oh, he didn't get enough of me and it was right from, you know, Robert to Henry and then Henry to Jack. And, both Robert and Jack are going to get more time with me and it's unfair to him. And none of those thoughts are helpful for him and they're not helpful for me either. And because I have the mom like, it's your job framework, I know that and I catch them. And so I ask myself, okay, how do I want to show up? How do I want to think? How can I feel empowered in my own thoughts and feelings and empower my son and empower Henry and know that any challenge that he's having with tantrums, or if he's not getting the time that I want to give to him, how can I create that?

How can I give him more one-to-one time? And how can I show him that I believe in him, as, you know, being born at the exact right time and having the exact age gaps he's always supposed to have and really seeing him as not at the effect of, of being a middle child or anything like that. And it's so subtle, the nuances in the parenting, because again, it's not like drastic changes, drastic overhauls, but because of the mom like it's your job framework. I'm not making tantrums or sibling fights mean I'm a bad mom, I'm failing. I should be doing more. Even if there is more I want to do from a negative, I want to change something space. It comes from a scarcity, it comes from fix it mode, right? How do I get my child to right? Anytime I'm in get my child mode, I'm focusing on things I can't control.

So the mom like it's your job framework really helps me evaluate the kind of mom who I want to be. I want to be a mom who asks myself, am I showing up as the mom? I want to be with respect to Henry and Robert and Jack. And in some ways the answer's going to be yes. And in other ways the answer's going to be no. And that's how it's supposed to be. I mean, think of a high performance job. I want a boss who tells me, this is where you're excelling and this is where I want you to make some small tweaks and double down and maybe learn these other skills. And I think the next year we can get you here. Like, that's fun, that's a good time. Just think of a high performance job where you're growing and you're learning, like there's so much fun that can be had in these skills.

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And you know, it sounds kind of silly to say it this way and, and I hope it's not coming off, in just or silly because it is something that I truly believe can make a positive impact on your everyday life. Like I see motherhood as a growth container. I see these skills as skills I want to acquire and I want to work on. So, you know, you've all heard me talk about how I was a yeller and you know, just more extroverted and that's my kind of personality to, you know, talk. And, most of the time that's a good thing when you have toddlers and when you're quick to respond and when maybe your natural default is to yell, if you feel frustrated, that's not helpful at all. And so my transformation to become a calm mom, to feel grounded, you know, just today, perfect example.

It's dinner time. My husband's making burgers and it, like the sensory input, the overstimulation is high. There is, baby yapping in the high chair. One of the kids is crying, the other one's got like sauce all over him and the dogs are kind of waiting around trying to be fed. I'm like totally chill. My husband's just looking at me like, are you going to do something? Like he is on edge. He's like, this is too much. And I, I just had a moment of gratitude for myself in that instant where I reflected on how I expanded my capacity to be in an environment where there's a lot of stimuli and how grateful I am for that. Because that's not my default. I don't think that's anyone's default. And yet when you expand your zone of safety to feel comfortable in, in the chaos, it's awesome because guess what?

There's chaos in motherhood. And so I'm really grateful for that work. And but for having a framework through which I want to evaluate myself, I wouldn't have done that. I became a more soft, grounded mom who's more comfortable in the chaos, who can let the laundry sit, who can hold boundaries and say a loving, no, while validating feelings without feeling frustrated at all, without needing to calm down because I am calm. Because I saw that as an imperative skill in my motherhood. So setting expectations for myself is how you mom, like it's your job and having those expectations and then defining them through skills and then working on those skills. Not because something's wrong with me, not because I'm

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failing, but because when I look at motherhood as a job, when I look at being a mom as a job, how can I excel at that job?

Just like if I got a job as an attorney or a CFP, I want to know how I can excel. I want to know how I can do well. Like it really is what makes motherhood fun. Otherwise, on default you're going to be clock watching, you're going to be kind of putting out fires, you're going to be in reactive mode. It's just kind of the way our modern world is set up in conjunction with how the primitive brain works and likes to respond to what it sees as going wrong in the environment. And so you've gotta take a step back for your sake and get clear on your own expectations for being a mom. And you know, if you're someone who you know, the thought of a high performance job doesn't sound awesome, I promise you this is actually in a way where it's helpful. So this isn't a job that you don't want, you want to be a mom.

So it's just creating expectations and standards for yourself to evaluate yourself so that you reduce or eliminate the mom guilt so you reduce that negative self-talk that not enoughness, so that you have a clear way to know how you're doing. Like I think that's kind of cool. We get to just evaluate how we're doing, not based on how our kids are feeling, that's recipe for disaster, not based on how they're excelling. We know they're supposed to have challenges and we don't want to hang our goodness. And whether we approve of ourselves based on their outcomes, that's not fair to them, nor is it to us just unhelpful all around. So instead, it's coming up with standards for yourself, for your home, for how you parent, and then evaluating yourself on those standards within things that you can control. It is a life changing work and I just want to encourage you to do this work.

Come inside the Mom On Purpose Membership. You'll get the entire Mom Like It's Your Job framework and it will really help you bring calm, bring purpose, and bring connection to your motherhood. Because when you treat motherhood like a high performance job, you go from feeling like you know you're reacting and like a motherhood is just kind of happening very quickly, but also slowly at the same time. You know what I mean? To

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leading with clarity and connection and confidence. So join me inside the Mom On Purpose membership. Get the Mom Like It's Your Job framework. And you know, come to the coaching calls. We have them weekly. I will coach you, you'll get direct feedback. You can also write in anytime you get the call replays, you can hear from other members. And I just think doing this work together can make a really big positive impact not just on this season, but on any season that you are in.

And for any season that is to come, it is work that will compound because you'll see how you can really lead through your motherhood and I think that makes all the difference. So I'm here for the growth, I'm doing the work with you. It's been really fun to revamp this framework for myself and redefine my own expectations for how I'm applying these tools. And I continue to do it right alongside you. Alright, my beautiful friends, I will see you inside the membership. 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.