

Toxic Mom Thoughts About Summer



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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, 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 friends. Welcome back to the podcast. So happy to be here with you today. Life is good and full and all of the things right? There's the yin and the yang, the ups and the downs, the challenges and the summer magic. And there is no exception to that. And I think the better that we get, I get, you get, at managing our brains and learning the inner work tools and applying them to our lives, the better our life experience is.

And so I wanted to talk today about summertime and what I consider to be kind of toxic thoughts that sound actually kind of typical, normal, helpful thoughts that you may not initially think are toxic and that you may actually be thinking. And I use the word toxic specifically here because I like to think of the word toxic as like poisonous. And when I think about a thought that is poisonous or toxic, it's really, really unhelpful for creating the result that you want. So if you want to create a fun summer and excited summer, a playful summer, a carefree summer, an intentional summer, whatever it is, right? And you have any of these thoughts or probably what's most likely to happen, like a combination of these thoughts on default as the human brain will have, then what's going to happen is that those thoughts will create worry, guilt, pressure, anxiety, self pity disconnection, mom guilt, the feelings that I think rob you of the exact experience that you want to have in motherhood.

And again, not speaking from my ivory tower, this is my experience too. And the older my kids get, the I, I think more this comes up for me in terms of summertime and creating an intentional summer. I mean, there is no shame at all with just like getting through the summer. I remember a few summers ago where like I was pregnant, right? And I had back to back summers of that and it really was just easy play, be pregnant and you know,

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do not like bare minimum. But I wasn't thinking about the things that I'm thinking about now for summer, and that's okay too. And so you have to meet yourself where you are. But for those of you who like me, just want to create special summers and just honestly it's, it's not a one size fits all. It's more about purposeful and being intentional with the summer that you want to create.

That's what it's about. And with that, just like being the high achievers that we are, we will, myself included, likely fall into one of these toxic thoughts that again, you know, it's not bad or wrong, but the impact of it is that it creates something that is so unhelpful for you. And the thoughts that I'm including here today are, are thoughts that, that are sneaky. Like you wouldn't think that it's a toxic thought. Obviously we know kind of the obvious unhelpful thoughts like why are my kids being so difficult or why can't they listen to me? Like those thoughts that feel terrible that are kind of negative and disconnecting. We know those thoughts. I'm talking about thoughts that you might think are actually fine and not a problem at all. They're kind of sneaky. That's why I call 'em sneaky thoughts. But they are toxic because they create something that you don't want.

They create the pressure, the worry, the mom guilt, the overwhelm, the self pity, the anxiety, the defeat, any of those emotions. And that list is non exhaustive of course. But like any of the emotions that you are experiencing that don't help you create what you want for summer, which by the way, that is how you're creating your summer, is through your emotions. And so yes, there are always the things that you're doing, but you're never not feeling a feeling. So through everything that you do, if you're feeling tense, okay, that's not the summer you want to create. Your kids will feel that. They will sense that, they will sense. Mommy's always stressed and intense and you know, I always lead with that because I think we care so much about our connection and our relationship with our kids and that's sort of like the first thing we think about.

But I want to, I just want to be clear that like this matters for you, for your experience too, and that more than anything, right? 'cause it's a relationship with self thing. So with that, let's dive in to, I think I have 10, a

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list of 10 toxic thoughts that will create more of what you don't want in your summer. Toxic thought Number one, we only get 18 summers. This is kind of from all of those viral reels that we see or content that's out there about kinda the brevity, the shortness of the amount of time that we are with our kids at home. And not just the couple of decades, but more specifically the summers. Like when you think of your lifetime and you think of like a hundred years, let's say, that seems kind of long. When you think of 18 summers, all of a sudden the brain goes to, oh no, this is short.

I better do this perfectly. And then what happens with a thought like this is that it can create urgency, pressure you know, for my high achieving mom clients, it's like you want to do all of the things and you want to do them extraordinarily well, but it's motivated from a sense of obligation and duty and responsibility and pressure. And so check in with yourself, right? Because when you just take out the word only and you think we get 18 summers, and that's plenty, it's a completely different feeling when you add in the word only, it adds in pressure and scarcity. And like, again, this stress that is just unhelpful, it disconnects you from the present I think, like I just don't even think this thought, 'cause I know it's an unhelpful thought. It's like kind of like click baity to me. Instead, I think like we get the exact amount of summers with our kids that we're supposed to have.

This is how life is supposed to go, right? And, and I just kind of stay out of that. I'm like, no brain. We're not doing that. And so just be mindful of that thought. It's just unhelpful. Number two, toxic thought number two, I should appreciate every second. I think kind of like with the emphasis of mindfulness and affirmations and appreciation and gratitude, we end up as moms on ourselves thinking that that's how we should be all of the time. I promise you, to this day, I've coached thousands of moms, my friends, I have never had a client who doesn't feel grateful and appreciative for their life. It's not a lack of gratitude, it's not a lack of appreciation it's not that you need to be more grateful or more appreciative and implementing those practices, what it is is an unmanaged brain. And so what happens is then we can try to push down negative thoughts with gratitude thoughts.

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Like, let's just say, your kid is navigating a challenge with friends over the summer and it feels difficult for you. You might have a thought like, I should be more appreciative of this season of life. This shouldn't be so difficult for me. I should just be appreciating that I get to parent and help him through this. And I wish this wasn't happening and I should be able to manage this better. Right? We tend to should on ourselves and then we should on other people. They shouldn't be treating him like this. He shouldn't be having to go through this. And so pay attention to your shoulds inside the Mom On Purpose Membership. This month I taught a brand new masterclass called Mom Traps, where I'm teaching cognitive distortions about how we as moms fall into these mind traps, these cognitive distortions and shoulding is one of them where I'm showing you exactly how to stop shoulding on yourself and shoulding on others for your sake.

Because again, this is a sneaky thought. Doesn't I should appreciate every second sound like a useful thought. Like don't we want more appreciation and gratitude? I mean, yes, but again, that's not the problem that I'm seeing with my high achieving mom clients. Like you are likely very appreciative and grateful. What's happening is that you're simultaneously feeling overstimulated or frustrated or overwhelmed or, maybe you don't even know how you feel. It just feels like it's too much. And then what happens is, instead of learning the tools and the skills to manage that, you know, that's exactly what we teach inside the Mom On Purpose Membership. You then kind of judge yourself and think you shouldn't be having that experience. And so be aware of that because it will kind of really steal your experience and what is available to you inside, inside your summer, right?

If you're shooting on yourself, then you're not going to have a very fun time. And again, you know, no shame in it. Just come and get coaching, come and get these tools so that again, it's like giving yourself a skillset for not just this summer, but the year ahead, the next summer and the next summer, and really for the rest of your life. Toxic thought Number three. I just want everyone to be happy. Oh my goodness, my friend. I think this is, this is one of the most toxic thoughts you can have because it comes from such a loving place, and it's one that's been so popularized that it is, I would say it's probably the top sneakiest thought, like, it sounds so loving,

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but when you check in with yourself, when you have kids who aren't happy or a spouse who isn't happy, and you have the thought, I just want everyone to be happy, you are resisting what is. So you will feel, I don't know, either frustrated or disconnected or worried you are wanting something that isn't the reality of how it is.

And that want that's disconnected from reality is a rejection of reality, which oftentimes creates frustration, but it depends what it is, right? It might be, some sadness, some discontent, it might be worry, right? I just want everyone to be happy. It sounds like such a loving thought. It is toxic, my friends, you've gotta do thought work on this thought. And of course, you know, I'm talking about the Micro container of summertime, but it's not just summertime. This plays into, you know, loving our kids forever, right? And, and we've all heard like, it's like wearing your heart on your sleeve. It is, without doing these tools and this work. And I still have to do that work because I'm no exception to the primitive brain that wants my kids to be happy. I just never think that thought. I know that my kids are supposed to have the exact experience they're supposed to have, which includes negative emotion.

The more comfortable I get with that by practicing my thought work and my feelings work, which is exactly what I teach inside Mom On Purpose, the better equipped I am to live that. And it, I want to say teach that to my kids, but it's not like, Hey kids, let's learn a lesson about how you don't have to be happy all the time. And that's okay. No, it's more of like an embodied teaching where when they're upset, when they're frustrated, I'm not rushing to try to fix their unhappiness. And I'm, I'm telling you my friends, this is not just about popsicles in the summertime, okay? This impacts the rest of their life. If you send the message to them that they need to be happy all of the time, guess what? In their adult relationships, in their marriages, in their relationships with their kids, in their relationships with you, just in how they approach life, they may feel very ill-equipped to navigate frustration, um, their own worries, their own discontent, their own disconnection.

And again, there's no point in time where we have none of that. And so it's not about trying to make everything happy and positive all the time. It's

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about learning the tools so that you can manage your brain to think how you want to think and learning how to feel your feelings, right? And, and you do that best by being comfortable with your kids' negative emotions. It's one of the skills that I'm the most proud of with my kids. It's like I am owning how I want to feel this summer. I want to bring a a lot of excitement and I want to bring a lot of playfulness. And it's totally fine if my kids want to feel frustrated and they're maybe going through a challenge I didn't anticipate or they're feeling however they want to feel like here for that, that is the best gift we can give our kids is so that they don't feel so alone so that we are with them in their real experience.

Okay? All right, toxic thought number four, it's my responsibility to create a fill in the blank summer. For some of you it's a magical summer, an intentional summer, a carefree summer, a you know, whatever your thinking is about summer, when you feel like it's your responsibility to create that, it can feel heavy, specifically the word responsibility. Now, I love taking responsibility for what's mine to control the trickiness and the stickiness of this particular thought is we tend to base what a magical summer is on things outside of our control. So when you say it's my responsibility to create a magical summer, at the end of the day, if you went out there and created some activities or signed your kids up for whatever, or took them wherever, what, like, whatever you wanted to do, at the end of the day, would you feel proud of yourself no matter what your kids' experience is?

9.9 times out of 10, that is not what my clients do. What my clients do is they do what they want to do, but then whether they're proud of that and whether they feel like they accomplished, that hinges on their child's experience of it. So if my kid enjoyed it and was happy with it and excited about it and felt like they were feeling the magic, then yes, I did a good job. But if they didn't, if they were frustrated, if they were bored, if they didn't like it, if whatever happened that they had a challenge, then I blame myself, okay, this is the mom. Like, it's your job process and it is one of the best skills you can learn. I teach this inside the Mom On Purpose Membership. I also teach it in the Calm Minded mom bundle as a masterclass. If you just want that.

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Again, the, the reason that this is so important is because a thought like it's my responsibility to create a magical summer can sound loving. And yet when you base it off of things outside your control, you make yourself a little bit miserable, a little bit controlling, and then you end up in like, mom guilt and just kind of like chasing something that isn't yours to control. So yes, you want to show up for your kids and create what you want to create, but not so that they feel a certain way. We've gotta let go of that so that our kids can feel the full range of emotions that they are supposed to experience. And I'm telling you, it is work to do to untie your feelings from theirs, but it is work worth doing because the downside is pretty big. When you entangle your feelings with theirs, they're not going to feel as comfortable coming to you and being authentic with their challenges, right?

Especially as they get older, because they're going to think, oh no, if I'm upset, then my mom gets upset and I don't want to make her upset, so I'm just going to shut down and not tell her and act like everything's fine it also just for me, it's not who I want to be in the relationship. I want to be authentic and open and just make space for them to be their most human selves. Now, of course, boundaries and rules and all of that, that's not what I'm talking about. I'm talking about they have to feel a certain way in order for me to feel like I'm a good enough mom. No way. Not how I want to mom. And, I think when you really break it down like that, we can see how unhelpful a thought like it's my responsibility to create a fill in the blank magical summer for them.

Okay, toxic thought number five, I can't relax until again, another fill in the blank here until everything gets done. I can't relax until everyone is okay. I can't relax until everything is like off my to-do list. Like, like whatever your until is, you gotta clean that up because relaxing isn't earned. I want you to feel relaxed just because, I don't know, I like to think of it as like your God-given, right? I like to think of it as I something that is always available to you if you are performing to earn your rest. It's very exhausting, my friends, and this is exactly why I teach my Time Freedom method, where you get rid of your to-do list because, it creates a lot of time scarcity, and makes brain management so much harder, which shows up in a very real way. Like you're rushing around through your days.

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Like, I can't relax until whatever is done. I'm so proud of the work that I have done on this. Like, I can just relax with things undone. It's like this inner strength that I have really cultivated from utilizing these tools and doing this work. Toxic thought Number six. I need a plan for every second. I think this comes up a lot like at the beginning of summer where we're thinking like, I just want to be intentional with summer. I just want to make sure it goes well. I just want to make sure like I've planned it well, and there's nothing wrong with a plan. In fact, I think more planning is better for summer because in the moment you're going to be defaulting to that primitive brain of yours. But on the other hand, that does not mean we need a plan for every second. It's, it's less about I have to fill this space and more about, okay, we have this chunk of time.

How do we want to use it as a family this summer? That's all it is. That's what a plan is. It's using your prefrontal brain to make decisions ahead of time. It's like, you know, planning your food or planning your money. You are going to make such better decisions out of the moment, ahead of time than you would in the moment when your primitive brain sees someone next to you at the restaurant ordering fries and a cheeseburger. Okay? Nothing wrong with those foods, I like to eat them too from time to time. But if you're trying to lose weight or change your eating habits or something like that, making a decision in the moment, unless you're doing some sort of method that's going to help you not do that, it's a lot harder. So what I'm trying to say here is when you're thinking I need to plan every second, you will create a plan from fear, and the fear is unfounded.

You could, you could not create a plan and it would be totally fine, it really would. But if we want to use our prefrontal brain to be more intentional for this summer, then let's loosen it up a bit and just say, okay, I want to create a plan for the summer versus I need a plan for every second. And my kids have to be doing something and they can't feel bored and like, right? Like, it, it's too intense and it's coming from fear versus, okay, this is who I want to be this summer. Like, have a plan for how you want to think and feel. I promise you, my friends, you will have such a better summer if you are thinking intentionally about how you want to think and feel versus over

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planning what, right? We're all about the summer routine and the summer plan. Like, I get it, right?

We, want to use this chunk of time mindfully, thoughtfully, intentionally. It's kind of like, oh my gosh, I've never thought of this analogy. This is great. It's kind of like every year you get a windfall of money, maybe you get a bonus or maybe your spouse gets a bonus and it's your family money. It's this bonus. Maybe it's at the end of the year. Okay? I want you to think of summer as this chunk of time. That's like a bonus. And it's different than the other nine months of the year. It's different than your regular salary or income throughout the year. It's, it's an extra chunk. So what do you want to do with it? Same thing with summer. Generally speaking, how do you want your weeks to go? Generally speaking, what are the bucket list items that you want to do? And generally speaking, how do you want to think and feel this summer?

That's plenty my friends. Okay, toxic thought number seven. If summer feels hard or there are challenges, I'm doing something wrong, my friend. If summer feels hard or there are challenges, it is not because you're doing something wrong, it is simply because there are circumstances happening. And the way that your brain perceives summer or the challenge feels hard. And that's valid. Our brain loves, loves, loves to go to all or nothing thinking again. This is another mom trap that I'm teaching inside the Membership this month. If you go on over to momonpurpose.com/coaching and you join, you will get that masterclass. And I promise you it's life changing because you can pinpoint these unhelpful thoughts and change them, right? That's the skill that you learn. And it, in a very real way changes how you think and feel on an everyday basis. And so if summer feels hard or challenging, I'm doing something wrong.

Okay? Not true and extraordinarily unhelpful. We're supposed to have difficulties in life, even in summertime. And you know this if you think about it in that way, but in the moment it can feel like that's not true. That if it's hard, if there are challenges, then you are doing something wrong. It's just simply not true. Difficulty hardships, challenges, they do not mean failure. They just mean that whatever is happening is hard for your brain.

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Remember my friends, circumstances, situations, they don't have meaning until your brain interprets them. And this is the most freeing tool that you can ever use in your life. Because no matter what happens externally, you can still decide intentionally how you want to think and feel about it. It's like the saying goes, you can't control the hand you're dealt, but you can learn how to play it. And that is truly a superpower.

Mental and emotional skills to navigate the challenges, the ups and downs. I just want you to know that you're not doing something wrong. Summer feels hard, challenges feel hard for your brain, and there are tools that can help. Toxic thought number eight is about what you are doing and kind of this pervasive idea, this pervasive thought of it not being enough. And this is a scarcity thought. So your thought might be something like, I'm not doing enough for my kids, or my kids aren't doing enough. Some version of something or someone or you isn't doing enough. I think that summertime is similar to the holidays in so far as like it's a container where we have a magnifying glass on everything. Like everything feels bigger and more important. And the same is true with respect to our challenges. So I think comparison is magnified and amplified in the summer.

I think our kids' challenges and you know what they like to do. So if your kids like to be on screens, it's probably amplified or magnified in the summer. And I think that with that comparison leads to all of these assumptions and generalizations that we make about our kids that are just unhelpful. My kids aren't doing enough, I'm not doing enough. Enough is a thought. And you don't have to think it. I know this sounds like too simple to be true, but it is true enough can simply not be in your vocabulary. And you gotta learn how to turn it around and manage your brain so that you can make decisions about what you want to change. So what I'm not saying is that you just say, okay, my kids are doing enough, right? Like that still ties it to enough versus learning how to unwind that thought and make decisions about how you want the summer to go or what you want to change.

Just because you made decisions about, I don't know, screen time or the schedule for the summer, that doesn't mean that it has to go through the whole summer. Maybe a new challenge arises or maybe after a couple

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weeks you see the impact of how you set things up and you're not liking it. Or maybe there's a new, you know, challenge one of your kids is having, or you know, who knows, right? Things come up. There are valid reasons just because we want to is another valid reason for changing things. And you have to learn how to do that from a place of confidence so that you are not sort of falling into the trap of, my kids aren't doing enough, I'm not doing enough. Again, that line of thinking will really, create like this low grade tension and discontent over the summer. And here's what I want you to know.

Your brain has a tendency to fall into all of these unhelpful thoughts. Why? Because of the survival brain. It is wired to scan for what's wrong, to scan for what's not good to scan for what could be better to scan for like things to fix, problems to solve. And I think as a high achiever, what we do is like we amplify that, we turn that dial up, which is really helpful if we're working on a work project or trying to solve something, you know, that's not lining up with schedules like we know how to problem solve, we can get it done and that's great. But when it comes to our relationships, when it comes to our decisions, that type of characteristic, that type of framework can be really unhelpful because it can lead to, again, this low grade discontent, this worry, this mom guilt where you are constantly scanning for what's wrong, what you need to fix, what you could be doing better.

And I promise you my friend, I'm the same way and I learned how to manage my brain to change that so that I don't have those thoughts. And it's so much simpler than you think. Okay? Toxic thought number nine, my kids deserve, fill in the blank. My kids deserve a better summer. My kids deserve to have a lake house they can go to. My kids deserve to be in overnight camps. My kids deserve to whatever it is, right? That you are not giving them or that they're not experiencing, or my kids don't deserve to have this challenge. My kids deserve better, whatever it is, right? The problem with this line of thinking is that it creates inadequacy, it focuses on something that's not true. So if your kids have a challenge, then they have that challenge and no one deserves that challenge probably, right? And yet when you say that, it's in resistance of what is.

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So you have to learn how to just accept where you're at. Now, acceptance doesn't mean apathy. I coach a lot of moms with kids who have different and various diagnoses, right? You get to decide how you want to think about that. When you think thoughts that create, sadness or guilt or frustration, is that helpful? Right? Most of the time it's not. Versus, okay, this is where my kid's at. This is the diagnosis we have and this is the type of support we're going to seek out. This is what's next for us. This is how we want to think and feel about it. It can feel a very connecting and empowering and hopeful in a way that may have not been available to you on default. Again, because these are very normal thoughts. That's why I like to think of them as sneaky. Doesn't it seem like a loving thought?

Like, my kids don't deserve this, my kids deserve a better summer, my kids deserve, fill in the blank. Like maybe it's just not relevant to what is. And so shifting your thoughts is not just like a little swap, it's not just like a little affirmation. It's, it's so much of an art that again, I love the Mom On Purpose membership because it's, you know, for less than a hundred dollars a month, you learn this tool over time and over the course of the year, and most members say multiple years, you really just learn how to keep your brain sharp. I had a client write in the other day. She's like, I'm watching the video, the replay of the call and video in the portal, but can you help me find it on the private podcast? I just love to listen on the go because every single week it keeps my brain sharp.

I'm like, yes, exactly. That is what this is for. Because on default, that primitive brain is going to be scanning for what's not good enough. What's wrong, what needs fixed, what needs to get done. I'm all for productivity. I'm all for solving problems, but not from lack, not from scarcity, not from not enoughness. It really just makes your overall experience of life harder. It makes it, more challenging. And the main emotions that you'll be feeling will be frustration or tension or stress or self pity or mom guilt, like any of those, right? It depends on how your brain specifically interprets the thought. For me, I I tend to go to like, tension and self-pity, I would say, out of those options. So you gotta check in with yourself and where's your default brain going to and what's that creating for you so that you start managing your brain better.

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And the last toxic thought, I don't have time for fill in the blank this summer. I don't have time for my goals this summer. I don't have time to lose weight this summer. I don't have time to read a book this summer. I don't have time to fill in the blank this summer. The way that I teach time, and I taught this in Time Freedom in the brand new masterclass last month, was it? It's gold. Okay? You can get it in the Calm Minded Mom Bundle over at momonpurpose.com/bundle or in the Membership over at momonpurpose.com/coaching, right? The bundle just includes the master classes, but the membership includes ongoing weekly coaching. And what I teach in my Time Freedom method is so much of it is mindset before you even get to the strategy and the tactics, and I give you it all, okay?

But the mindset that you have to really work on is that time is experienced through you. So there's no such thing as I don't have time for now. What there is, is the way that you prioritize things and make decisions. And so what I'm not saying is that you would want to work on your goals this summer or you would want to work on your weight loss goal this summer, or you would want to read more books this summer. Maybe you don't want to, but you get to make those decisions and that goes back to your priorities during this season of life. And then it also goes to decision making. And we're going to talk about decision making next month inside the Mom On Purpose Membership. I'm so excited because decision making is a huge part of your life, right? Like your life is simply the compilation, is that a word of your decisions?

And so the better you are at decision making, the better life you create. And I think that when we make decisions based on what other people want for us, it leads to a lot of resentment. It leads to a lot of self pity, it leads to a lot of shoulding on ourselves and shoulding on other people. And so owning that you're making the decisions that you want to be making with your time actually feels really, really powerful for yourself. So you might decide, you know what? I don't want to work on my goals this summer, or I don't want to, write a book this summer or read a book this summer, or whatever it is. But that statement is so different than I don't have time for it. And so when you are saying you don't have time for something, it's simply an invitation for you to do the inner work.

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And you get all of those teaching inside the time Freedom Method that I teach inside the Membership and inside the Mom On Purpose bundle. And it is work worth doing, my friends, because again, the time of summer is like a container with a magnifying glass on it that is going to bring to light the scarcity, the worry thoughts, the fear-based thoughts, the hurried rushed thoughts that are otherwise present. And they're just more amplified now. And so I think it can be a great opportunity for you to start doing this work at a deeper level. And so I always want to invite you to come and get coached every single Monday. There is a weekly group coaching call. You can listen to the replays on the private podcast.

You also get daily dose of positivity inside a mindful message as well as, access to all of it inside your member portal. So I would love to see you in the Mom On Purpose membership, pay attention to your thoughts. I am just always reminding you and myself how important thought work is because it really is the difference between you creating what you want for the summer, you having the summer that you want, the carefree summer, the playful summer, the fun summer that is created from thought work. It's not created from what you do. Okay? And so practice your thought, work my friends. It changes everything. Until next week, take care.