

Approaching Your Goals With A-Player Mentality



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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 friend. Welcome back to the podcast. So happy to be here with you today talking about a player mentality. So over the last couple of years I've been coaching a lot of women with weight loss and it has been so much fun for me. It is one of my favorite things and what I created and included inside my program At Your Goal Weight is a training on how to have an a player mentality. And I want to talk about that here and how to do that, but more importantly why it matters.

And this applies anytime you are working on something specifically a goal. That's kind of how I'm thinking about it. Like it comes up a lot with my high achieving mom clients, especially with weight loss. But it also could be applied in a work setting for sure you know, maybe at home, you know, apply it wherever you want. But I want to preface it with like, I'm sort of thinking about it through the lens of, of working on a goal. And I will use the example of weight loss since a lot of my clients are on weight loss journeys. So to get started, I actually want to talk about the default. So the default way that we tend to respond when we fail, when we make a mistake is to be our harsh inner critic. Almost like an inner mean girl. That's how I think about it.

It's subtle, it's probably not like dramatic language, but even just a subtle thought like, I can't believe I did that. So for example, if you are anything like me and you have forgotten something for your child, like a lunchbox or their extra clothes or whatever it is for school, how do you respond to that? It could be for a weight loss school that you're working on and as you are doing your plan and eating less and

Approaching Your Goals With A-Player Mentality

following the, the method, you notice an uptick. So a harsh inner critic, inner mean girl would be like having the narrative in your mind, what's wrong with me? I should know better. I can't believe that happened. They're just like low grade negative thoughts that feel tense and you may not even realize that this is what your brain is feeding you. But a lot of my clients do know this inner critic, and so what they've actually done is swung the other way.

And that's actually where a player mentality comes in. So the default is to be harsh and self-critical. And then, you know, somewhere along the way you learn that's not very nice to be an inner mean girl to yourself. And so what you do is you change it and you decide, I am not going to be mean to myself anymore. I'm going to work on that inner voice. I'm going to have a nicer inner dialogue and self-talk. So what happens though and where this is a problem and where I'm seeing like a blind spot and why I created the a-player mentality tool is because of this blind spot. The blind spot is not being a mean girl to yourself and not shaming yourself and blaming yourself and being your inner critic and not feeling that like tension towards yourself. And, having that harshness towards yourself does not mean you go all the way to the other end of the spectrum.

And this is kind of what I see happen the most. And the other end of the spectrum is, kind of like abdicating responsibility for what happened in a way that is kind, which is great. We want to keep the part where you're kind to yourself of course, but it also comes with this sense of, okay, let's just move on from it and let's not think about it. So the shame is still there, right? Shame hides. And so when you make a mistake or you get it wrong, like weight loss is a perfect example. So if you're trying to lose weight and you're, you know, doing all of the things and then you get into a plateau or an uptick and you know, okay, I don't want to be harsh and critical towards myself, and instead what I'm going to do is say, you know what?

Approaching Your Goals With A-Player Mentality

Things happen. It's no big deal. It was a tough weekend, I was stressed. We're just going to move on. Okay, this is what I see all of the time, my friend, can you relate to this? So I want you to not do this either. There's a big problem with this. It ignores what happened and you take your brain with you. And so yes, it's great that you're nice to yourself again, we're going to keep that part and it's great that you're no longer that like mean, harsh inner critic. However, if you keep doing what you did and keep thinking how you're thinking and keep feeling how you're feeling that led to the mistake or the failure or whatever it was, and you ignore it, like you don't look at it, then you're going to get the same result even if it's in a different circumstance. So it's really all or nothing thinking, right?

And so on the one hand, typically at first we're harsh and critical and we have this like mean girl and then on the other end of the spectrum we're like, no, no, no, we're done with that. And so you're really nice and kind. But what comes with that that I think is the blind spot that most of you know, the members of this community miss is taking it like to the next level where you actually ignore what happened and you, you have a little bit of shame there and so you just want to quickly move on. You're like, okay, it's no big deal. This happened. I know why it happened. I was stressed and I'm not going to beat myself up. We're just going to move on. Like, I can't tell you how many times I have had a client say that to me and I'm like, whoa, whoa, whoa, whoa, whoa, slow down.

We are not going to shame you or criticize you or, be mean to you. Of course not. And also we are not ready to move on my friend. So the analogy that I like to give is thinking of a professional sports team and they lost a big championship game and they still have another championship game to play. Like, I don't know, maybe it's basketball and there's a tournament or something like that, right? Like there's a lot on the line. They lost that game. And so they don't just give

Approaching Your Goals With A-Player Mentality

themselves a pep talk and say, we can go out there and do it better next time. You know what they do? They go home and or you know, where the team gathers and they watch tape and they like rewatch what they did that didn't work and they figure out what they could improve upon and what could be better for next time.

I was at a business conference a while back and the head of a department was talking about HR and talking about how during their interview process, one of the questions that they ask to candidates is how do you like to receive feedback? And when I heard that question, I kind of got tense and like cringed a little bit and I did a lot of thought work on that and I realized it was because I was not living into having an A player mentality. And once I created this kind of tool and expanded upon it, like I realized like how brilliant that question is because if you are on either end of the spectrum where you're really harsh and critical and kind of like mean girl to yourself, or you are very kind to yourself, but you ignore any time you make a mistake or get it wrong or fumble or miss the ball, right?

And the sports analogy that I'm thinking of, then you miss it. You miss the opportunity to do better and grow and you know, more specifically if it's weight loss or if it's something else, you miss the opportunity to fix like what you did wrong. And I think even that sentence like what you did wrong can feel like an attack if you're used to being really harsh and judgemental. But when you really do this work and you see that it's all or nothing thinking and you get comfortable with no, no, no, I'm not setting and achieving goals so that I can be better. I'm not setting and achieving goals to like prove that I'm worthy or good enough. I'm setting and achieving a goal because I want to. Then any mistakes or failures, they become a lot lighter. You don't take them so personally and this can work extraordinarily well in the work setting as well.

Approaching Your Goals With A-Player Mentality

I've coached many moms inside the Mom On Purpose Membership about their career and about how hard and difficult it is for them to receive feedback and it's because they're attaching their worth and their identity to the role. But when you let go of that and you just decide I am a worthy human being and I don't have to do anything to prove that and I want to see what's possible and I want to get feedback and I want to be able to grow and I want to know what I'm doing wrong and the mistakes I made and like you have this a player mentality, it's a completely different work experience. The same is true with your goals. The same is true with weight loss. When you decide anytime I make a mistake or I get it wrong, I want to study it. Like I want to get in there.

I can always tell when I'm coaching a private client with weight loss and they sort of want to like skirt over what happened and move on very quickly. And I'm like, oh, okay, this is what's happening here. There's some shame there. And very quickly I say like, there's no shame. You're not wrong or bad. What you did was not effective for the result that you want. And so I need to make sure as your coach that we know exactly what that is. What were you thinking? What were you feeling? What did you do? What did you not do? Like what was your self-talk? We need to like get in there and examine it. Just like how I imagine anyw ays, professional athletes sit down and watch back the game and if they had an off game, or even if they didn't, they just want to study themselves to improve because that's what makes them a better player.

And that's how I think about the A player mentality. And I think that, you know, there's a lot of talk in the coaching industry about like B minus work and I get the sentiment behind that. And a lot of the work that can be very, very helpful, especially when you're just beginning to do this work, is to learn how to let go of that default brain of yours that is so harsh and so critical and such a mean girl. But after you've done

Approaching Your Goals With A-Player Mentality

that, like the next level, the next layer of the work is to come back to the middle and have an A- player mentality so that whatever you're doing, you can do it with really high standards. Not so that you are trying to prove something or be happier or like show that you're good enough or worthy, none of that. But just think about people who are exceptional in whatever they do, whether it's motherhood, whether it's being a surgeon, whether it's a CEO, whether it's like throwing a birthday party.

I just like to have high standards because that's kind of part of my identity and I like that, but it's not from this place of lack. So for example, I pick and choose what my standards are for what, my husband and I were just talking about this, my standards are very low for messes right now and for like laundry being folded, that's not an accident. That's not because I'm a slob. That is a strategic approach. That is me choosing priorities. You know, what's a higher priority than me folding little boys' laundry and putting it away. Like pretty much everything, like a lot of things, my health, my wellbeing, my clients, my business. Like I make sure the laundry is clean, but I like basically use my own system where I just have baskets of clothes that are unfolded. I got little kids, it doesn't bother me, me at all.

When I look around my house and I see toys kind of all over the place. I have so much gratitude. I wanted this for my whole life. This is so short. Like even in five years, like all these toys pretty much are probably going to be gone definitely in 10 years. Like that is so sad to me. And so I just want to embrace it. And does it mean that we have toys in our living room everywhere? Yeah. Like it doesn't bother me. And so what I'm articulating here is having high standards for the things that you want to have high standards in. And so if you have a goal or it is in your work where you want to excel, like you get to decide what that is for you and then have an a player mentality about

Approaching Your Goals With A-Player Mentality

it. Do you see the difference there between an a player mentality and perfectionism?

Right? If it was perfectionism, I would need everything to be perfect. And if it wasn't, I would make that mean something negative about me. So the laundry like a perfect example, I would, you know, not be able to tolerate a mess. I would definitely not be able to tolerate, unfolded laundry. I would make that mean something negative about me as a mom. I would definitely be overly worried or concerned about other people when they come into my home and I'm just not. And so that's the difference. Do you see what I mean? Now I think I have an a-player mentality with my goals, with my business showing up as a mom, the things that matter to me. And so I think about it as like a strategic approach and a way for me to like show up as the mom who I want to be.

And for you, if it's in your work, if it's a goal, I just want you to think about when you make a mistake, when there is feedback to be had, when you see an uptick on the scale, when you miss the mark and stumble over your speech or you get like a negative review, like what's your default? Do you default to being a harsh inner critic, mean girl? Or have you kind of done some of the work? So now what you do is you kind of just say, it's okay, we don't have to worry about it, I'm going to fix it, I'm going to do it better next time. But you don't actually look at what happened. That is a sign for you to consider the a player mentality. And all it is is saying, oh, no, no, no, we're not going to have shame and go into blame.

No blaming me, no blaming anyone else we're also not going to just ignore it, but instead we're going to look at what happened. It's like, how do you want your feedback? Give your feedback to yourself in a loving, warm, but also firm way. So if you know you are trying to, I don't know, lose weight and you drank a couple glasses of wine that you hadn't accounted for, what you don't want to do is be harsh and

Approaching Your Goals With A-Player Mentality

critical and mean to yourself, but you also don't want to just say, oh, well no worries, like, you know, next weekend I won't do that. Or something like that. Like, that's not helpful. What's very helpful is for you to have an A- player mentality. An a player goes back to the moment with curiosity, not shame and looks at exactly what happened. So you have to slow it down.

Again. I just, I just imagine professional athletes like watching tape really slow, really, really slow to see like exactly what happened. That's what I want you to do. When you are looking back at a mistake or like, you know, kind of a miss or a failure and look back at what you were thinking, how you were feeling, like any other factors that you want to consider, study yourself so that you can learn. You can't learn something. So you'll take the same brain with you in a future circumstance. And so if the goal for you is to not have another uptick, for example, with weight loss, then you want to make sure that what you do is different and you can't know that unless you know exactly what happened. I think about this with my own business and it's like, you know, having a launch, it might be for you, a work presentation, whatever it is.

If you don't get a result that you want or that you wanted, do not keep doing the same thing the next time. Do not kind of excuse it and say it's totally fine. But also of course you don't want to be harsh and critical. Instead you want to go back and look at the data, look at the information. If this was a situation where you get a, I don't know, like an annual review from your boss or the CEO or something and it's not what you expected, it could be really easy to internalize that. Take it personally to blame maybe the staff to blame a colleague, to blame the actual person who's giving you the feedback, your supervisor, the CEO, whoever it is, or then to blame yourself, right? It's going back and forth between blame. But I love the thought. There's just no one to blame here, okay?

Approaching Your Goals With A-Player Mentality

There is no one to blame. And what I want to do is look at what they said. Look at how I showed up and performed the last year. Maybe I want to have a conversation to learn more. Maybe I know exactly like what the feedback is reflecting, maybe not, but you want to slow it down and, and like take inventory so you can learn something. I think this is, is truly how you grow, how you get better, how you change. And I don't mean better as like a person, I mean better in the skill. So like, if you're trying to learn how to ski, you can't just go out skiing like without any instructions, time and time again and become a professional skier. Like there are coaches, there are instructors who teach you how to ski and they're going to tell you, you know, what you're doing wrong and, and how you can improve on the skill of skiing.

And so that's why I love thinking about different things as skills. It's, it's kind of like yelling, this is such a great example when I'm coaching my clients on yelling and how to stop yelling. If you are continuously yelling in, you know, predictably similar circumstances, like you're yelling at your kids at night, right? Of course every night's different, but you know, arguably a lot of nights are the same. So if you just go from being really harsh and mean and critical towards yourself, like, I'm such a bad mom, my kids don't deserve this, I'm going to mess them up. This is terrible, right? You're kind of yelling at yourself for yelling at your kids, which does not work. And then on the other end of the spectrum, what you could end up doing is kind of, ignoring it. 'cause there's still that shame there.

And so it might sound like, you know what? I'm going to give myself a break. I've been really stressed of course I didn't mean it and I feel bad, but you know, I'm just going to try my best tomorrow and, and hope that my kids listen better and I don't yell. Okay? Also not helpful. Again, like yes, it's nicer to be kind to yourself and I want you to keep

Approaching Your Goals With A-Player Mentality

that part, but it doesn't actually solve the problem where you're yelling, okay? And so there's a skill gap and with that skill gap, you need to figure out what you're missing. So with yelling, it's you're thinking and feeling certain things that are leading you to yell, right? Yelling is just the action or the the reaction. And so what are you thinking and feeling in that moment? Not generally, not, you know, typically in the last week it's like, let's go to the very specific evening of last night and look at a micro example and study it.

Like imagine you watching yourself on film on tape and what were you thinking and what thoughts created, what emotion? Were you thinking they should be listening to me, they know better. Why is this so hard? And then you're feeling tense and frustrated. Okay, slow down. Now why were you thinking those thoughts? Right? Just out of habit because they feel true to you. And what did they create for you? They created frustration and instead of processing that frustration, you reacted to it. So, okay, the work primarily there then for that skill is for you to do thought work out of the moment. That's 80% of the work. Otherwise, you know, you're sort of like hopeful in quotes without actually doing anything to change it. Is this making sense? It's kind of broke my brain in the best way. Definitely. I have been someone who type a perfectionist, mean girl to myself, harsh, self-critical.

And you know, what really got me to develop? This was my clients who kind of swung to the other end of the spectrum with yes, being kinder and nicer to yourself, which is amazing. We want that. But then not actually looking at what happened and what went wrong so that we could change it. And I realized, oh, this is shame, right? Shame always likes to hide. And so if you're in a rush, just kind of slow it down and remind yourself you are good and worthy and it's totally fine if you're feeling, you know, embarrassed or any emotion, right? And just process that. But for your own sake for the future and the skill gap or whatever it is you want to work on that you look at exactly what

Approaching Your Goals With A-Player Mentality

happened, because that's the only way to change it. It's sort of like being accountable to yourself without shaming yourself.

Like, what was I thinking? How was I feeling? Why did I make that decision that's within my control? Because every decision is one that I'm making. Even if it's, you know, quick in the moment and it's reactive, no kid can make you yell right? In that example. And so it might feel that way, but when you take accountability for yourself, then you get to change it. Isn't that incredible? I just find it to be so empowering and so helpful. Now, accountability doesn't mean being mean and harsh and critical to yourself. So that's why I always go back to that business conference where one of the directors said how the HR says, you know, how do you want to receive feedback? Such a great question. So you want to ask yourself that. Maybe you want to give yourself feedback out of the moment. Maybe you need space alone.

Maybe you want to start with just reminding yourself of a few truths, which is whatever happened is not a reflection of who you are. You are 100% worthy and there's nothing you need to do to earn that. And like, and then you fill in the blank with whatever happened, you missed the mark, you failed, you forgot you didn't get the result that you wanted whatever it is, right? And then, then what? Then you want to look back at exactly what happened. And I, think this is how you can like love yourself, stay out of perfectionism and have high standards and be committed to excellence. Like I love that about myself and I never want to get rid of that. So I do have to come up with tools and ways to make sure that it doesn't turn into perfectionism and that harsh inner critic mean girl.

Because, you know, that's no way to live either. So think about it for yourself. Think about your goals that you're working on right now, or a work project or however you're showing up where you're missing the mark. You're not meeting your own standards, right? I, teach that in

Approaching Your Goals With A-Player Mentality

Mom, Like It's Your Job inside the Membership where I teach you how to create your own standards for being a mom. And this A-player mentality would work the exact same way, kind of in the example that I gave with yelling. It's the same thing any standard that you have where maybe you are not meeting it, it's not because you're a bad mom, certainly not. Oh my goodness. And so you want to make sure you're not being mean and harsh and critical, but then also you don't want to just like sweep it under the rug and like hope it doesn't happen and then move on.

Again, that's that shame. And so you want to get really curious with yourself and examine yourself and for whatever the situation is, you know, study your thoughts and your feelings so that you can see how you need to think and feel and act differently so that that does not happen again. Or you know, if it's not yelling, if it's something else, so that you show up in the way that you want to show up. And for my weight loss clients, it's looking back at exactly what you were thinking, feeling, deciding like what was happening, like studying yourself to make sure that whatever result you created inadvertently presumably you don't create again, right?

Because we don't want to just, you know, say no big deal and move on and then you know, you're in that same cycle of losing and gaining the same 10 pounds for a year. You just like can't do that if you have an A player mentality. And I think it really is a core skill that will help you with your weight loss goal and any goal for that matter. So at your goal, weight is open over at momonpurpose.com/goal. And the motherhood tools and frameworks and coaching are over at momonpurpose.com/coaching. I would love to work more closely with you my friend. And with that, I will talk with you next week. Take care.