

How I Became A Better Mom



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With Your Host

Natalie Bacon

[Mom On Purpose](#) with 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 were 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. How are we doing today? I have a fun episode for you. I want to talk about how I personally became a better mom. And I want to use my personal experience as a mom of three. I had three boys in three years, as you probably already know, but if, if you don't, if you're new here, I have three under five just for a few couple short months and then we'll be three under six. And I have grown a lot.

And what I know is that my expertise as a professionally certified coach who has now coached for nine years, like that combination of lived experience and motherhood with my coaching tools, I have grown so much, not from a place of, you know, I was a bad mom, not from a place of, you know, I wasn't good enough. And I think those of you who work with me closely in my containers know that that's never kind of what we're starting from. We're not starting from being damaged or broken or anything like that. It's a skillset. So I like to neutralize it morality-wise and think of something like skiing. If you want to become a better skier, there's a certain level of skiing that you are comfortable at and there's a certain level that you want to get to. Maybe right now you're only comfortable on the green hill slopes and you want to get up to black diamond or whatever it is.

When we think about it in terms of a skill like that, we take the morality out of it. We're not laying in bed at night like, oh my goodness, I'm such a bad skier. My kids deserve a better skiing mom. Like we don't do that. But with things that are so personal to us like motherhood, we do, do that. And I think that that's to our detriment because laying up at night thinking you're a bad mom or you should have done better or you're not good enough doesn't actually help you become who you want to become. What actually helps you is getting out on the ski slopes and practicing. Isn't that so fascinating to think about? It's like if you want to become a better skier, you

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gotta get your reps in, you gotta learn, you gotta take classes. You have to invest in that skill and you will get better.

But not from this place of you're so bad and horrible now, just from a place of, oh yeah, I am a very beginner skier or this skillset I don't yet have. And what actually happens when you apply that sort of framework to motherhood and parenting and time management and really anything, then you are so much more equipped to take on the challenge of learning a new skill. I was actually just talking about this with my husband because I've really nailed down like holding boundaries and holding space for my kids' emotions and all of that. I'm going to talk with you about that more specifically in a second here, but it's on my mind to kind of have this little tangent. I was talking with him and we're talking about how I am really comfortable in that skillset and my husband isn't as comfortable. And so sometimes he finds himself fumbling.

And I, was talking with him about it and out of the moment, right? We were talking about it at night and I was saying, "Yeah, because I've practiced it so much. I studied it. I use my coaching tools. Of course I feel more comfortable". It's not because he's a bad dad or doing something wrong. He just hasn't been on the slopes as much as I have. And I really want to encourage you to think about motherhood, to think about parenting more specifically, to think about time management, to think about maybe it's like weight loss if you're one of my weight loss clients. I want you to think about a skill gap that you might have in a very specific area. So I just named some general areas that we can all kind of picture and think about, but for you, maybe it is something more specific like yelling.

Maybe you find yourself reacting with yelling more than you want to. That's not because you're a bad mom or a bad person. It's not because you don't know better. It's because there's a skill gap. Like I can watch a skier in the Olympics or, you know, any other kind of time, even just going to the slopes and I can think, okay, I know what to do. I see what they did there. And then what happens when I get on the slopes? Okay? I'm not a Black Diamond skier. Or, you know, pick a different example if skiing doesn't resonate. I often like to talk about baking cakes. I cook a lot more. I could do an entire

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episode about my cooking skills having improved. And also, if I go and try to bake an elaborate cake right now, even if I watch a video on it, it's not going to be that great.

But guess what? If I take a course from a professional baker, if I study that course, if I make a cake every single day, guess what's going to happen in 365 days? My skills for baking a cake are going to be night and day different. It's going to be a complete 180. I will be such a better, if we're going to use that word, I will be a better cake baker. Now, bring it back to motherhood. I want to talk with you specifically about my experience about how I became a better mom, not from this place of shame, like I was a bad mom or something bad was happening or I was bad or anything like that. I don't think most of us say that outright, but I do think that most of us carry this level of mom guilt that is unnecessary and, and more importantly, just unhelpful.

So if you start from, I'm a human being who has a past, who grew up with human being parents and, you know, my life experience, my childhood, you know, what got me here today blessed me with certain skill sets, certain skill sets that I have a 10 out of 10 for. Maybe, you know, you're like me who was someone who really worked on honing her productivity and getting things done. And after doing that, I really found myself in that energy all of the time. And so I had to work on my skillsets of being more present, of holding boundaries from love and warmth and connection. My skill sets of being grounded, my skillsets that I really learned from coaching and gosh, nearly a decade now, of holding space. The reason that I can hold space so well for my kids' emotions is because I know that skill like the back of my hand, because I do it with my clients every day, right?

And so, these are just skills. I wasn't born knowing how to hold space for my kids' emotions. I wasn't born as someone who really understood how to not react. In fact, I am very extroverted. I am very like mental and, and verbal. And so my default when I'm in a fight or flight kind of reactivity response from my nervous system is to yell. And I share that with you on purpose because I want you to know that I learned this skill for decreasing that, lowering that so that I don't yell, right? Now, of course, there are

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exceptions. I have yelled. Sometimes I yell, but I've done so much work and I've gotten so much better at it. And so when I talk about how I became a better mom, I'm, I'm going to give you specifics, but I know some of you, some of you high achievers who have been with me for a long time, you are a little bit hesitant with the phrase better mom.

Like what are we even talking about here? And so I really want to define it, especially because this is a podcast, this isn't social media. I can get deeper with you here. When I'm talking about when I say a better mom, I'm talking about my skill sets for very specific things have improved in the same way that, you know, if you want to work on skiing or if you want to become a better baker, those skill sets will improve by following an expert, by taking courses, by working with a coach, by then doing the work and practicing it. And that is very real. So I'm not talking about your human goodness and your human worth. You are good enough. You are a good enough mom, a good enough woman, a good enough person, just as you are. We're not trying to change that so that you feel better about yourself, right?

That's a topic for a different day. I teach you how to do that in the membership, how to feel good about who you are and embrace your humanness and then look at, okay, where are their skills that I want to work on? And this, my friend, when you approach it this way, it makes it so fun. I know this sounds kind of crazy, but learning the skills of parenting, learning the skills of time management, learning the skills of creating positive identities so that you're not overwhelmed, worried or stressed, learning the skills of making space for your kids' challenges and emotions so that you're not worried about them. That can be really fun. Saying this out loud, I'm like kind of laughing to myself because if you are new here, you're like, "What in the world is this really fun?" I'm like, "Yes, because think about it, again, using the example of skiing or baking a cake, right?"

The way that you, you really get good at a skill is by getting your reps in and following an expert, following a program, following a coach, taking classes. And you will do that and participate and study the craft of it when you enjoy it. And so when I'm constantly, you know, reading books and

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consuming and listening and implementing different types of courses and strategies for whether it's, it's motherhood or my coaching tools or weight loss or anything like that, I am doing it from lived experience and from an energy of like this is fun. I want to increase this skillset, not I better learn this because I'm not a good enough mom and I need to in order to become like better in the sense of my humanness. Okay, we on the same page here? Awesome, because what I don't want you to do is think that you need to do this because you're not good enough or you're a bad mom or you have this layer of mom guilt.

I can help you remove that mom guilt, right? Those are my coaching tools that I'm trained in. However, when you get to the point where you're like, "Okay, I want to work on the skillset. I don't want to yell anymore. I want to learn how to hold space for my kids' emotions. I want to stop worrying so that I can have a really connected, authentic relationship with my kids as they get older so that they come to me so that they don't hide it thinking that mom's going to be upset if she knows this. "Like these are skill gaps. And so I think it's the best news ever because for those of you who are in the membership, you know, because some of my mindful messages refer to the housewives and I'm a Bravo girly and when I do some examples, I will sometimes pull from the housewives who are worried or stressed or, just kind of overwhelmed with either motherhood or parenting or some version of that.

And what I see missing in the way that they are talking about the challenges in parenting is seeing that there are skills that they can learn and practice that would help them tremendously, right? How to stop worrying about your kids, how to not be overwhelmed, how to decrease tension and stress. And ultimately what we all want is how to create a connected relationship with your kids, you know, while simultaneously having rules, holding boundaries, still living your life. And, you know, I don't pretend to have all of the answers, definitely not all the answers for what you should do, but you will have those answers as you learn these tools because you will expand your skillset and your capacity to decrease stress and worry and overwhelm and frustration and tension so that you have

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more connections, so that you're not yelling, so that you end the day and you don't have this racing mind and this never ending kind of to-do list.

Like those are real tools and real skills that make a real difference in your everyday life. All right, now I want to dive into the specific ways that I have become a better mom with that as the foundation. What I'm talking about here are the skills that I have defined for myself as being extraordinarily helpful for showing up as the mom who I want to be. So for you, it may look a little bit different. However, I do think universally all of these skills will likely be very helpful. Let's dive in. Number one, I alluded to this, but I want to talk about it more directly here. I expanded my capacity to hold other people's emotions, specifically my kids' emotions. What does this mean practically? You may not be familiar with it. It's a little bit of coach speak to hold emotions for someone. What I mean by that is my kids can be upset without me getting upset.

They can have a meltdown in public. They can cry. They can flail, resist, you know, just basically it looks like having a wrestling match sometimes. They can have a tantrum. They can get really mad and frustrated. And I can hold that, meaning I am grounded. I am regulated. My nervous system is not sending off alarm bells. My brain is not going into catastrophic thinking like this shouldn't be happening, this always happens. You know, why is this always so hard? Like that all or nothing thinking too. I don't think I immediately need to fix it. Their emotions don't become my emotions, right? So they have a tantrum, then I have a tantrum about their tantrum. That's not happening. This has been one of the, gosh, just biggest, I think, shifts in, in how I parent compared to how I was raised. And it's, it's not because I'm a better human being.

I literally just learned a skillset, okay? Now that skillset allows me to be a better mom. Do you see the difference there? And so expanding my capacity to hold other people's emotions, this is a skill, my friends, you can learn it. 10 out of 10 recommend that, not just for little ones because I like to say like tantrums just change flavors. I have clients in the Mom On Purpose Membership with older kids and adult kids and, you know, it, it's like the, the tantrums just change flavors. So your adult kid is getting upset

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because you made a decision about something they don't like, that is a tantrum, right? An adult version of it. Like can you hold space for that? Meaning, can you not try to defend yourself? Can you not try to get them to see your point of view? Can you be there in their upsetness, give them space for that emotionally?

I don't mean like disconnecting and withdrawing. I mean you're present emotionally, you're, you're not trying to fix it. You're allowing them to feel how they want to feel about your decision and still loving them, right? 'Cause oftentimes what we think is if someone disagrees with us or we don't give someone what they want and there's this disconnection that you have to do it from a cold energy and it is a life changing skill to learn how to hold someone else's emotions and let them feel how they want to feel without taking it on because not only are you not cold, but you're also not, you might say like fiery and hot and reactive, you can genuinely feel love for them and for yourself and hold space for all of that. Okay. Number two, I expanded my capacity to be in chaos without internalizing it. Now, this is a little bit different because number one is specifically about my kids or a child feeling big feelings, right?

And that may not be when the house is the most chaotic at all. What I'm talking about with number two is when my environment has a lot of stimuli happening all at once. Three little boys running around, even if they're playing like happily, right? Maybe the dogs start barking because the UPS guy drops something off. Maybe the timer on the stove is going off and then at the same time my phone starts ringing and it's a doctor's office. So it's not necessarily that emotions are high, but there's a lot happening in my environment that I like to describe as just the chaos, okay? When I did work on expanding my capacity to feel grounded, sometimes calm, right? Those two things I don't define as the same, but sometimes we use them interchangeably. But oftentimes I'm feeling, you know, productive or connected or present or something else.

But the point is that my nervous system doesn't feel chaotic. I'm not in fight flight even though my surroundings could make it easy for me to be in fight flight. In fact, you know, it's like whenever my mom visits from Ohio, as an

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example, she's always like ending the day kind of laughing at herself and the whole situation because, it, she's always like, "It is busy," right? It's kind of like a nice way of saying there is chaos in our circumstances. And for me, I am such a better mom because I have challenged myself to expand my capacity internally, my thoughts and feelings of how I experience the chaos. Let's just call it that, right? So when dogs barking, UPS is dropping something off, boys are running around screaming, the timer on the stove is going off, the phone's ringing and it's a doctor's office that I've been waiting for, something like that, I'm not thrown off.

I don't feel chaotic inside. I'm not overstimulated. Now, I like to think that every person, because we are human beings here, has a threshold and I am not immune from that, but think of a capacity, right? If you continue to expand your capacity, it's like a skill set is magic sauce for motherhood, my friends. My capacity is so high to stay grounded and connected and present in the chaos. I like to think of myself as an emergency room physician attending the one in charge who is triaging. I'm not thrown off. I got this. Let's go. Loud? All right. It could be loud. It's fine. And that, my friends, when you can get there, like, it almost feels like you're a little bit unstoppable, right? I'm like, "Bring it on, let's go." And, you know, is it my favorite thing ever? Like, I've talked about this, I think it was just last week.

No, but again, I'm not overwhelmed by that. I'm not overstimulated by that. Okay. Number three, I stopped trying to become someone else's version of a good mom. There are no standards for what makes a good mom. And so what we do is we look to our social circles. We look to social media. We typically look externally. This is why I often say her life isn't supposed to look like my life. Your life isn't supposed to look like her life. And really doing work on this and truly believing deep in my bones that I'm the exact mom my kids are supposed to have and my kids are the exact kids that I'm supposed to raise. I know that I'm supposed to be an imperfect human. I'm not supposed to be an AI robot mom. And also, the more I look externally at what other people are doing, the more I use status to guide who I want to be as a mom, which really inhibits my ability to lead.

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And what I mean by that is just, I am supposed to be the mom who I want to be. And when I try to be someone else's version of good mom, my kids get like Natalie Light. So the crafty mom, the crunchy mom, the perfect mom, the, you know, Pilates, Starbucks going mom, right? I find that the more that we kind of try to put ourselves in a box, the less in tune we are with who we really want to be, because there's only one of you. And so really having the self-confidence and the self-trust and letting go of the mom guilt and kind of having blinders on to keep you out of comparison is so life changing. This was really, really helpful for me so that I remember my kids are supposed to have me as a mom. I love talking about, you know, the future and goals, and we talk about our peak and our pit every day.

And am I going to be the mom who, you know, always does the best craft or, you know, whatever the case may be. Probably not, but I am going to be the mom I am supposed to be for my kids. Number four, I treat motherhood like a high performance job. I love identifying as a high performer. I'm a former lawyer. I'm a female founder. I run a company, CFP. Like I have background in doing hard things in my career and bringing that into how I show up as a mom, oh my goodness, my friends, it is life changing. How do I want to dress? How do I want to think? What kind of attitude do I want to have? What do I want to do with my kids when I'm home with them? What matters to me in terms of connection? What kind of boundaries do I want to set?

What kind of rules do I want to have? How do I want to make sure that I'm playing with my kids? Like when we go into a role at a workplace, like, you know, if I'm practicing as a lawyer, when I start that job, there are expectations given to me. And I want to not only meet those expectations, I want to exceed them. But those of you who are in the membership, you have taken the mom like it's your job framework, you know that what we do on default in motherhood is come up with expectations that other people have talked about and given to us, how happy our kids are, how successful our kids are, what our kids are doing, how clean our house is. And when you measure your success as a mom based on those things, first of all,

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most of them are outside of your control, you're setting yourself up for a rollercoaster experience of motherhood.

You're only happy when your kids are happy. If your kids are struggling, then you're struggling. If anything is wrong with them, you're like embarrassed and ashamed and you think it's a bad reflection on you as a mom. That is a really unhelpful, and dare I say, even like toxic place to be in because you become dependent on their success and their happiness, which they can feel, right? So it has this negative impact, not only on you, but on them and on your relationship with them. And so really treating motherhood like a high performance job where I created my own expectations for myself that are within my control, life changing. It is one of my absolute favorite frameworks inside the Mom On Purpose Membership that I teach, will change your life if you study it, implement it, you know, for the next year, just that one masterclass alone would be worth the entire year's membership.

Can you like just imagine that? It's just such a different energy when you think about being a mom through that lens, because then you have something to measure your success by that is within your control. And that is, it's not only freeing, but it's motivating and energizing. Next, I became a better mom when I lost the weight I wanted to lose. Now, you may be wondering why and how does this relate? Obviously, being smaller or thinner does not make someone a better mom. It is not about the number on the scale at all as it relates to motherhood. Not the point. For me, and I think for most women, when you aren't at your goal weight, you are feeling out of alignment, meaning, you know, for me, it's like I was 175 pounds and I wanted to be 125 pounds. There's a misalignment, you know, and even as I was losing weight, I remember getting on the scale, I remember trying on my jeans and being like, "Oh my gosh, I'm still in the 140s." And for me, again, that's not bad or wrong, it's just not the number that I wanted to be.

What's the number for you? When you are out of alignment, meaning you, you don't weigh what you want to weigh, you experience that. Now, I will never be someone who says you should go on a weight loss journey or you need to. Absolutely not. I am here to help those of you who already know

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that the version of you who you are inside is a certain weight and you are not at that goal weight yet. You want to lose weight. You have the desire to lose weight. I don't think you should. I just want to help you if you want to, okay? Do you see the difference there? It's not like, you know, being smaller or thinner or, or a certain weight makes you a better person. Not at all. So if you don't want to lose weight and you are in alignment, regardless of what that number is, then you will be showing up how you want to be, whether that's 200 pounds, whether that's 125 pounds, whether that's any number, right?

There's no morality there. But if you are not at your goal weight... So for me, when I wasn't at my goal weight, because we are in our bodies, we experience that every single day. And those low grade thoughts about not being at my goal weight, eating a little bit more, feeling like I can't wear the clothes that I want to wear, being more self-conscious in photos, covering up my legs or my stomach, dreading, picking out like a bikini, and you might call some of those things superficial and maybe yes, I don't know, but I care about those things too alongside my health. Now for me, I was still mobile, but I didn't feel like I could be as physical and as energized, and so that played a part into my reasoning as well. I just know for sure that whenever you are out of alignment with who you want to be, that version of you exists.

This is what I believe. I believe that version of you exists already. And so your job is to get in alignment with her. And the more you are in alignment with, you know, everything you want in your life, here I'm talking about weight loss because it applied to me, I believe you will show up better in every area of your life, including motherhood. So for me, I lost the weight I wanted to lose and I couldn't let that be a someday goal because I knew it would kind of eat at me. I knew that I would have thoughts about it daily, day in and day out, and I didn't want to have to manage my mind around it. I did not want this to be a someday goal. And then the benefit of doing something hard, of showing my kids what's possible, of losing 50 pounds in four months when life was living to the max, I had three kids under four at home.

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I wasn't going to spend hours in the gym. I didn't exercise at all. I didn't overhaul my eating habits. I didn't even track my food or count calories. I put my brain to work on how can I lose more weight doing less? And I created an entire method and I have helped so many moms with that method now. Like that created a success snowball and my kids get the benefit of that. So it's not about the weight, it's about who I became because I wanted to be in alignment with that desire and I did it. And so for you, it may be your weight. I know for a lot of women in this community it is, or it may be something else. The point is that when you are living in alignment with who you want to be, when you see your future self, what's different about her, the faster and the closer you get to being in alignment with that, the ripple effect that will have on the way that you show up in your life and especially in motherhood.

And lastly, I became a better mom by taking though work seriously, not affirmations, not positive thoughts, definitely not, "Hey, can I get a recommendation for a mindset book?" Nuh-uh, we're not doing that here. This is real coaching. And for me, I know that when I practice and get better at the skillset of thought work, which I'm practicing every single week, then I become a better mom because I can manage my mind. It is like having a supercharged battery pack on your back for motherhood. It really is. Without it, I would have nighttime racing thoughts. I would be worrying about my kids. I would be yelling a lot more. I would probably feel more defeated, more overwhelmed. I would probably be searching externally for solutions. And I just can't stress this enough. I take it seriously. I study though work. I know how impactful it is.

I know that I am a much better mom, that I continue to expand my tools and my skill sets so that I therefore expand my capacity. I can take on so much more in motherhood. And I do believe it has a positive impact on the way that I parent my kids. For example, the way that I think and the way that I have positive self-talk then transcends to them. I can teach them about having a growth mindset, teach them about having confidence in themselves, not to be the best, but to love themselves when they're not the best, not to make sure that you practice soccer so much that you're the best on the team, which of course, you know, Yes, be a high achiever if you

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want to, but way more important than that is can you show up, make mistakes, fail, and love yourself and get back up and reframe failure and do it again?

That is because of thought work, because on default, my primitive brain is going to have unhelpful thoughts rooted in frustration, scarcity, tension, worry, overwhelm. And then I'm going to look externally for what I should think. Just at soccer the other day, I hear parents, you know, kind of speaking negatively about their kids not listening. I would take on those thoughts and think, oh yeah, there's something wrong with my kid when they're not listening. But you know what? I don't do that. Instead, I manage my mind. And so I can show up from love and connection and still hold boundaries and know that there is nothing wrong with my kid. Now, that doesn't mean that we don't get help if we need help, of course. But when you don't have thought work, you will likely try to help your kids from a place of something is wrong with my kids or something's wrong here, or whatever the case may be.

And in so doing, you will carry a lot of worry and trying to fix the circumstance in order to feel better. And that will be to no end because we know kids are supposed to have challenges. So this is obviously my favorite one because I am a ride or die thought work expert and I am obsessed with it. I love it because it has changed my life, you know, yes, on a, a big general scale, but really I use it so much more now because I'm not able to control my kids and control my home and control my husband and change my circumstances. Like if you are, you know, married or partnered and you have kids in a home and life is lifing, you know, you're not going to be changing your circumstances like you might be if you were 20. Like if I was 20 and I was around screaming kids, I might just get up and go to a different coffee shop or whatever it is, right?

It's, it's easy to change your circumstances when it's just you. And not always of course, but a lot easier, at least it was for me. And so for me in motherhood, using thought work has made all of the difference, the ability, the skillset to think about my thinking, to practice brain management. This is why I'm so passionate about having a positive influence in your ear that

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is not teaching, right? You get this from the podcast. Yes, that's great. Can feel good to hear someone else's thoughts, but that's like level one, that's like surface level. It's not going to last because it's not helping you see your thoughts. That's what we do in coaching. That's what you get in weekly mom group coaching inside the Mom On Purpose Membership. And for weight loss, if you want to get in alignment with your goal weight, absolutely join me inside At Your Goal Weight.

So you can get started with my free weight loss training, how I lost 50 pounds over at momonpurpose.com/50down. And then for Mom On Purpose Membership over at momonpurpose.com/coaching. I'm so passionate about this work. It has changed my life. It continues to change my life. And I hope that there are some nuggets in here to help you become the mom who you already know you are. You just want to see that actualized. All right, my beautiful friends. Thanks for being here. I will talk with you next week. Take care.