

Resentment Towards Husband



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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 friend. Today's episode is brought to you by a member in this community who is struggling with resentment towards her spouse due to some things he's not doing that she wants him to be doing. I know that so many of you can relate to this. You ask me about it all the time and you get coached on it and it is I think one of the most common challenges that we navigate as moms today. So with that, let's dive in and listen to her specific question. Just a reminder, you can always call in the podcast hotline at 8333-AskNat and leave me a message. It's completely anonymous. It'll go right to voicemail. I would love to hear from you and you can ask me whatever is on your mind and then I will answer it on an upcoming podcast. Alright, let's dive in.

Hi Natalie. I'm struggling with a feeling of resentment towards my husband because he doesn't do what he says he's going to do. For example, he says he's going to clean up the kitchen or take out the trash or reserve plane tickets and he simply doesn't do it. And then when I check on the task, I feel so resentful because I was counting on him to be reliable. And I don't want to feel this feeling towards my husband. I don't think it's helpful for our relationship and I don't want to have a bunch of extra work to do. Can you please help me? Thank you.

Yes, my friend. I can absolutely help you. And I want to get started with defining resentment. Resentment is an emotion, so it's a feeling that we feel and all feelings come from our thinking. And resentment comes from thinking that in some way you've been treated unfairly. This is just really good to know. So in the beginning of your message, you said that you're feeling resentful because your husband doesn't do what he says he's going to do, but that is not accurate. That is not why you feel resentment. You feel resentment because of what you're making, him not doing what he says

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he's going to do mean. So what is the thought that you are thinking that's leading to resentment? So let's say your husband doesn't clean up the kitchen and you walk downstairs and you see that it's not cleaned and you feel resentment. The way that you are experiencing this is because of what you're thinking.

So what is that thought? Is it this isn't fair, is it? Why do I have to be the one? Is it he should do what he says he is going to do? And here he goes again, not doing it, is it I can't rely on him and I should be able to rely on him? Is it when he doesn't do something that means I have a bunch of extra work to do? What is your thought? Because that is why you feel resentment. This is the science of coaching yourself and applying all of this psychology theory directly to your life. This will radically change the way that you show up. Now, I'm not saying that you should do everything, and I'm not saying that you shouldn't care that your husband doesn't do what he says he's going to do, but is resentment really helpful? And you alluded to the fact that it's not going to be helpful for you, but you also suggested that you don't want to go to the other extreme where you have a bunch of extra work to do.

So your thought is probably something along the lines of he should do what he says he is going to do and when he doesn't, that gives me a bunch of extra work. And just identifying that thought tells us so much about what's going on for you. It means that you are taking on more work than you want to do. So it shows us a need that you have. And what's really awesome about doing this work is that once you get to peace, you can come up with creative solutions to get your needs met, but it will be done so much more effectively from peace. When you're in resentment, you are so attached to blame and thinking that your spouse is creating this, that it blocks all creativity and ways for you to come up with how to really navigate this. So let's take a step back here and remember that the purpose of doing this work is to learn more about yourself so you can show up as your best self because you can't control spouse.

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I often give the example inside the membership of imagining that your spouse just didn't exist. Like he was just permanently gone and it was just you and you were in charge of everything. You might feel tired or exhausted or overwhelmed, but you wouldn't feel resentment. And that's really important to see because what it tells us is that it's not your spouse who's creating the resentment. You would have the same amount of work in either scenario. It's just that the story that you're telling right now with your spouse, there is a story that's creating resentment. Now, again, I'm not suggesting that you don't ask for help and make requests, but doing that from peace and getting creative when you're on the same team and thinking about it as being on the same team comes off in such a different way compared to if you're feeling resentment and blaming your spouse for how you're feeling, that is just a recipe for more disconnection.

Not getting what you want and feeling miserable about the work that you're doing and also feeling miserable Now about your marriage, none of it is helpful. At the end of your message you alluded to, if you don't get mad and feel resentment about this, then you'll have a bunch of extra work to do. This is something to unpack as well. I have a bunch of extra work to do if my husband doesn't do something that thought, how does it feel? What does it lead you to do? And how do you show up in your marriage and in your home when you think and feel that way? My hunch is that it's not very helpful. And what I want you to see is that there is nothing that you have to do. Not one single thing do you have to do. And the way that I really visualize this for myself is like there's no one physically grabbing my arm and moving my body to do something.

I always have free agency and free will to do whatever I want. And if I don't want to clean up the kitchen, I don't have to. Now the kitchen may stay a mess. And then the work to do is exploring your thoughts about a messy kitchen. So what I want to suggest for you to do here is change the way that you are thinking about the work that you're doing because we can't change and control your spouse, if we could change and control your spouse, I would be all in. But I want to empower you right now. You're disempowering yourself by giving so much power away to your husband.

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Whether he does or doesn't do something determines how you feel. And most of the time we can barely take care of ourselves emotionally. So putting our emotions in someone else's hands is not usually going to be the most helpful and it certainly leaves you a little bit more less in control than you otherwise would be.

And I want to empower you to be in control of your own happiness. So I would come up with thoughts that show you the truth. So this is kind of a predictable circumstance. It's likely that your spouse is going to from time to time, not do what he says he's going to do. How do you want to think, feel and act? You get to choose. We can't choose how to control him. It's not possible. But you can choose whether you pick up the slack or you can choose just to leave it and not do it. You could just leave a kitchen the way it's, that's what he's doing. And this wouldn't be done from blame or kind of this tug of war back and forth fighting. It would be done from this place of I just don't want to clean the kitchen right now. And husband said he would.

And maybe he will and maybe he, he won't. But for me right now, I want to take a break and I want to rest. Typically behind resentment, there is an unmet need. So what is the need that you have that you are not meeting? Is it around housework? Is it that you want more breaks? What need do you have that you're not meeting? The more that you are able to get your needs met, met and meet your own needs, the less resentment you will have because you won't blame your spouse on not meeting your needs because you will be meeting your own needs. So ask yourself, what do I really need right now? And find a way to take care of you. This is effective when you are in a place of curiosity towards yourself, curiosity towards how you're thinking, how you're feeling. Most of the time we tell ourselves that we know ourselves so well and we know our spouse so well, but it's not really true.

Most of us have no idea why we are the way we are, what our thoughts are, what our feelings are. We're very unconscious and that means we are unconscious about our spouses as well. And so there's so much here for you to learn about yourself and about your spouse. I like to think about how

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in marriages there are expectations and then there is the reality. So everyone who is married knows this, that we all have expectations of our spouse. And then we have the reality where our spouse doesn't meet those expectations. And so there's a gap between the reality and the expectation line. The gap between those lines is space for a story. And most people don't think there's a choice in that story. For example, he didn't do what he said he was going to do, so he's unreliable. And now I have to do everything.

That's one story, but it's just one optional way to interpret the events. And there are plenty of other ways that could still feel good and true for you. You could think something like he's forgetful and that's okay. Or he does things last minute and that's different than me and that's also okay. Or I choose to give my spouse the benefit of the doubt for my sake because that's the kind of wife I want to be and it makes my life easier and better. The point is that there's the expectation you have and then there's the reality. And in between there is the opportunity for you to rewrite the story that you tell. This is an opportunity for you to do this work for your sake, for your peace because it does not feel good to be wound up so tight, feeling resentment and um, disconnection to yourself and in your marriage.

Sometimes clients will say to me, me, why do I have to be the one? Why can't he be the one to do the work? And I get it. If I could convince your spouse to be the one to change, I would. But we can't control other people. So the more that you accept that, the quicker you accept it, the more empowered you make yourself. Because it's so freeing to be able to change yourself for your own benefit. We're not doing this for spouse's benefit. It will benefit him, but it is for your benefit. So when you're feeling resentment, notice it. Say to yourself, I can tell I'm feeling resentment. Ask yourself, what is the need that I have that's not being met? And what am I thinking that's creating this resentment? And ask yourself how you want to think and feel. Thinking if he doesn't do what he says he's going to do, then I'm going to have a bunch of extra work to do is not a helpful thought. Even if it's a true thought, it's not helpful and you have a choice where you direct and focus your thoughts.

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So you might simply just redirect to, and now I have some choices to make about the kitchen. Sometimes maybe you choose to clean up the kitchen because that's who you want to be. Other times you're just going to let the mess sit because that's who you want to be. Remembering too, that there isn't one right way to be. So if you've been following me or you have been in any of my programs, you know that I like to be someone who does what they say they're going to do. I highly suggest this. I think there are a lot of benefits to that, but it doesn't make it right or wrong. There's no morality here. And I think that when we do this work and we show up as our best, let's say in this case, this person does what she says she's going to do, it can be tempting to project that idea onto our spouse.

Like somehow because you are someone who does what she says, she's going to do that that means your spouse should then be someone who does what he says he's going to do. And it's just not useful. I like to remind myself that I'm not the center of the universe and I'm not even the center of my marriage. I'm just a person, a human being doing my best and sometimes not doing my best. And the same goes for my spouse. So we are two different people and in a lot of ways very similar, but in the ways that we need to coach ourselves and our brains. It's the differences, right? And my spouse isn't supposed to be me. So in this case, if you're someone who does what she says she's going to do and follows through and over, delivers and cleans the kitchen when she says she's going to, that's amazing because that's who you want to be.

Your spouse isn't that person. So now what? You love your spouse, you care about your spouse, you want to have a connected marriage. So focus on the thoughts that give him the benefit of the doubt and then from peace, get creative and decide what you want to do. Maybe just leave a messy kitchen, maybe get some other help. Maybe you decide you want to do it again, I go back to, okay, if it was just me, what would I do? I would do all of it. I just wouldn't have the resentment. Or for some of you, when your spouse travels, it's not uncommon for me to hear this in my clients inside the membership that it's easier to take care of everything when the spouse is gone traveling, even though it's more work. This just shows you the

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power of mindset. This means that when the spouse is home, there's so much more mindset, drama going on.

There are so many more stories that are creating all of these narratives that actually make it harder. But when your spouse is out of town, it's a completely different set of expectations. And I'm not suggesting that you think your spouse is out of town when he's actually there, but I do want you to notice the link between your thoughts and your feelings. So what are the thoughts that you have when your spouse is out of town that make it feel easier for you? And when your spouse is home, we're not going to control spouse. It's impossible, but we can control ourselves. So how do you want to think when your spouse doesn't do what he says he's going to do? You might want to think a thought like sometimes my spouse doesn't do what he says he's going to do and that's okay. I make mistakes and I have faults too. Neither of us is perfect and that's okay, and now I just have some decisions to make about the gaps. Do I want to overdeliver in those instances or do I need a break? Like what is my need? Do I want to fill in those gaps with service to the home and the family or do I need to, you know, reenergize and do I need to take a break for myself?

I also want to make sure that you're not shoulding on your spouse. So if you think that your spouse should always do what he says he is going to do and he's someone who doesn't do what he says he's going to do, you will create a lot of resistance and frustration in your marriage because you will be thinking something's gone wrong. He said one thing and he did another. This shouldn't be happening. But if your spouse has a track record of not doing what he says he's going to do, I would expect that. And it doesn't have to be to the other extreme, like my spouse never does what he says he's going to do, but it might be somewhere in the middle. Like sometimes my spouse doesn't do what he says he's going to do and I expect that that's just not something that's a priority to him and that's okay.

I accept all of him, the shortcomings included. And so now what? What kind of wife do I want to be? How can I love both myself and my spouse and my home and my family in this instance? And it might look different in different

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situations. It might be that you like to book trips and so you book the trip when he forgets to book the flights. Or it might be that you really don't like doing that and you often mess it up. And so you decide that you want to remind him or ask him. I think that making requests of our spouses can be very helpful. The problem with that I think is it's often done from a place of feeling resentment. So we've all heard the phrase, it's not what you say, it's how you say it. This is exactly what I'm talking about.

If you feel resentment and then you make a request of your spouse, he will sense that and it will create disconnection. It's not going to go over well. It would sound something like, alright, you didn't do what you said you were going to do again. Could you please get these plane tickets? So that is going to create a very different outcome than if you're giving your spouse the benefit of the doubt coming from love and connection and saying, Hey honey, I noticed that the flights aren't booked yet. Are you able to do that for us? Something like that. You know the language that you want to use, that's the action that you're going to take. My point is that the thoughts and feelings behind that action, behind the words you say matter more than the actual words that you use. Because if you have judgment, disconnection, and resentment and frustration and resistance behind what you say, it does not matter what you say.

That feeling will come through. And even if your spouse does it, you're still left with a disconnected marriage. So again, it goes back to, okay, what kind of narrative, what kind of story do we want to tell in those gaps between expectations and reality? And this is something that I've done so much work on and I think it in part, it's challenging just because of the human brain's negativity bias. And for a lot of us, I can speak personally as an attorney and a CFP that we're trained in our jobs to look for the negative. I'm like, I want my doctor, I want my surgeon. I want my lawyer to find what's wrong. It's a very useful skill. I don't want them to gloss over and say everything's fine. The problem though is that we take those incredible skills that are awesome for our careers and we keep that hat on when we're at home.

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And then we're pointing out all of the problems that are in our marriages, in our homes, in our kitchens, with the garbage, all of it. Well, it's not really a big deal at all. And I just think that that's because we have taken what is already the brain's disposition to look for the negative and amplified it through our trainings, through, you know, the work that we do in the world. And so learning how to shift in your hats and your identities is, gosh, one of the most powerful tools that you can learn in your entire life. 'cause then you can be that wicked smart attorney or surgeon who you know does an amazing job and who comes home and takes off that hat and is much more warmhearted and connected and easygoing. That's not to say that you don't make requests and that you don't care, but it is to say that the energy that you bring to those requests will be from warmth instead of from frustration.

I think requests are best made out of the moment when you're not feeling resentment. So if you're feeling resentment, you might want to give yourself what you need in that moment. Take a break, get some fresh air, do some deep breathing, listen to a podcast, stretch, change your environment, process your feelings, and approach your spouse at a different time. Is this 100% of the time practical and doable? No. But everything else being kind of equal, that's I think when you'll show up as your best, I think the mindset we're on the same team is really helpful here. So if you think about, I always like to use like corporate America as an example, and you are a leader and your spouse is a leader and you're on the same team leading your family, there are going to be challenges that come up and you're going to want to have meetings, have family meetings outside of the day-to-day, logistics of everyday life.

And when you have those meetings, that's a perfect time to talk things over and bring up challenges and things that are going on that you want to work through. And if you have this mindset, I have the best partner out there, I'm so grateful that this is my partner, we are on the same team, we can figure this out. Then it's like you and your spouse sitting on the couch together and the challenge of booking the flights, taking out the garbage, cleaning the kitchen are all in front of you. So it's you and your partner on

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the couch together. That mindset, we're on the same team. And what's out in front of you is the challenge. So it's you two against the challenge, not you against your spouse. This is a very different mindset. This does not mean that your spouse is going to change their mind, agree with you.

It just means that you're respectful. It means that you care about their opinion. It means that you give them grace to not be perfect. And it means that you allow yourself to come up with creative solutions as well without trying to control them, while still asking for things that you want from a place of love and connection. So my friend, whenever any of you are feeling resentment, make sure that you process the feeling, but identify the need behind the resentment as well as the thought, creating the resentment and get to peace before deciding who you want to be so that you don't let that feeling kind of become who you are and create more disconnection in your marriage.

Resentment is a sign that you aren't giving yourself what you need. So I suggest that you do the work to not blame other people for that, and also not blame yourself, but instead to look introspectively at what's going on for you. What do you need more of? How can you give yourself that? And how can you find more ways to take care of you and be conscious and intentional about the stories that you tell in your marriage between expectation and reality. There will always be a gap for all of us. We all have this vision of what marriage would be like, about what our spouse would be like. We often project what we think is "right onto them". So we then think that they should be more like us. And all of it is just an opportunity for you to grow yourself. That's why I love doing this work.

It's truly never done. It is the gift that keeps on giving to yourself and to your marriage. I know this work continues to help so many of you because you tell me, you tell me all of the time that this work has truly saved your marriage or gotten you through really hard times in your marriages, and it is that powerful. It's simple and doable, but completely transformative. So again, if you have a challenge or you would like any help on this with respect to your marriage, call and leave me a message at 8 3 3 3 2 7 5 6 2

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8. That's the podcast hotline. It goes straight to a voicemail. You can leave me a message. I'm the only one checking those and I will answer it on an upcoming podcast so that you can get the help that you more than deserve. My friend, 8 3 3 3 Ask Nat, I'll talk with you next week. Take care.

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