

Episode 26 - TOXIC THOUGHTS

I'm Diana Swillinger, and this is the Renew Your Mind podcast. Episode 26 Toxic Thoughts. Welcome to The Renew Your Mind podcast. I'm your host, Diana Swillinger. A lot of us have tried to do the right thing all our lives, but we still feel overwhelmed and stuck. I believe that you deserve to get unstuck and experience more joy, more peace, and more contentment. Regardless of what life sends your way, I'm here to help you renew your mind and make it all possible.

DIANA: Hey. Hey. How are you doing today? I'm doing fine. Doing good. I am, um, loving this month. I have lots of workshops on the calendar where I'm going to be coaching entrepreneurs, which is always super fun. Each one of them is working on growing their own business, and I love working with them. It's really fun. So, uh, it's not something I'm doing in my own program. I am hired as a coach to go do it, but I am so fortunate to be a part of it because I meet the most incredible people. Some of them are probably listening. So hello. Hello to you. You know who you are. And my coaching roster of one on one clients with women in my own program is full for September.

So, of course I'm happy about helping as many women as I can with renewing their minds, finding new ways to think about things and become more emotionally healthy. It's so fun and it's really rewarding, and I love every minute of it. I'm so grateful for each person, and honestly, it's pretty humbling that they trust me and I get to help them in their lives. And I learned so much I learned from each one of you. It's really the best job ever. Well, by the way, even though my roster is full, I want you to know I'm still doing some free coaching calls in September, so there's not quite as many spots as usual. But if you want to connect with me, I will help you one on one. And then if you, uh, do want to be a part of the program, there will be some spots opening up starting in October. So you know what? That's not really that far away. It's going to be here before we know it. I went on a walk today, and I'm thinking October is going to be here before we know it because my ears were cold. It was in the 60s, but my ears got cold. So it falls in the air. It's going to come really fast. Okay, uh, today's topic toxic thoughts. That's going to be really fun, right?

Let's talk about toxic thoughts. Over the past few years of coaching, I have noticed there's some common ones. They just keep coming up, and I put them in the category of not useful, but I think I could call some of them toxic, too. Thoughts that all of us think in some version at some time or another. But they're the kind of thoughts that are not actually helping us be the person that we want to be. They're usually thoughts that seem benign or true or normal. And so they're toxic because we're not even questioning them, but they just might be sabotaging us from living a happier life or life with more peace, more contentment. And by the way, I don't think there's anything wrong with wanting more happiness in your life. I know some of us Christians think that we get to have joy, uh, but we shouldn't ever want to be happy. I don't know that they're that different. And I think wanting to feel the emotion of happy or pleased is kind of like wanting to

feel the emotion of peace or contentment or joy. I also think if I feel more peace or contentment and joy, I'm probably going to feel a little happier. Anyway, I'm off topic just slightly.

So let's get back to toxic thoughts. Toxic thoughts are thoughts that don't really help us. They're not helping us feel more positive emotions that we want. They're not helping us be a better person. If the thoughts aren't helping you do that, they might be sabotaging you. Here's an example. Two thoughts, actually, that never served me, that were toxic. I'm a bad mom and I'm a bad wife. They're really simple thoughts, short, noncomplex words. They're not complex in meaning. They're easy for the brain to digest and just assume that they're true. It's actually kind of a bummer, I think, that they're so easy to think. But those are the ones that really get in there and do their nasty work because we're not paying attention to them. We'll find all sorts of reasons to believe them. Actually, for me, it was easy, some thinking of the thought that I was a bad mom. I could look around my house. It was never fully clean. There were always things around clutter or toys or dust bunnies or dishes. I couldn't keep up. So I was failing. That's what I was thinking, anyway. I lost my cool.

Sometimes when I was stressed or if the kids weren't doing what I asked, I yelled, not always. Sometimes enough. I didn't always want to help with their homework. Sometimes I didn't have enough energy to do the things I thought I should be doing. I wasn't much of a cook. I wasn't consistent with teaching my kids to do their chores. And you know what the brain does when we have a thought? Our resourceful brain. How nice of it. It's so good at doing what it does, we have a thought. It's like, all right, I'm going to work, and I'm going to prove your thought is true. So I just gave you a whole bunch of evidence that I would run through my brain about why I was a bad mom. But honestly, if the brain finds one or two thoughts, that's enough. But thoughts like that are toxic. That thought is toxic. So I have a thought tester. Let's run it through the thought tester. I have three questions to test a thought. Ready? Here they are. One, is it true? Two, does it serve you? Three. Does it honor God? So, let's just take a look at this thought that I think is toxic. Let's put it through the thought test. Is it true? And this one's tricky because my brain is really good at proving it's true.

Remember, we just found a ton of evidence that makes it seem true. So to think something different, I'm going to have to intentionally look for reasons to disprove it. I'm going to have to decide if it's true or not. It's going to take some brain energy. And psychologists tell us that our brain is wired to conserve energy. So we're going to have to work against that lazy tendency of the brain to just accept that it's true. Uh, but this question is the thought true? Is very important. If we don't explore it, it's really hard to let go of the thought. If we think it's true, we pretty much can't let go of it. We have to question this. To consider that a thought might not be true, I'm going to have to look for evidence to the contrary. All right. What evidence is there that I'm a good mom? Going back to the days when I was struggling with this thought and I used to think I was a bad mom, there were moments I honestly struggled. But you know what else is true that actually happened? I told my kids I love them every day. They always had food to eat. I made sure they had a clean bed and a safe place to sleep. I took them to school every day. I communicated regularly with their teachers. I drove them to sporting events. I threw birthday parties for them. Not every year, but I did.

I told them there was nothing they could do to make me love them less. I hugged them. I played games with them. And I could go on and on. When we look at all that look at all that evidence now, how would you describe me as a mom? Most people say, that's a good mom. It's a loving mom. It's a committed mom. It's a mom who cares. That shows I'm a good mom. So is it true when I think I'm a bad mom and I don't think that this thought passes the Snopes test? I think I would give this one a big fat F. It's false. It's not true. And if that thought is not true, what will we call it? HM, there's probably a word for that, right? A false statement. What do we call that? We call it a lie. It's a lie. The thought does not pass the first question of the thought test. So I already know I have no business thinking it. But let's take a look at the second question, because it is just as important. It's not. Which comes first? You could start with either question. Does the thought serve me? Same thought. Let's take a look. I'm a bad mom. Does this thought serve me? So here's how we can determine this.

I have a Mind Shift tool that I use to test thoughts, see how they make us feel and how it affects what we do. I'm going to talk us through it a little bit here, but if you want to hear more about it, go back to episode ten, because it's all about that. Um, and you can learn more there. But basically, with the Mind Shift Tool, we look at what we think, then we see what we feel when we have that thought. And then we look at what we do, what we think, what we feel, what we do. I'm going to plunk this thought in the Mind Shift Tool and see where it leads. That's how we're going to find out if it serves me. So first, what do I think? I'm a bad mom. Next. What do I feel? Well, not good. I never think that thought and feel good, that's for sure. So it feels bad. But there's always an emotion we can find to be more specific.

I know a lot of times when I'm working with people and we get to this, it's like, oh, I feel bad. Well, let's go deeper. Let's try to find an emotion. So when I think I'm a bad mom, for me, I feel shame. To me, it sounds like or it's synonymous with, there's something wrong with me, which always leads me to feel shame. Okay, next is going to be, what do I do? Then what do I do? So first, what do I think? I'm a bad mom. What do I feel? Shame. Then what do I do? For me, it usually looked like disconnecting. Like hiding out in my room or losing myself in TV shows, putting on a movie for the kids, getting out all the Legos and sitting in another room disengaged. Something like that. Basically, that thought led me to shame. And then I would disconnect and not show up for my kids the way I truly wanted to. It wasn't helping me become a better mom. It was helping me disengage. And I'm not saying we don't all need some time to disengage and chill and that I'm totally a proponent of that. That's valid. But I'm not talking about that when we just need a break or we're exhausted or there's something else going on. I'm talking about when we're having a thought. A thought like, I'm a bad mom, and I, um, want to find out if it's serving me, and it's not. When I put it through the Mind Shift Tool I see it is not serving me. It's leading me to be less of who I want to be. It's leading me to act out in a way that creates more evidence to prove I'm a bad mom. It's a thought that leads me to sit in shame. It does not serve me, and it's not true.

There's one question left in the thought test. Does it honor God? Well, we can be quick about this one because honestly, if the answer is no to the first two, it's not going to honor God when

we tell ourselves we suck, when we believe the lie that leads us to shame and disconnection, does it honor God? No. All right, so that's good to know. That third one is easy because we have a God that is truth and he upholds truth. And we have a God that gives grace and mercy and fills us with love and encouragement for every day, not shame. So if the answer is no to either the first questions, it's going to be no to the last one. And we have no business entertaining that thought. And our thoughts are just thoughts. Did you know that most of our thoughts are opinion based or they're based on perspective? And that's okay. We get to think what we want to. It's based on our observations or our relationship experience or just general life experience. And it all contributes to that. But that's good to know. We get to think what we want, and we have free will. And free will, my friends, it starts in our minds.

So if a thought is causing you to feel emotional pain, if a thought is debilitating you from being the person you want to be, if a thought is not true, not serving you, not honoring God, you don't have to think it. If it's disrupting your life, maybe stop thinking it. And I know the question of the day, the question you're all wanting to know that I get asked all the time. How, how do I stop thinking a toxic thought? And there isn't a magic pill that you can take to stop you from thinking the thought, just like we want to. Pill. I remember in the 80s, I'd go to Walgreens when I was a teenager, I wanted to check out the new diet pills. They were a big thing back then. But if you wanted to lose a couple pounds, you wanted to go to Walgreens and get a pill and be thin. We all know that doesn't work. You want to fix a thought in your head. There is no magic pill or instagram meme that's going to fix it. You're going to have to do a little bit of work. And it starts with noticing and paying attention to what you're actually thinking. Usually when people start doing this, start paying attention, they realize they've been, uh, kind of unconscious to a lot of what is actually happening in the brain.

Or you could say a lot of what's happening in the brain is happening in the subconscious, but it's not inaccessible. You can start peeking behind the curtain, seeing what's going on in there and observing. And guess what happens when you're ready to let go of a toxic thought you've been noticing. A lot of the time, you just get to show up and be your own teacher. You'll remind yourself that you've checked up on that thought, and it's not true. You'll remind yourself that you've asked the questions, what do I think? What do I feel? What do I do? And you don't want the feelings and behavior that result from it. And you start teaching yourself that you're ready to let go of the thought. It's a process. It's not a magic pill. It's a willingness to be aware and be kind and patient with yourself. It's a decision to let go of a thought that's not true and doesn't serve you. How long will it take? I don't know. How long did it take me to stop thinking I'm a bad mom? It took a few years. Little by little, I chose to drop the thought. Some days, I wasn't able to. But I kept working at it. I kept working with me. I'm like, It's okay, we'll get this. We'll keep working at it. And, you know, I almost never think that thought anymore. One time this year, I found it lurking behind some frustration, like, behind the shadows, and I ended up sitting in my closet in the dark. That was a huge clue, because you know what I'm feeling when I decide to go in my walk in closet and sit in the dark? I'm feeling shame.

So I'm in my closet in the dark. I'm like, what the heck is going on? Why am I feeling shame? And I uncovered the thought I'm a bad mom. I'm like, what are you doing in there, you little

stinker? So I worked with it now, because I had so much practice before. It didn't take long. It took me five to ten minutes. I let myself feel some shame. I'm like, okay, right now I think I'm a bad mom. What does shame feel like? Feels like I want to slink down into a dark black hole in my closet and melt away. And I let myself feel it for a couple of minutes, and then I asked myself if the thought was true. And because I had worked on this one so much before, I was able to get through it right away. But this took, remember, years of practice.

So I was able to remind myself, it's not true and move on. Today, I know I'm not a bad mom. It's a garbage thought, and I'm done with it. And now let me leave you with some more examples, because I just gave you one example of a garbage thought that I think you have no business thinking. So I have some other ones that I hear on a somewhat regular basis, and I think you have no business thinking because they're toxic. So let me share them with you. And if you catch yourself thinking one of them, you can put it through the thought test. You can ask, Is it true? Does it serve me? Does it honor God? See how it makes you feel. See how it makes you behave. Okay, here's some of the thoughts I hear on a regular basis. Or, uh, a version of them. I'm doing it wrong. I don't know. She always has it together. I hate my life. This is too hard. Or I have to do this. And the word have to or those two words have to is key. There I have to do this toxic thought, my friend, because you don't have to do it. You get to choose. There's so much power and choice. Okay, um, two more toxic thoughts. You know, these are ones that we don't usually admit to other people. These are our secret toxic thoughts.

Nobody likes me, and I'm not enough. I'm not enough is one that we have a hard time even noticing we're having or articulating. But it's in there for a lot of us. And if you're struggling in this moment, you're hearing some of these, you even think some of these are still true for you. Let me tell you what I know is true, okay? Because if you want to dump these toxic thoughts, it's going to be a process. So you're just going to borrow what I know about you. You're not doing it wrong. You're exactly where you're supposed to be. You do know. You probably do know. You do know what you want. You do know why you care. And if you were to check in with yourself, you do know the next step. You do. And, uh, basically what I'm doing here is I'm answering those toxic thoughts back with what I know. Okay? So the next one when you think other people have it together, no one has it all together. No one is more or less together than you. We are all a bunch of broken humans doing our best to figure it out. You guys got to trust me. I've seen into a lot of people's lives. Nobody has it together.

We're all figuring it out. Okay? If you think it's too hard, well, your life may be challenging, but I want to assure you, this is the perfect journey for you. It is. What are you going to make of it? It's the perfect journey for you. Well, that was the I hate my life it's the perfect journey for you. It might be hard, but you can do it now. It's too hard. Well, nothing's too hard. Everything's possible one step at a time. So much more is possible than what you think. And if you think you have to do it, I want to tell you you don't have to do any of it. Let go of the huge list of expectations you have for you. Just let it go. If you think people don't like you. I'm telling you, people do like you. I can name one right now. It's me. I promise you. I like you, and it's true. If you want to test it out, you just send me a message. Or you come to a free coaching and see me face to face. I will prove it to you. I do like you. So there's one. And if you think you aren't

enough, I'm telling you, you are totally enough. You were made in God's image. He made you without error crafted, uh, exactly the way you are, because he knows just how amazing you are and how amazing he wanted you to be. He put you together on purpose. You cannot add to your value. You cannot take away from your value. It is not possible. Therefore, you are enough. That's my dose of encouragement for you today. We all need encouragement and help in this life. We do. I do. Sometimes we need a coach. Shout out to my coach, Natalie.

She helped me tremendously in just one call last week. We all need some help, and I'm here to do the same for you if you want it. I think you should really take me up on it, because I can help you. I can help you create the life that you're looking for for yourself. Picture a day when you wake up feeling great about your day and great about who you are because you like you. Picture a day when your best friend is looking right in your eyes and says, you have your spark back. You look happy again. Picture a day when anxiety and frustration are a thing of the past and you love your life. All of that is possible. It's happened for me, so I know it's possible. I know how to do it, and I can share that with you. And it's happened for the women I coach. This life can get better and better each day. So if you want some more resources to help you do that, you can get a free coaching call. And there's some other resources available to you over at Rympodcast.com. Let's get you started on your mind renewal journey. All right, y'all, that's it for today. I will catch you next week. Take care.

As an advanced certified life coach, I help Christian women trying to live their best lives, but they still feel unsatisfied, side, and stuck. I teach thought management skills that work so you can enjoy life again and step into who God has created you to be. Don't forget to head on over to [Rympodcast Um.com](http://RympodcastUm.com) to get my free resources or a free coaching call.