

Episode 164

Unmasking Destructive Anger and Embracing Grace | Natalie Hixson

Life Repurposed Podcast
michellerayburn.com/164

Michelle Rayburn [00:00:46]:

I'd like to introduce you to Natalie Hixson. She's a wife, mother and certified professional life coach who helps discouraged Christian moms overcome destructive anger and burnout. After learning to thrive in motherhood and process anger in a healthy way, Natalie became convicted to help other moms avoid those dark years of motherhood by helping them to appreciate and process their anger, learn to identify their triggers, and ultimately control their reaction to those triggering situations. She enjoys her own motherhood journey by hanging with her husband Mike and their three daughters in beautiful Bozeman, Montana. She recharges with Jesus, coffee and adventures with her family, like skiing in the winter and hiking in the summer.

I want to give a little disclaimer here about this episode. I guess it's more of an apology to both you and to Natalie, my guest. We had some trouble with audio distortion before we started recording, and I thought I had fixed it, but when I went to edit the episode, I realized that it was not resolved all the way. And so I apologize for some problems with audio quality on the recording, but I listened through it as I edited and felt like our interview was clear enough for you to listen in. And so my apologies for the audio, you know, as regular listeners that I strive for the best quality possible, and sometimes that just doesn't work out with Internet connections.

So let's jump into that chat with Natalie and I hope you enjoy her story. I like to go back a little bit sometimes, go back to childhood. We won't start all at the beginning. You won't have to talk about your birth or anything like that, but we'll go back to the beginning a little bit because I have some childhood memories that really are still in my mind today. So I'm wondering, since we're going to be talking about anger and destructive anger and the effects of that. Can you think of your first memory of when you experienced an anger emotion?

Natalie Hixson [00:03:24]:

Yeah, one of them was I was like somewhere between four and six and I had cotton candy my mom had gotten me and she dropped me off at my great grandma's house. And I walk in and my great grandma's like, you don't need that candy. And I was like, what is mine? And she thinks, no, are you going to give that to the boy down the street? And that was like, wait, how come he gets it and I don't? And that right there was one of those core memories that added to my self

image as far as my body and stuff. I've had to go back and really ask the Lord to forgive me and forgive my grandma for that experience. That was one of the first ones I remember.

Michelle Rayburn [00:04:13]:

I can remember being the oldest child in my family. My mom would put me in charge.

Michelle Rayburn [00:04:18]:

So before I was really of the age to be a babysitter, I was probably twelve and my brother was a year behind me at eleven. And I remember my mom and dad maybe going for an hour somewhere for coffee or something and me getting so mad at my brother that I was just screaming at him because he wouldn't listen to me. And I remember that feeling of being dizzy almost with being so mad I thought I was going to pass out. And so that wasn't the first or the last time really, that I experienced anger.

Natalie Hixson [00:04:52]:

Right.

Michelle Rayburn [00:04:52]:

So as we talk about this, is this something that a lot of people who experience destructive anger will have memories that go all the way back to childhood? Or do they often have life, an inciting incident in their life?

Natalie Hixson [00:05:05]:

It really depends. I have clients who come to me who are like, I was never angry until I became a mom. And then there's clients who like me. My story where I grew up with two parents who were demonstrating destructive anger. So it really is interesting to me because I assumed in the beginning that everyone had parents who experienced showed destructive anger. But then that has absolutely been proven not true in my experience. It just totally depends.

Michelle Rayburn [00:05:40]:

Yeah, I've noticed that sometimes as parents we try to repress the anger in our children, but then we don't repress our own. And so that sends kind of an interesting message to kids of like, mom's allowed to get angry, but I'm not.

Natalie Hixson [00:05:54]:

Yeah, it's true. We have a difficult time processing other people's emotions and how to deal with it. And especially when our kids, and often for us long, we're trying to repress their explosions because we're maxed out too. And we're just like, I can't deal with yours, so you need to knock it off because I'm just trying to deal with myself here.

Michelle Rayburn [00:06:16]:

Right. Or we're embarrassed. My son was telling me yesterday that his daughter, who's almost two, had her first full on meltdown in the grocery store yesterday. And this moment of like, whoa, I've never seen this side of her. I didn't even know it was in there.

Natalie Hixson [00:06:32]:

Right? Oh, man. Yeah. Being in public can be absolutely challenging when the kids are because we do we're like, is everybody thinking they're thinking I'm a bad parent? We don't want to think that. Most of the time, we're like, we don't care what other people think. But then that actually happens, and you're like, I'm so sorry to be that mom today or that dad today with that kid today. And I have an experience on the airplane. I remember when my oldest was throwing epic. I it's interesting because the Holy Spirit totally led me in this.

Many times. I would just be, like, whispering in your ear to shut up, be quiet. Like, I was really mean. I was like, Stop it. And it would just make her more upset. And at one time, the Lord inspired me to just tell her it's okay. "Don't worry about what anybody else on this plane says. Don't worry about it." And so I did. I started telling her, "It's okay. If you need to scream, scream. If you need to cry, cry. Mommy hears you." And that totally calmed her down.

And I remember saying, "I don't care what anybody else on this airplane thinks." And I was probably saying that more for me, but just also letting her know it's okay. "Right now, you're in distress. I need process through that. And you're this little and this is how you do that at this age." So it was really interesting and kind of like a big thing for me to try to reuse that going forward.

Michelle Rayburn [00:08:03]:

When you were talking now, it really reminded me of something we talked about before we started recording, about how oftentimes the expression of anger happens behind closed doors. And when we teach our kids they can't say how they feel in public, then they learn to repress it too, and pretend to be one way in public and another way behind closed doors. So let's talk about

your experience a little bit then, and how you came to a point where you first realized you needed help with anger and then how you came to a point where you started helping others.

Natalie Hixson [00:08:34]:

Yeah, so like I said earlier, my parents, the way that they showed anger was destructive. So it was yelling, it was slamming doors. It was sometimes throwing things. It was a pretty scary environment for me today. Absolutely. They've grown. They are new people in the Lord, and it's a beautiful thing. And I think that on the Lord actually is part of my healing journey to help encourage them as well. But not that I'm taking credit for their growth, obviously, that's their own.

But it's just really cool when we can watch our kids help us grow. And that was one of those places that was seeing that right and being with my kids. So I get married to my high school sweetheart, and while we moved in together after getting married, I can remember these epic fights where I'm screaming at him, and he's just sitting there on the couch, completely quiet. And I remember yelling at him, one yelling at me.

I remember my mom at one point when I was right up, it's okay to yell. This is how we die. I was like, okay. It was reinforced. It's okay. And he's like, I just don't do that. If we pause and look at his bringing up his parents were quiet. They avoided conflict. Sometimes there's passive aggressiveness. It was a quiet household in that regard, and so they processed it in a different way. You put us two together, and I'm trying to explode, and he's, like, withdrawing. And at that moment, I remember just some of the episode tantrums I was having in our marriage, being afraid of having kids, because my anger was I was starting to see that it's contrast. Like, this is not healthy.

That didn't stop us, obviously. We had Enya a couple of years after we got married, and when she hit about two years old, you could find both of us throwing tantrums together. We were both screaming, yelling, except Mommy was more scary, where the story takes a turn for the worse. So I was very abusive, and I don't say that lightly. I've just told this story so many times, so please know my heart.

What I'm about to share, it might sound like I'm sharing it in a light manner, but it wasn't light. And I don't condone it. But I was very scary. I was threatening. I would get in her face. I would squeeze her arm too tight in these bruises. I'd spank her butt too hard, and leave handprints, I would just threaten, throw things. It was really scary. Life a two year old tantrum, but what was I, like, 23, 24 at that point?

And I knew it wasn't okay, but I didn't know what to do about it. I felt like I'd been struggling for so long at that point that there was nothing I could do. I was hopeless. By the grace of God, we actually live next to my parents. We were in a duplex, like condos, and they were in one side. And so when I could tell I'm getting to the point where I might actually really cause damage, I would call my mom, and she would come take her from me. So it was really scary.

My husband, he would try to get involved, and I would get more angry at him, but he would do his best to protect Enya from me. So fast forward a couple more years. We had her sister Skye, and I can remember Enya's. Tantrums at this point are epic. He has not learned from anyone how to deal with the anger. And she just keeps getting reinforced by my behavior, right? And so I'm nursing sky one night, and I'm in a room with the door shut and Mike's down the hallway with Enya, trying to get her to bed. She's throwing a tantrum, and I'm sitting there getting more and more upset to the point where I just explode and scream at the top of my lungs for Enya to shut up and go to bed.

And Skye stops nursing, and she looks at me with this horrible little baby face and just starts bawling. And I was like, this has to stop. And my conclusion to that was Enya needs therapy because if Enya's tantrums will stop, then I won't get so upset. So we took her to therapy and therapist observed her and us. And then she met with me and Mike alone, and she said Enni was perfectly normal for her aging development.

I was like, but you're not home with her, or she's going to be good for you. And she's like, I understand that, Natalie, but you're the one who needs to be in here.

And I was like, Wait, what?

It was hard to hear it, but at the same time, deep down inside, I was like, You're telling me that I can change? I'm here. We'll do it. And so that was definitely spirit led. And it wasn't a Christian counselor. She was a psychoanalysis. But I spent four years of psychoanalysis therapy with her. And I'll tell you, it really helped me understand a lot of workings of how humans are and helped me kind of process through a lot of past events in my life. But I left therapy because I still hadn't changed the patterns at home. They had been getting less intense. They weren't as abusive as they were, but I still yell. I'd still slam doors. I'd still be scary mom, right?

Thank goodness the abuse had stopped at that point, the physical we're going to say it that way, the physical abuse. But I continued my journey. I wasn't done. I wasn't going to settle for this. I knew I really was desperate to continue this journey, to not be like that anymore.

And so I just was led on a personal development journey through the Lord. And some of it actually happened to be through me trying various different online businesses that failed. And

just the personal development, reading books, doing online courses and stuff, it just kept me in a positive mindset going forward. And then I was also growing in my faith in the Lord, and those two things were absolutely helping me. And then I felt led to coaching school. And so I went to Christian Life Coaching Institute, got my certification, and I thought I was going to help moms organize their life just because one of the things that helped me was I did a full house purge, and clean and everything has a place and a place for everything type of mentality. And that helped alleviate some things, but it didn't fix anything.

It just helped. So once I went into that, I learned about listening. And she was very adamant. If you are going to be coaching people, you're Christian coaching, you have to know the Lord. You have to spend time with him daily. You got to get in that consistent habit, because if you can't hear him, if you don't spend that time with him, then you won't hear him. You can't recognize his voice if you aren't ever talking to him and listening to him. So then through that journey, my coaching practice was not doing anything.

And I met with some ladies and a little business mastermind, and one of the moms and I stayed up late talking about our journeys through anger. She related and she had a podcast. She's like, get on my podcast. We have to talk about this. So I did. And it was at that point, after that podcast, that mom started coming to me. I need help. I need help. How did you do this? And the really crazy thing is it was through helping them and serving them that really got me over the biggest hump of my destructive anger. And so it was just the Lord working through, I mean, so many coaching sessions, hundreds of hours of coaching sessions that it felt like when I got off those sessions that that was for me and the Lord was just speaking through me, right? And so it was so cool.

And I still to this day, I'm not perfect. I still get angry. I still make mistakes. Especially around those hormone cycles. Those can be fun. But today my destructive anger looks more like a side remark or I will give a funny look or I might slam my door still. But there's not this all out my rage. I would just check out and I would come back to you and be like, well, what just happened? I don't even know what I just did. It was so scary.

And I like to really hear, so what does that look like? Now with annuals from, I mean, one of the sweetest confirmations that we have restored and renewed and we're continuing to grow with any and she knows the story. Everything you've heard and more she's heard from me about what happened. Very open with her about it. But I was visiting her at college this last year, her first year of college, and I was being careful. I didn't want to get into her bubble or anything. Not that she was putting that out, but I didn't want to be careful. I don't want to come "Mom" you at college.

And she'd ask me to come hang out in her dorm and cook dinner and stuff. And I was like, well, I don't want to overstep my boundary. She's like, mom. Having you here makes my stress level go so much more down. I really love having you here. And I was just like, wait. What? Because that's not what it was 18 years ago. When you're two years old or whenever it was. The message for you listening is the Lord will redeem and restore. And we have to put our faith in that. Even when we're in the middle of the muck and the mire and we're just like we're hopeless and things are never going to change.

First of all, we want to stop saying that.

But second of all, we haven't got to trust that we're going through this, and the Lord's going to use this for his good. The enemy is trying to make it for his plans. The Lord is going to turn it around. And now today, I look back at that and I'm so grateful for the experience. I'm not thankful for the things that happened that were bad, but I'm grateful for the experience because of who I get to help today. Because this, as I was telling you before we started recording, this is like a hidden challenge.

Moms are afraid to speak out that they've got this challenge because in our society, especially with instagram and all that, we've got this idea of how perfect life looks and they never get angry. We can even be at church and see moms that were like, oh, how do they do it? They're so patient and it's like you don't know what they're like at home.

Michelle Rayburn [00:20:07]:

Yeah, absolutely. Thank you for your vulnerability, and I appreciate the way you share your story, because I can relate to so many aspects of it. And I can't say for certain now, looking back, that if I had sat in therapy with my child and had somebody tell me that I was the problem, I don't think I would have received it in the way you did. One of my biggest hurdles in life has been this self sufficient thing, like everybody else around me is broken. They triggered me, therefore they're responsible for it. And so that would have taken, I think, now if somebody said that to me, because even now, my husband, he's a lot like yours. We were high school sweethearts. He's the middle child who never wants to have a conflict. He will push back now and I will receive it. And he'll even diffuse that anger because he will say, I don't think you're angry at me. And he's right.

Oftentimes I've realized for me it's fear. And when I'm afraid or I feel out of control and I feel like there's nothing I can do to fix that, I just freak out and then everything makes me angry. So I'd love to talk about triggers because I know you have a resource with triggers, but I'd love to know some of the things you've discovered that trigger us to get to that point where we lose control.

Natalie Hixson [00:21:33]:

Yeah, well, like you just said, there's that idea that not just idea, but the feeling that we're afraid or we're out of control. Anger usually comes from one of the negative emotions that we're not wanting to process because it's vulnerable. If we're afraid, we want to protect ourselves. If we're disgusted, we want to be like, get away, stop it. If we're sad, we don't want people to know because so many reasons, right? Some people will say anger is a secondary emotion. Some people where I live is we can feel angry and not get constructive.

And feeling anger is okay. And Psalm 44 says, be angry and do not sin. Meditate within your heart on your bed and be still. It's okay that we get angry, but what are we doing with that anger? That's what's important. And I like to discuss, too the difference between what is destructive anger and what is that okay to be angry?

Michelle Rayburn [00:22:38]:

Yeah, I'd love to hear more about that.

Natalie Hixson [00:22:41]:

So the feeling of anger in general, you're feeling upset. For whatever reason, you have this feeling that you're angry, and that's okay. You are not sinning because you're feeling that feeling. And so I just really like to make that clear because often people will feel that and immediately feel shame and guilt. So what are you doing with that? Are you using that anger to control a situation? Protect yourself from something? In that case, we're going to destructive anger. And destructive anger is those scary behaviors. Or we're screaming, we're slamming things, we're throwing things. We are belittling, threatening.

We might go to the other side. Maybe we're not loud. Maybe we're passive aggressive. Maybe we're manipulating. Maybe we are lying. I remember my husband would come along and be so angry. I'd just be like, bye. And I'd get in the car. He was with the kids, so I could leave him and he wouldn't know where I was. Didn't have location back then. Silent treatment. Those are all destructive behaviors, right? Whereas anger, you might be frustrated, you might help your foot, you might sigh. Those things are not so bad.

In fact, I told them, okay, you've got that built up energy and you need to get it out. If you have little I'm like, okay, everybody, we're feeling frustrated. Let's roar. Like William or even to this day when I get really frustrated with all my teenagers, depending on the situation, I'm like, I'm going to take a moment. I'll be back, and I'll go out to the recycling bin and I'll stomp hands and

box food, and I won't be cursing. I won't be telling myself that my kids are terrible. I'm just life just get it out.

And so getting the energy out, that's okay to get that energy out, but let's communicate about it. I'm upset right now, so I need to take a moment and go calm down before we can continue in this conversation. And I like, to tell the kids, mommy's angry right now, like when they're little, especially Mommy's angry right now. And so we need to take a break. Everybody just calm down moment to their own places. Let's calm down. It's not you I'm mad at. It's the situation. So we're trying to deflect that from the kids. It's not them. We have a problem here. You're not the problem. The problem is a problem. We'll figure it out, but we got to calm down first. So it's kind of helping us work through that angry feeling in a healthy way. And I like to say the negative emotions, whether it's anger, disgust, sadness or fear, those are speed bumps. We're feeling them for a reason.

So let's slow down, stop and go, why am I feeling this way? And I use a little prompt of sit and pray or shorten it to sit and pee because I like to encourage moms, just go to the bathroom. No one's going to argue with you for going to the bathroom. Right? But if you're like, I love that, literally in a place where you can't because you're like, I can't leave my baby on the floor. Just remove yourself. Like, if you're on the floor, get on the couch. If you one side of the room, go to the other side of the room. Just make a movement of stepping out.

Step out in faith that you can get out of this situation in a healthy way.

So s is stop, separate.

I is inhale. T is tune in.

Tune in is what's going on for me.

Why am I angry? What's going on for them? Why are they upset? And then pray, Lord, I need strength. Don't pray for patience. Don't pray for patience. Pray for strength and clarity of mind. Lord, please give me clarity on what's going on. Give me strength to walk through this in a productive way. Help me to use kind and loving words. That's the heat of the moment. And then if we did blow it, or even if we didn't blow up, but we had to take that calm down moment and come back.

We want to recover and just take responsibility. Something you were saying. I don't think I would have been able to take the therapist saying that to me. And that's a big deal. We have to take responsibility for what is going on for us. That was my thing in the beginning, and you need therapy, not me. Well, there's a couple of things that were clouding my judgment. There I thought, first of all, this was genetic. I couldn't change. And second, that was a lie from the enemy. And second, I was thinking that it's kind of along the same lines that there's no way for me. I've been praying through the frame, nothing's going to happen. And then there's the third

thing that I just wouldn't go to, which was you need to take responsibility. But I wanted to but I didn't know. Right. And so Lord led me into that. I think that all led to the Spirit, because he was just like, no, this is your answer right here.

You need to take responsibility, and if you're taking responsibility, that moves you into productive action. And so that is what helps you start to step out of those behaviors, because you're taking responsibility and you're being productive, destructive behavior. We're taking the easy way out, or we're just not facing it. And it's basically like the lazy way out. But I don't want to call anybody listening lazy. You just didn't know. You don't know what you don't know. But responsibility is huge.

And you'd asked about triggers, so the trigger tracker is something that your listeners can go download for free on my website. And it is the thing that this is usually what I like to do after the fact. Or maybe, you know, there's a time that you get triggered, like the bedtime or leaving the house big time for mom. Typically with kids getting triggered, we want to write down there's questions like journaling prompts, basically, that are like, what happened? What did you do? That's not the pretty answer. You don't want to write that up. You need to face it. It's kind of that moment where you're, like, going back to rewind the camera and see what your actions were in that, right? How do we want this to look in the future in a healthy way? How would a healthy mom walk through this? Right. Trying your best to do that. And then there's what was going on. Were you hungry, tired, hormonal? Are they hungry, tired, hormonal? Inspection of teenagers. Girl mom right here. Three girls? Yes. My husband wants to leave once a week, a month.

Michelle Rayburn [00:29:21]:

Your husband's in my situation, where I had all boys in my house and he has all girls in his house.

Natalie Hixson [00:29:25]:

Oh, my goodness. Yeah. There was a week this summer I had my niece. We don't have nephews even. We have all girls on both sides of the family. And my niece was over, and all of us were hormonal, and we were just like and I was like, I didn't realize. We were all like, okay, where are you all at on your cycle? God bless Mike. But anyways, that's very tricky Also ask, you know, go to the Word to find some encouragement and also to make sure you pray about it. Pray over this situation. And we don't take time. We don't really take time to stop and go, what's going on? For me? Why am I doing this? Like, the gal that you're talking about, Jennifer, the binder girl. Great.

Michelle Rayburn [00:30:17]:

A couple episodes ago, Jennifer Dukes Lee.

Natalie Hixson [00:30:19]:

Yeah, great episode. Absolutely. Anybody listening, go listen to that and pick up one of her journals, because journaling is so helpful to help us. We're giving ourselves time, and as moms, we don't do that enough. We need to give. Ourselves time, but with the Lord. And so directing those things to the Lord, always in prayer. And I have found in the stage of life that I am in as I have to release control of my children and let them walk their journey. I can't police them anymore. I just have to kind of sit back and be the judge of like, no, you cross curfew, here's your consequence. But helping them is praying for them now more than anything else. And if you can start that habit back when your kids are littler and continue that habit, he's going to help you overcome and work through these things. You're not stuck and you're not alone.

Michelle Rayburn [00:31:16]:

For me, I remember having my second child was very colicky. The first year was really rough and I remember being not only sleep deprived, but frustrated because I didn't know what to do for him. There were times I had to just put him in his crib because I was afraid I was going to hurt him because I was so frustrated. But I went to Mothers of Preschoolers group and I remember just admitting to the people around the table that motherhood is not what I thought it was going to be, and just seeing other people say, oh, I feel that way a lot of days too. It was really helpful for me. And this was pre instagram, pre Internet perfection, all of that. But there's this thing I had already built up in my head that everybody else's life is so much different than mine.

So it felt good for me to hear other people say, I go through that too. And that was just calming, even for me to know that he was back in the nursery crying, that he didn't like it there either, and those people couldn't figure out what he wanted. And so this was just my time with other people. Where have you found places to be real with other people? Where you have felt safe, where you can express? Because I'd love for our listeners to think a little creatively about if they're feeling stuck right now, they can reach out to somebody like you for coaching, but also in their circles, where do you look for help?

Natalie Hixson [00:32:36]:

Yeah, it's really amazing how many moms I've talked to who they heard my story and it wasn't until they heard my story, they're like, Wait, I'm not alone. And I encourage them. I'm like, you need to talk to people. Talk to people in your circle. Ask the moms. I can get vulnerable and open up to my book club girls that we've been book clubs for years. Really? Core group of girls, those

girls. We open up and we're vulnerable with each other about what's going on. We pray for each other. Woman's bible study, it can be intimidating, but there might be another mom there that you kind of start to like with the sense you might be struggling with even one thing that's the same, reach out to that person afterwards, even asking your pastor, because your pastor typically talks to lots of people having the challenges, right.

And saying, Is there someone with this challenge that you think that I could talk to, that we could keep each other accountable or pray for each other? And most recently, for me, I joined the woman's prayer group at my church and have been able to just I mean, I'll never forget the girl. I text her like, Are you still being in prayer group? And she's like, yeah, come. It's completely changed my life, and I can't go into everything right now. But that was like a month ago. And since then, I can't tell you the things the Lord has done in my children's life and my life as a mom, just being in that group. And I have opened up and been very vulnerable about challenges that we've experienced. And so it kind of gave you the one that we're Christian circles for me, right?

Michelle Rayburn [00:34:16]:

Yeah.

Natalie Hixson [00:34:19]:

We're not even focused on worshipping or do anything secular. It's just book club. We read whatever we decide to read. So there's that. And then if you have a good relationship with your parents, if you feel like you can confide in them. And one of the ways I'd go about that with your parents is asking them questions. What was it like for you when you had kids this age? And I know that can't always be parents. Our relationship with our parents can be really challenging.

One of the things through my four years of psychoanalysis really encouraged me to talk to my parents, and it was super scary and super hard, but I challenged my parents, and we had some really difficult conversations and ones that didn't end so pretty, but we were able to overcome so much, my mom, dad, and I. It's been really beautiful to see that relationship and how encouraging my parents are over what I do today. So reaching out to them as well, hopefully that gives them solutions and help.

Michelle Rayburn [00:35:35]:

I think there's a little bit of a stigma, maybe a lot of a stigma. And if we get past the fear of speaking out, it's amazing how many times people say, I can relate. And we're careful about sharing our stories because, first off, we don't want to be that person on the news.

Natalie Hixson [00:35:53]:

Right.

Michelle Rayburn [00:35:55]:

I think that was always in the back of my mind, if I don't control this, I'm going to be that person on the news.

Natalie Hixson [00:36:02]:

Oh, so scary, so afraid that someone's going to come take your kids away. That was my number one fear when I was in the worst of it. And I will tell you something, too. A really important thing to understand is when you focus on that fear, that's going to keep you entrapped.

Michelle Rayburn [00:36:19]:

Yes.

Natalie Hixson [00:36:20]:

And so if you're telling yourself those things that you're a horrible mom, terrible, you're never going to change. Someone's going to take your kids away. Nobody knows what I'm going through. I'm the only one. You're going to stay stuck. And so we have to start speaking truth, and the Lord is very clear about that in the Bible. We need to focus on what's good and lovely and true. We need to speak those things over our families and our motherhood. You spoke this world into existence. Words are powerful.

Michelle Rayburn [00:36:53]:

Yes. Thank you for that. I think for me, the journey, now that my kids are older, they're adults, is also using those words to say I'm sorry, or now that I look back, that's not the way I would have done it, because I don't want them growing up with these hidden secrets of I can never say that. There were times my mom was scary angry, and I didn't want to be around her, which is so important why?

Natalie Hixson [00:37:18]:

We want to do the sit and pray to recovery. We're modeling that to our kids, and our kids are seeing we make mistakes, and we want our kids to see that. And moms are like, oh, I blew it again. I'm like, what do you learn, and how did you recover? And I'm very clear with the moms I talk to and work with and you listening. It is okay to mess up in front of your kids. In fact, they need to see that I work with some moms whose parents never messed up, like, quote unquote, messed up in front of. You would think, oh, look, I grew up with parents who never got angry.

Listen, I have moms that I work with who are like that, and they don't know how to process anger, and they feel so much guilt and shame because their parents remember we're acting that way. So what's wrong with me? So for us to show our children that we do get upset, it's okay. And yes, we want to work on the destructive behaviors and not be abusive. That's important to work through and overcome. But making those mistakes and getting to recover with our kids or showing our kids, you're going to grow up and you're going to mess up, and there is grace for that, and the Lord will cover us. We got to take that to the cross and leave it with him.

Michelle Rayburn [00:38:34]:

I think it's also been helpful to have my adult children who are married watch us model conflict in a marriage. Because I remember my husband had a conversation with my grandpa many years ago when he was living, and my grandpa told my husband that my grandma and grandpa never had had an argument in 65 years of marriage. And I remember my husband thinking they had to have and I was thinking, Well, I think they probably did. I don't know. But that's like a false thing because my husband and I have conflicts all the time. And so for our kids to see us disagree and then to see me admit to my husband I was wrong. That's very helpful for them, because for many of their years, they didn't see me say I was wrong.

And so all of that becomes helpful for them in applying in their own marriages as well. I would love to know, Natalie, where you've seen this overflow into other areas of your life. This is the life repurpose podcast. We think about how when God changes us in one area, it affects maybe our work, our relationships, or overall well being. So what have you noticed in your life as you've overcome that destructive anger? And when I say overcome, I don't mean you never get angry like you said before, but you've overcome the destructive side of it.

Natalie Hixson [00:39:55]:

I feel like, first of all, I'm being used for God's glory, right? And not perfectly, but he's able to use me in ways that I can encourage my kids, encourage other moms, encourage people older than me, even. So that's been really cool to watch. It's all him, not me. It's just me laying down and being like, use me. I would say, in general, yes. Health wise, I feel better. My marriage, we were talking divorce in 2015, and the Lord led us into marriage coaching, and that made a huge

impact, not just in our marriage, but also with my destructive anger when I was working through that.

And forgiveness, I mean, it was one of the questions that you had. Forgiveness is huge. One of the questions that I heard on that other podcast with Jennifer was, who would you hug in heaven? And the first person that popped in my mind when I heard that question was a person in my life who caused a lot of destruction in our life. The narcissistic sociopath got the diagnosis from someone, so it's not like I'm just calling them that.

Michelle Rayburn [00:41:16]:

Yeah.

Natalie Hixson [00:41:17]:

And so much destruction. And I was under the victim of that abuse for a really long time. And I would want to hug her. I pray to the Lord that she is healed and able to be there. I want to hug her. And that is I think forgiveness has been one of the biggest things that changed for me, is learning that I am not perfect. I am a sinful human being, and I have my own challenges. And so being able to forgive others and love them through that lens of Christ, my marriage, that's a big one. Huge. Absolutely love them more than I ever have.

Michelle Rayburn [00:42:03]:

If you were high school sweethearts, you're like me where you were probably somewhat immature when you got married. I was only 20 when I got married. And so it's like I'm finally acting the way that we just grew up together. We both learned how to behave with each other. That's kind of fun. One of the things that I have found freeing for me is no longer when you talk about forgiveness, no longer looking at the people who were the source of some of my younger years of anger.

And I say source as in people who modeled anger. I don't have resentment toward them. I don't hold them responsible for my current behaviors. For example, if it's like a parent or somebody else, a teacher in our life who it's like that person caused me. It's like I no longer have those feelings. And I feel like that's healing to get to a place where I can say, even if they modeled it for me, I'm an adult, and I'm making my own decisions, and that, in so many areas of life, has been freeing for me, I think a huge step in getting past I still get triggered by interesting things.

Natalie Hixson [00:43:15]:

That's the thing, too. And that's being aware and doing those trigger trackers and taking time, and we want to get into an awareness of what are we thinking, because what we're thinking is going to turn into how we're acting. And we think something we get an emotion from the thought we just had, and then we're going to act on that emotion.

So by us being aware of our thoughts and taking thoughts captive through Christ, we can turn those thoughts to more productive and really work through that. But if we haven't ever done that or we didn't know we could or we didn't know how, then we're just letting our thoughts run us, and that's where we get into those cycles of rage and anger and destructive behaviors, because we're not stopping to go, what's going on in me right now? Yeah.

Michelle Rayburn [00:44:06]:

That's become kind of a really good self awareness, is to know I'm feeling this way and instead of acting on it, to learn how to pause and wonder what's causing me to feel this way. That's been a lot of years of exploring. So for the listener out there, this is a journey, and we're all a work in progress, like Natalie said. You were talking about resources. Natalie, I'd love to know how people can connect with you, how they can get that track, the trigger tracker that you mentioned.

Natalie Hixson [00:44:36]:

Yeah. So I'm at just my name Natalie Hickson, H-I-X-S-O-N on the tricky little S in there, and they can just get there. I think you have a link that you can send them to.

Michelle Rayburn [00:44:51]:

I will, through your show notes.

Natalie Hixson [00:44:53]:

Show notes. And then they can download the trigger tracker for free. But I have a blog over there and not really on social media for business. I'll post my blogs and stuff on Pinterest, but at the moment, that's really all I'm doing, social media ones.

Michelle Rayburn [00:45:09]:

Are you open for coaching clients?

Natalie Hixson [00:45:12]:

I am, yes. I take clients in as they come and just as the Lord sends them my way. Yeah. All right.

Michelle Rayburn [00:45:20]:

So, listener, if you want to connect with Natalie and get those resources, or if you're looking for a coach to help you take those next steps on her website, which I will link to in the show notes so you can find her there. And Natalie is a resource for you to begin those steps for healing and getting over destructive anger and figuring out how God can repurpose that in your life. As we wrap up Natalie, is there something that you would want to say to the listener who's out there who isn't sure of her next step or she's maybe just started down this journey? How would you want to encourage her?

Natalie Hixson [00:45:55]:

Yeah, first of all, kind of just going to bring back some of the stuff I shared in depth. A life coach that I work with once tell me you're a special person, but you're not a special snowflake, meaning that, yes, you are unique and God has created you a special person, but what you're going through right now, somebody else has gone through as well. So don't sit there and think that you can't change or there's no hope for you. Believe that will only keep you where you're stuck or lead you down a worse road.

So, as scary as it might feel, start, first of all prayer and ask the Lord to lead you to somebody to talk to. Whether it's me or your pastor or a friend, don't care. But don't stay in the darkness that you're in thinking that you can't because nobody else will understand. And then trust the Lord and get on that. Lead us at just five minutes a day. Get in the word and talk to the Lord. You need that encouragement from Him. Yes.

Michelle Rayburn [00:47:05]:

Thank you so much for being vulnerable and sharing with our listeners today. And thank you for the ministry that you're doing, because I know this is work that's going to impact people and ultimately change families for the better. So thank you so much, Natalie.

Natalie Hixson [00:47:22]:

Thank you. Thank you for having me.

Michelle Rayburn [00:47:25]:

If this episode got you thinking, I encourage you to reach out to someone, whether it's a friend or whether it's somebody at your church, your pastor, somebody in your Bible study, you're welcome to email me. You can look up Natalie if it's got you thinking and you just need to tell somebody, I'm struggling with anger and I think I need to take a next step. You're going to find people ready to encourage you. If you're looking for the show notes for this episode, those are at michellerayburn.com/164. And there you will find a link to Natalie's website and also that worksheet that we talked about, and you can figure out what your triggers are and use some of those journaling prompts as well.

So I encourage you to get that. I downloaded it. It's great. So do get that free resource. I also will have a discussion guide and some thoughtful questions for you related to this episode that will be going out to my email list and then after that, we'll be on Patreon for the Life Repurposed Plus subscribers, so that's also available as a resource for you too. Thank you for listening today. I so appreciate when you invest your time in listening to an episode. I will be back next week with another episode. You've been listening to life repurposed. If you'd like bonus resources sent to your inbox each week, be sure to sign up at.