

The Divorced Christian Woman Podcast with Natalie Hoffman, Season 2, Episode 7 - Neighbors, Acquaintances, and Small Town Gossip: Living Free in a Fishbowl

Heads up, friend: What you're about to read is a raw, unedited transcript straight from the robots. That means you'll find some weird words, funky punctuation, and moments that make you go, "Huh?" If you want the real experience (and to actually know what's going on), I recommend reading the polished article, listening to the full episode, or watching it on 1.5x speed with captions on. Your brain will thank you.

Natalie: Are you navigating divorce in a small town where everyone knows your business and has something to say about it? Gossip, judgment, and shame. Don't have to define your story. In this episode, we're exposing how to take your power back, reclaim your voice, and finally feel safe again, no matter what they say.

Joining me today is my friend and fellow coach, Diana Swillinger. She's the host of the Renew Your Mind podcast, and we're gonna be talking today about dealing with small communities that we might be part of. It could be maybe you're from a small town. It could be your church community, um, or maybe a ministry community.

I know some people have, I've talked to have been part of Camp Ministries and you know, things like that where they actually live in a community with other people. Living in a small town or a tight-knit community can make divorce feel a little bit different than when you're kinda lost in New York City or Los Angeles or something.

Living in a larger, more anonymous place in small towns, privacy is scarce. People notice if you're at church or not. People notice if you're at the ball game or not, and they notice. That you might be suddenly missing your wedding ring, right? Gossip spreads quickly, often very distorted. In tight-knit communities, relationships can be layered.

You might have your child, might have a teacher who also goes to your church who might also live next door to you, and also play on your husband's softball team. It's harder to find neutral ground or fresh connections. In a small town, people might feel like they have to pick sides. Small towns and conservative faith circles often carry stronger cultural scripts around marriage and divorce.

So you might feel judged as the woman who separated from her husband or the woman who abandoned her marriage and her family, or you might be pressured to reconcile even if d abuse was present. Divorce can often feel like social exile. And then another issue is limited resources for counseling. Or legal aid or abuse recovery, you might, it might be less available to you in smaller communities.

Um, or you might even worry that seeking help locally is gonna compromise your privacy 'cause like what if your counselor knows your husband's cousin? That kind of thing. And then finally, kids in smaller communities often have less ability to escape the dynamics, so they might be affected as well. Um, their classmates might repeat what their parents have heard at church or around town, and then your kids have to deal with that.

So, Diana, why do you think gossip hits so hard for women in these situations, and how can we begin to take back our power from it?

Diana: Yes. Let me also say that sometimes we might live in a big city, but they're small communities. Or cultures Yes. Within the big city. Yes. So it might still be your neighborhood or your work situation or the school or the church or you know, so it can happen in the big city too.

But I think gossip, well it's, it hits hard one because we do all have a feeling like we would like to be liked. That's just in us. We like it when other people like us. That feels good. And also gossip can feel like a betrayal. So especially if it's come from a group of people or a person that we used to trust.

We thought they were our friends. They were our our people. They were our church group. They were whatever the other parents at school. And we all got along and we thought they were people we trusted, and now they're saying something that sounds derogatory or is not true, or it's just. Gossip, which they shouldn't be sharing your story anyway.

It's your story. And then it feels like betrayal. So excuse me. Our brains are, um, like I said, we wanna be liked because our brains are wired to have connection and we wanna feel like we belong. And so when that kind of betrayal happens,

our brain's going, we're being rejected. We're being rejected and we're, or we're being ousted from the tribe.

If you wanna go really primal, you know, like if you were just a small group of people out in the wilderness trying to survive and now you're on the outs, your survival is at risk. And so the amygdala part of our brain that's reacting with fight, flight, freeze type responses doesn't realize it's maybe not as big as a threat as being thrown outta the tribe into the wilderness, but it still registers and it feels very unsafe.

It can also feel like. You know, if someone else is gossiping, it's like, wait a second, that's my life you're talking about. That's my story. And you now you're telling a story about it and it can feel like our voice is being taken away from us. So our autonomy, um, and if there's lies, which gossip is rarely ever a hundred percent true, it might be some truth mixed with lies.

That's part of the betrayal and it feels like, um. Like the story of our lives is just like, it's not even our story anymore. It's taken on this life of its own. And then also how it, like, then there's that layer of is if other people are believing that stuff about me,

Natalie: yeah,

Diana: now what's my worth? Mm-hmm. Who am I to them?

Am I value? If I don't belong here? Am I a valuable person? Maybe I am not good enough. Maybe I did screw this up. Maybe there was some other way to go about this. How did I end up here? This isn't supposed to be my life. There's something fundamentally wrong with me. And then we feel shame.

Natalie: Mm-hmm.

Diana: Oh, just from gossip.

Natalie: Yeah.

Diana: Yeah. And. I, I don't know what to say about that. It's just, it's just painful all around. I mean, we can get to a place. Let's talk about this idea of taking our power back. I don't think this totally erases like gossip. If I do this, gossip will never affect me. I don't think that's the case, but I think the sting can be less and we can stay more grounded and we can get our footing back quicker,

take our power back if we understand that they're doing them and what they're doing and saying.

Doesn't make anything true about me or for me. Like I don't have to what? What kind of people are they that they're going out gossiping anyway and do I need to catch my pearls before swine and be like, look at these pearls of truth. You must understand them when they're just gonna trample all over them anyway.

They don't care. So we've gotta let that go. And I mean, maybe we can ask people to stop talking about us and sometimes they will, but other times. It's not gonna happen, and we just have to let it go and not engage.

Natalie: Yep, yep.

Diana: Um, yeah, understand their behavior's all about them and their character. I mean, sometimes I like to get to a place, well, if I have, if I'm in a good place, I have a place of compassion where I'm like, they life's hard.

They're just trying to figure it out. They feel better about themselves when they diss me, whatever. But there's a part of me that wants to just go to pity, like, oh my gosh, they're so. They're so scummy. I pity their life. Okay. That's the, that is another human part of me. I don't

Natalie: think that's pity Diana.

Diana: Uh, we're

Natalie: actually pitying them.

Diana: Pitying them. Like they're less than. Yeah. How terrible I have. Oh, their life is so lowly. It must be terrible to be them. I have such pity for you. Bless their

Natalie: heart. We're almost turning the tables and doing to them what they're doing to us. When we're, I know.

Diana: So I do have that tendency. Sometimes I don't stay in that.

I'll move to a place more of compassion, but I mean, sometimes that can be helpful to help, help us dis engage. I think it's normal.

Natalie: It's normal to go through that. Yeah, for sure. Yeah.

Diana: Yeah. Okay. Other ways to take our power back? I like to say, I think I said this on nep, another episode we were talking about like, let's just believe what God says.

God says, we're loved, we're chosen, we're valuable, and a lot of other people in this situation are probably gonna tell. You just believe this. Just believe how much God loves you. Don't let that bother you. But I wanna bring some reality to it and acknowledge that some of us might not totally believe that yet when we're going through a lot of pain.

If we've been through some religious rigmarole, you know, trying to parse through. Cultural beliefs about who am I? What is marriage? Can I be divorced? What can people say about me? And if we don't totally. And if our, our image of God gets screwed up in the process and we think he's a judgmental God and he thinks I screwed up too, we can't just do what everyone else wants us to do and just know that God loves you, you're okay.

So I wanna say to get our power back, we need to work on embracing. What we cognitively understand is the truth about a gracious loving God. Who does want good things for us? I want to, as we always do, I wanna share in the Flying Free, Flying higher Kaleidoscope. The best place to work on this is the healing your relationship with yourself course.

Mm-hmm. When other people are saying things about you that aren't true, or they're stealing your story or talking about you behind your back, if you are not solid in your relationship with yourself. It will be way more painful than it is when you start having your own back. When you heal parts in you that are broken and and need to be seen and need to have attention and need to be validated.

When you can really work on that relationship with you and become your own best supporter, you can get your power back when this stuff happens.

Natalie: Yeah,

Diana: yeah. And so I'd say have a lot of compassion for you through the process too. And get more people on in in your corner who can kind of counteract some of that stuff.

Again, we can't control what the other people are doing, but if you surround yourself with people who are supporting you, are building you up and are speaking truth into your life, the sting of that stuff is not as bad.

Natalie: Yeah.

Diana: Yeah. Did you have anything to add to that? Otherwise, I'll ask you a question.

Natalie: No, I don't.

You pretty much covered it.

Diana: Okay. Oh, good. I did good on that one. Ding, ding. All right, Natalie, how can we respond when someone makes a veiled comment or, or it could be a noisy comment. Either way. So it is kind of like gossip, but now they're just coming out and talking straight to us, I guess.

Natalie: Yeah. Yeah.

How can

Diana: you respond when someone makes a veiled or a noisy comment about our life or divorce? I mean, there

Natalie: are people that do that. I sometimes I wonder, like at the audacity, I'm just like, well, you are, you are ballsy. Yeah. Um, I am not that ballsy. I usually, I'll think things, but I don't actually say them out loud, but some people say 'em out loud.

Here's the thing, you don't owe anyone the inside scoop on your life just because they're curious or just because they make a comment. So sometimes the best response is just short and neutral, like, it's been a hard season, but I'm moving forward. Or, thanks for asking, but I'd rather not talk about that today.

You could use humor to deflect it or diffuse it. You could say, well, you know what they say marriage takes two and divorce takes a whole village of opinions. Ha ha, ha, ha, ha. You know, that might get a laugh. It might shut the conversation down. And then there's moments where you just have to be direct, especially if someone is getting pushy.

Like maybe that, maybe we do need to be a little bit ballsy sometimes and just say, you know, that's a very personal question, or, I appreciate your concern, but I don't talk about my divorce casually. The point is that you get to decide how much of your story to share and when. So having one or two go-to responses ready ahead of time is gonna help keep you from feeling off guard.

You just have to practice saying them. 'cause sometimes it might be, you know, a stretch for some of you to actually say something out loud or respond back in this kind of way. But, um, you need to remember that your healing is not public property. So what do you think the role of shame plays Diana in keeping women small?

And how can we start to dismantle shame in our lives?

Diana: Oh, I spent a lot of time thinking about this when, with my Renew Your Minds, uh, podcast. I created a Facebook community where I just, I, my informal poll, I ask people on the way in to the Facebook community. What are the thought? What one thought is keeping you stuck in your life?

And over 30% had a thought of, I'm not worthy. I'm not good enough. Something's wrong with me. I'm not enough. Hmm. All of those kind of comments have to deal with shame. So those are just the people who joined my community who recognized that that kind of thought was a problem for them. I guarantee that kind of thought is a problem for everybody else coming in too.

They just didn't recognize it, but it just, after asking, I just like, wow, we're all dealing with this. And so I have several podcast episodes on the Renew Your Mind podcast dedicated to shame, especially if you go to episode like seven around, uh, 74 through 82. I have several episodes in that cluster about shame.

Shame is, um, like I said, it's that if you're trying to recognize it, you've got a little voice in your head saying something like, you're not enough, you're not worthy, or something's wrong with you. Like, I used to have this thought that would recur in my head, and it just sounded like. Something's wrong with me.

That's shame. And when we're having this, the, this kind of undercurrent of thought in our head, it keeps us small because notice how you feel. When you think something's wrong with me or I'm not good enough, do you wanna go out and do stuff in the world or do you wanna hide? For me, when I was in the throes of shame, I had this small walk-in closet, kind of just like a little square of a walk-in closet where you could just stand in the middle with.

I would, when I was feeling shame, I would go in there and keep the light off and shut the door and sit on the floor. That. I mean, I knew for sure when I was in there, I was feeling shame. That wasn't the only time I felt shame. That's just when it got so overwhelming I had to physically respond to it.

Yeah. And so I would start noticing where else in my life did I feel like I just wanna, I don't wanna say anything right now. Uh, maybe I won't do that. I probably shouldn't go to the party or any of these things that made me wanna like pull back and hide shame. We have no choice in the throes of shame to do anything, but then to pull back and feel small.

We don't say speak up and use our voice when we're feeling small. We don't pursue our dreams when we're feeling small. We don't confront things in our life that need to change when we're feeling small. And so if we want to move forward, if we wanna not be hiding, if we wanna dismantle that shame, I say, instead of hiding in the closet in the, with the light off in the dark, let's bring that shame out into the light.

Natalie: Yeah. To

Diana: bring it in the light. We talk about it, we write it down, we pray about it. We admit it to God. We share it with the coach. We share it with a friend. Because remember, like I said, all these people coming into my Facebook community, they're like, half of them know they're feeling it and the other half don't know, but they're feeling it too.

This is all of us. This is me, this is Natalie. We still have these thoughts pop in our head. We still have shame pop up, okay? But we as coaches, we bring it out into the light. We talk to people. Natalie and I talk to each other when it comes up and we walk through it with each other. Um, you can compare what you're thinking and feeling to truth.

Like, we're not always ready to believe I am worthy, but we can, uh, baby step our ways there if we have a thought like maybe, you know, or not. Maybe that's what I'm getting to. If our thought is I'm not worthy, stick a maybe in front of it, maybe I'm not worthy.

Natalie: Yeah,

Diana: because what happens next? No, I'm just gonna ask you real quick, Natalie, what happens next?

If I would continue the sentence, maybe I'm not worthy, but. Maybe,

Natalie: maybe, I don't know. Where are you going?

Diana: I am just the opposite.

Natalie: Okay.

Diana: Can you feel that? Sorry, I put you on the spot.

Natalie: Yeah.

Diana: Maybe she's like, wait, I should know this coaching skill.

Natalie: Like I, I'm not exactly sure where she's going. I thought maybe you were gonna try to talk about the, you know, this is how we make like a bridge.

A bridge thought. So we go from one, this is

Diana: before the bridge thought.

Natalie: Okay.

Diana: It's just invite, it's loose. This is the, you talk about tilling the soil of, um, old thoughts. Yeah. I have a podcast where I, I read what you said in the Flying Higher Kaleidoscope about tilling the soil of thoughts. Yeah. And got your permission to read it on my podcast.

But using the word maybe let's us loosen that belief up. Maybe I'm not enough.

Natalie: Yeah.

Diana: Maybe I am.

Natalie: Yeah.

Diana: Maybe. I'm not worthy. Maybe I am. It, it helps, I think,

Natalie: I think I, I think I, I do that with the word what if. Yeah. What if I am? Yes, maybe so I'm not worthy. And then I think that's my go-to. I think in my head that's what I usually, that's my go-to thing is, well, what if you are?

What if I am? What if you are? Then what, what would life look like then?

Diana: I like that. That's more forward moving than the maybe even. Okay, so there's other questions you can ask yourself too. Like if you have these, if you, if you're feeling shame, I would ask yourself, what am what am I thinking that has me, what am I believing about me that has me feeling this?

And then ask yourself, do I wanna keep believing that?

Natalie: Yeah.

Diana: Is this belief that I'm not enough helping me? How is it actually making me feel in light of all of that? Do I want to keep this belief or do I wanna work on believing something different? This is all about bringing shame into the light so that you de power it.

Natalie: Yeah.

Diana: Yeah. All right. So, uh, thanks for letting put you on the spot. Wait, we don't think alike on all things, everybody. Okay?

Natalie: No.

Diana: Okay. No, you and I definitely don't, actually don't. I think we seem like we think alike a lot, but we don't. Okay. Um, but we land on the same truth, which is fun.

Natalie: Do we just take different trains to get there?

Sometimes

Diana: we have different thought trains. Okay, Natalie, how do you decide which neighbors or acquaintances you can trust with your story? What people in your life can you trust with your story? And which ones should you not trust with your story?

Natalie: I feel like we talked about this in one of a past episode where we talked about those concentric circles.

Was it Stacy? Mm-hmm. Who had talked about that? Probably deciding who you can trust with your story after divorce, or, I mean, honestly, after any painful experience that you go through is. It's not about being paranoid, it's

about actually exercising wisdom because not everyone has earned the right to our vulnerability or to our story.

Some people are safe because they listen without judgment. They are able to keep our confidence and we can walk away from them and we feel lighter and not heavier. But others, you know, you share a little piece of your heart and suddenly you are the subject of the next church prayer chain. In a subtle way or the latest round of neighborhood gossip.

So a good rule of thumb is just to start small. Share a little if you want to, just to see how it lands and what happens with that information afterwards. Do they respect your privacy? Do they support you? Do they twist your words? Their response is gonna tell you everything that you need to know, but you don't owe your story to everyone who asks.

I think a lot of us Christian women are so we've been trained to just overshare and to be vulnerable. Now, not, not everyone is, but I think a lot of us have that propensity because it shows that we're showing in good faith that we wanna connect and we're willing to be vulnerable with them, and we're hoping to have that connection.

We don't owe anybody that our story is sacred, and we get to decide who's gonna hold that story with care and respect, and also who maybe hasn't earned that privilege yet. Um, okay. So how do you coach yourself, Diana? When are you ever afraid of what other people are gonna think? Yes. Okay, so when you're afraid of that, Diana, I feel like Diana is a stronger person in this, in this area than I am, but.

Um, 'cause I really struggle with this a lot. But anyway. Diana, how do you coach yourself? How would you coach me? You know what

Diana: that, that's actually a good point and part of it has to do with having different personalities. We can take all the different personality tests, you know, like you've talked about being INFJ.

I'm like ENF what, whatever the other last letter is though. Sometimes its I-N-F-T-E-N-F-T, I kinda waffle between the two of those. Yeah.

Natalie: So that's

Diana: part of it. Yeah. Yeah. Different enneagrams, all, all these different personalities are gonna make. It different for us with how much weight we give to what other people think.

But

Natalie: yeah,

Diana: I do. I do care about what other people think and I think that God made us that way. I believe that's a part of us that wants that God put in us this longing to be a part of the community of other people. This longing to bring respect and love and if somebody else thinks something about us that.

Is making us not a part of that group again, you know, it's, or touches on shame, like maybe something's wrong with me, then it, it does mess with us. So, okay, how do I coach myself when or others about what other people think is I put it in a box what other people think is. Going on in their head. Let's put a box around their head.

It's in a box. Okay. People, it's contain, their head is an oval. It's in an oval. It's a story in their head. You're talking about what other people think. We're not even talking about what other people say. I mean, sometimes they say it. You know how many people I've coached where they're worried about what other people think?

And then I ask, well, have they ever, you know, they think this about me. Have they ever said that? Well, no. Has anyone ever told you that they think that or said that? No. Well, how do you know? Yeah. So that's interesting. What we think other people think is often a story in our head. Mm-hmm. Anyway. Even if it's true, even if they are thinking something about us that we don't want them to think, just let them have their story.

Their story in their head about you is creating frustration for them or feelings of judgment or resentment or envy or other icky emotions. Let 'em have the ick.

Natalie: Mm-hmm.

Diana: I don't want other people's ick. You wanna think something about me? That's not right. Go ahead and think that. And you feel icky about me.

I'm not. I'm gonna feel amazing about me 'cause I am amazing. Healing your relationship with yourself, Flying Free, Flying higher Kaleidoscope, do the course and feel amazing about yourself.

Natalie: Yeah.

Diana: Okay. I don't wanna feel icky based on their thoughts. I'm gonna let them keep their thoughts, let them, my sister said, let them to me in the year 2000.

I believe that's where I heard it first

Natalie: before Mel. Mel Robbins came out. Yeah.

Diana: And then I wrote a, a let them blog in 2019, and then I think Mel Robbins read my blog and was inspired.

Natalie: Gosh, that's

Diana: what, but the point is what other people think. We've got to just let them have that. That's their business. I don't wanna be a part of it.

And then I like to ask myself like, okay, they're thinking that, or maybe they even said that. Fine. Now what do I want to do for me? 'cause that's about them. What do I need? And I, and then I just take care of me.

Natalie: Yeah.

Diana: Yeah. All right, Natalie, next question. How do you use body language and presence to project confidence, even when you feel shaky inside?

Natalie: Yeah, so I think sometimes the hardest part of showing up in our own lives is projecting confidence when inside we feel terrified. And the secret is that confidence isn't always about what we feel, but it's what we practice. Body language can do a lot of the heavy lifting. We talk about this in the, um, I think it's the self-care course actually.

We talk about body language and Amy Cuddy, I think that's her name, wrote a book. Uh, do you remember the name of her book? I'm all of a sudden Drawing a blank. She wrote a book about, and, and actually we studied this book in Flying Hire several years ago, um, about body language and it. I mean, it's ama,

it's amazing how much body language and how we carry ourselves can create the feeling of confidence in our bodies.

Um, if we stand tall with our shoulders back and our chin up, if we make eye contact, even if it's just for a few seconds at a time. If we plant our feet firmly on the ground, when we take slower, deeper breaths, all of these things are signals to our body, to our nervous system that signal calm and authority.

And so, um, even the way we use our hands matters if we gesture openly like this instead of crossing our arms tight around our, across our chest. Think about, think of it like wearing a jacket that's a little too big. At first, you try on these confidence postures until it starts to feel like, Hey, this is who I am.

This is, this feels like it fits. I think women especially are kind of taught in, even in the workplace and everything that we are supposed to make ourselves a little bit smaller. We kinda hunch our shoulders and we kinda close in on ourselves and that actually makes us feel smaller and it makes us feel more insecure.

You don't really see men doing that a lot. I mean, maybe you see, you know, insecure men doing that, but for the most part, men take up space. They have big chests and they puff themselves out and they take up space because they're man and they with the man.

Diana: The man spread.

Natalie: Yes, the man spread. And I think, and obviously we don't have to go to that extreme, um, but, but I do think there is something to that.

I think people actually respond to that energy. And over time, their response to you when you're showing up that way is going to help to retrain that shaky part inside of you. So here's some things that you can do. Do stand tall with your shoulders back, straighten your spine. Think, you know, open, like open your chest, open posture.

Keep both feet planted firmly instead of shifting or fidgeting, make eye contact even if it's just for a few seconds at a time. You don't have to go like this. You know, that's, um, that's a little. Unnerving. Use your hands gesture naturally instead of putting them behind your back or, you know, hiding or crossing them across your chest.

Breathe slowly. Take deep, steady breaths that can calm yourself. And project steadiness as well. When we get, we start talking like this, it does not project

confidence, right? When we're taking he, you know, deep breaths. I mean, I'm exaggerating to get the point across, but, and then smile gently. You don't have to do a pasted on grin.

You can just warmly have a, have a warm approach, approachable expression. I remember the first time I ever heard resting bitch faced. I never, I never heard that before. And then I was like, I looked it up. What is resting bitch face? And then of course you'll get a whole bunch of images of what if you don't know what that is, if anyone's listening, I don't know.

Maybe I'm the only backwards person here. But if you don't know what that is, Google it and then look at the pictures of it. And I was horrified to realize, I hope I don't have that. I really try hard not to have that. I try hard to like look pleasant, even if I'm just standing doing nothing, even when I'm mowing the lawn in, you know, when my neighbors are out, I try to have a pleasant look on my face when I'm mowing the lawn.

Here's some don'ts. Don't shrink. Avoid hunching or folding over in on yourself. 'cause that signals insecurity to yourself. I'm not talking about just to other people. It signals it to yourself. Don't fidget if you're constantly touching. Have you ever seen some people on social media? They're like constantly going like this.

Diana: Yes, I've seen that.

Natalie: I've always, for those, what that would be like to just constantly be doing this to my hair. For those that are listening,

Diana: she's just constantly pruning her hair

Natalie: and looking at themselves, wait, pruning the right word at myself. And so anyway, then the other day I was just thinking about, you know, what I was going to eat for dinner and like, no, don't do that.

Um, or, or your jewelry or your phone, obviously. Um, don't dart your eyes. Have you ever been around someone where they're like this Uhhuh? Yeah. And then, okay. And then what? Where they're not even really looking at you or paying attention, that also signals insecurity to them and to you.

Diana: And

Natalie: then don't, again, don't rush fast.

Choppy movements or speech can undermine your authority. I actually have a problem with that. Sometimes I talk really fast, even on the podcast and I try to get it up, but it's mostly because we have a timeframe and I need to make sure that we get it done before the timeframe is done. But do you see how that undermines my authority when I do that?

Um, and then we've already talked about crossing your arms. Um, it creates distant, it's basically what it's doing. It's communicating. I'm closed. Don't, you know, and, and that doesn't, obviously, that is a sign of also, you know, like boundary and fear and, and or closed closedness to another person and someone who is, has a sense of authority or confidence is going to be open because they don't have anything to be afraid of.

Right.

Diana: Yeah. Alright. Okay. So I love this stuff. I love body language stuff so much. And I would say doing all of that stuff, but then also have this under not underlying comfort in your own skin is really gonna help, which is part of just, again, thinking like my daughter used to, um. Make fun of me in a way.

I guess when I first started being a life coach, I was just going around telling everyone I'm awesome and so are you. I'm amazing. You are amazing. It was part of me, um, rising that belief up within me and then wanting to call it out of other people and somehow I've kind of pulled back. I'm like, I should bring that back.

I wanna go around telling everyone you're amazing. So do all this body language stuff that Natalie just talked about and think. I'm an amazing person.

Natalie: Yeah.

Diana: I'm me. I'm unique. There's nobody else like me, and I'm amazing exactly as I am. You can feel if you think that you can feel your shoulders rise.

Natalie: Yeah.

So Amy Cuddy has this, uh, you can actually look up Amy Cuddy. She's got a TED Talk. That's great. If you stand in front of a mirror before you're gonna go and do a talk, or before you're gonna get in front of someone that you're nervous around and you do the power pose, like those superwoman pose, you put your hands on your hips.

Lift up your chin and you know, spread your chest out. It will actually say, again, it signals to your nervous system that I can do this. You can speak to yourself in the mirror while you're looking, and I've, I've tested this out. When I first learned it, I tested it out. It works.

Diana: I do it too.

Natalie: Yeah,

Diana: I first learned it on Grey's Anatomy.

Before the Cudi book. Yeah, they would do it before Christina and Meredith would do it before they gone into a big surgery.

Natalie: Yes. Now I watched Grey's Anatomy after I read the Amy Cudi book, but you're right, I remember that scene.

Diana: Yeah. Yeah.

Natalie: Okay, so, um, we're gonna have to, let's, I think we can get, I think we can get in the last two questions, we just have to be a little more concise.

But what tools help you, Diana, refocus your energy on your own life instead of on other people's opinions?

Diana: This is where as Christian women, I think we've been told all our lives, if we focus on ourselves, that's selfish.

Natalie: Yeah. And,

Diana: and so the first thing I've done is scrap that belief. I can't believe anymore that focusing on me is selfish.

I choose to believe that focusing on me, my needs, mental, spiritual, emotional, physical, my needs are more important. Than anyone else's, actually, because I Well,

Natalie: they're your personal responsibility, Diane,

Diana: and they're my responsibility. Yes. Yes. And if I don't take that seriously and I don't do that, I show up as a way different person for other people.

In fact, I did not like how I showed up for other people when. I prioritized my needs last. I was depleted. I was exhausted. I was depressed. I was anxious. I was overwhelmed. I was edgy. I didn't like that version of me. Yeah, it does not be that version of me. People are amazed at the amount of peace I have in my life.

People tell me I bring this good vibe. They like being around me. They're drawn to me. And I'm, I'm still kind of blown away, but Yes, I know. I just was like, I'm amazing. I, I am also humble. You are amazing, Diana. I also have a humility about me and it seems like it, they wouldn't coexist, but they do. And when I realized that that's the energy that I bring now and that's how I show up.

I am, I'm a bit floored, but I wanna keep doing that.

Natalie: Yeah,

Diana: that's inspiring. That serves other people. That lets me love other people. That lets me be more compassionate to other people, so I'm gonna take care of me first. So the question is, how do I refocus my energy and my own life and let go of other people's opinions?

I take care of me. What do I need spiritually? Um, I need to meditate and I need to pray. Those are my two main ways and worship music. Those are my three main ways that I take care of me spiritually. Right now, I tell myself, awesome. I have the app on my phone that gives me a new affirmation or several affirmations every day.

I look at them, I say them out loud. Um, I journal. I go for walks. I notice nature yesterday when, um, I had the window open in the morning before a rainstorm, and so the winds were blowing in, the paper towel was blowing in the kitchen and little things were fluttering, and my cats just sat there amazed. Oh, well, I sat and stared at my cats for 10 minutes and I just stayed present in the moment and I'm like, watch my cat.

Watch the effects of the wind. That's all you're doing right now, Diana. There's nothing else to do. Was I thinking about what other people thought of me? No. I was grounded in the moment. So I do things like that. Um, of course you guys always hear me talking about changing thoughts and shifting thoughts, so I will create a thought like what, what they think is about them.

It's not about me. And then I let it go. Or, um, it's okay for them to think that about me. They can think whatever they want. I don't care. I'm happy to let

them have their own free will and think whatever they want. God gave me free will, too Glad I have it. You know, however I can shift my mind to let go of it.

I might also, uh, to have my energy be mine. I don't wanna give it away and let them suck all that energy out of me. If I'm spending time around people that seem to be opinionated about me or, um. You know, I, 'cause they might be sending subtle body language things where I can tell they're thinking something derogatory about me or they're not comfortable around me or whatever.

And if that's sucking my energy, I can limit my exposure with them. I can hang out with them less. I can have less conversations with them. I can have them not show up. You know how many times somebody who I haven't liked the energy on Facebook. I do the snooze for 30 days snooze, and I'm like, oh, they're back up.

My snooze is up already. Snooze, snooze. I could just turn it off. But sometimes I play with it to see like. How it's working, how it's affecting me. Yeah. Um, I wanna give you something else. Uh, and I think, well, I'll give you two things. Um. When I say you, everybody listening, I'm giving you two things. One thing that I have found super helpful is to put my brain to work on something else.

If I'm really concerned about other people's opinions, it's like my brain is trying to solve the problem of what other people are thinking about me. And if I can tell my brain, Hey, we don't need to work on that problem right now, we're gonna have a different problem. It's kinda like if you were in the middle of folding the laundry and then you're.

A child says, I just spilled the milk all over the floor. Suddenly you're not putting attention on the laundry and now you're gonna put your attention on the milk. You can shift and while you've clean up the milk, you're not thinking about the laundry.

Natalie: Yeah. You

Diana: can shift your attention on purpose to something, give your brain a different problem to solve.

Not gonna think about them right now. Now I'm gonna go, you know, fix the door on the wood. She, I'm gonna think about that. Whatever else it is that you need to do. Notice, ladies, I picked one where you pick up your tools and you go be a badass woman. All right? Then, uh, the the last thing I'll give everybody is to celebrate your amazingness.

Celebrate all the things that you're doing, that are moving the needle forward in your life, that are helping you get a new skill that created growth, that helped you have a good moment. Notice all the stuff you're doing, pat yourself on the back and celebrate it. You're, you are building yourself up. And it's a refocus of energy.

It's not thinking about what anyone else thinks about me. I, what I'm thinking about me is I'm doing an amazing job over here. I'm figuring stuff out and I'm excelling, and I'm loving my life. Yeah. So that's what I have there. Okay, one, one more question, Natalie throwing it to you, and then you can take us to the end.

Natalie: Okay.

Diana: How do you grow into the kind of woman who doesn't need the approval of the whole community to feel grounded?

Natalie: I think it's by slowly learning that your worth was never meant to hang on their opinions in the first place. Yes, if you're in a small community or even just a tight church circle, for example, it's easy to absorb the message that being good means keeping everybody happy.

But the truth is that is a hamster wheel that never stops spin. The real shift is gonna happen when you anchor yourself into something a lot deeper, and that is God's love for you, your own core values and your integrity. That is your compass. So you just start noticing, does this decision align with who I am and what I believe, or am I just doing it to avoid raised eyebrows?

The more you practice living from that inner place, the steadier you're gonna feel, yes, some people are gonna disapprove. That is always gonna happen. They might gossip, they might pull away from you, but their reactions just, they're not your North star anymore because you become rooted in the knowledge that you can disappoint people and you're still good.

You can be misunderstood and you're still safe. You can be talked about and you're still deeply loved. That is when community opinion becomes background noise instead of the thing that's actually driving your life. All right, I wanna read a review as we close. This comes from one of our Flying hire members.

She wrote, thank you for these past three months of instruction and insight. I know without a doubt that God led me to you and Flying higher for the first time. I'm understanding what I was married to. Why the confusion and pain

were so great all those years of trying to have a happy marriage. I finally feel set free from the pain, the guilt, and the shame that weren't mine to carry.

You combine teaching, coaching, spiritual inspiration, all blended together into the most nutritious mental smoothie. It tastes amazing. Here's another example of my growth from your classes. I was scrolling through Facebook. I saw a post about seven rules to live by, and here were my thoughts. It's interesting how lists like this would make me feel judged or shamed in the past if I didn't follow those exact rules or I would feel uncomfortable or sad if the rule was one I felt was wrong or misplaced.

I always felt like there was some expert who knew better than me how to live, or that I was a better expert if the rules went against my moral code. I think differently about that now. Now I can look at a list like this, thanks to your Flying higher teachings, and I look at it simply as someone else's rule book.

I can choose to take it for myself or not. I have no need to judge it and determine if it's worthy or if that person needs to be corrected, but I just simply recognize it as their rule book. I can also look at someone else's rule book and find some rules that look good, and I might choose to add them to my life.

It is such a newfound sense of freedom and respect. It saves me so much internal conflict. Thank you, Natalie, for enriching my life and many others as well. And just so you know, I don't see you as the ultimate authority. You are not a cult. You have done an excellent job empowering us women to choose for ourselves for this.

I'm so grateful, but also, I love that you point us back to Jesus. That is such a beautiful gift. So I just wanna say it's hard to capture everything. I, I touched on this a couple episodes ago. It's hard to capture everything that can change in your life when you actually join us and do this work with us.

You know, you can listen to the fe, the, uh. The podcast. Okay. And you're getting this high level kind of, you're getting some ideas and some people have said, they've actually said, well, I don't really need your program 'cause I get so much out of your, out of your podcasts. No, you don't. You don't. You don't.

You don't know what you're, you don't know. And people will come in and they'll be like, oh, no, I thought I was getting everything I needed from your podcast. Oh, my word. I had no idea what was underneath And inside the program, we regularly hear this kind of feedback that this person wrote in almost every day.

You have to come in and find out. It's always better than what you can describe. It's like hearing people describe Paris. They can tell you about the I've and I've never been there. Okay, so this is my experience. I can hear about the Eiffel Tower. They can, they can. People who've been there can tell me what fresh croissant smell like or the way that the lights shimmer at in the evening.

I can look at photos. I can watch a documentary. I can watch, you know, Emily in Paris. I can even listen to stories, but none of this is going to compare. Standing there yourself, breathing the air, hearing the sounds, feeling the rhythm of the city in your body until I actually go to Paris. Paris is just an idea for me.

Same thing with a, to be at a live concert. Uh, if, if you've never been to a live concert, there's no way I could describe to you what the, you know, what it feels like to have the bass vibrating through your chest or the crowd singing in unison to a song they all love. Or the goosebumps when the music goes to the swelling part, right?

But unless you're there surrounded by that energy and sound, you are never gonna really know what that fully feels like. So come on in and join us inside Flying Hire. You can go to join [Flying hire.com](https://flyinghire.com) and you can experience it for yourself. And then also, Diana, tell 'em about your podcast and what you can do to help them if they want, uh, concentrated help from you.

Diana: I'm gonna remind everyone that I first started by listening to Natalie's. I mean, I was already a life coach, but I was listening to Natalie's other podcast because I needed it, and then I joined the Flying Free Kaleidoscope. And oh my gosh, the amount of help, comradery and, uh, growth that was available to me, there was exponential.

So I can only echo that. And the, for this tiny investment that it was to make, it was way worth, way more. In fact, I thought you should have charged more. But you don't, you just keep it affordable for anyone, uh, everyone who needs it. Okay? And then if you wanna work with me, head on over to [RYM podcast.com](https://rym-podcast.com) where you can learn about free classes that I have.

You can have a free coaching call with me, which I'll, then, I'll tell you all about my one-on-one. Group coaching and you can also learn about the Renew Your Mind Institute Life Coach certification program. I've already certified dozens of life coaches with the kind of work that I've been, um, honing and crafting over the last eight years, and I'd be happy to share more information with that about,

uh, about that with you too, if you wanna be a coach or just want a lot of deep personal development.

Natalie: Awesome. I love it. Alright, so the, the help is there for you if you need it. That is it for this episode, and we are going to see you again next week. Can't wait. We've got some more people coming in to join us again next week. It'll be great until that, until that time comes, keep Flying higher.