

Done with Dieting Podcast #5: Why We Give Up



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With your Host
Elizabeth Sherman

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You're listening to the done with dieting podcast episode number five.

Hi, I'm Elizabeth Sherman, former corporate high tech executive turn life and weight loss coach. But it wasn't that long ago that I was searching for that perfect diet, the one that would finally be the golden ticket to lose the weight that I so desired.

Fast forward past tons of failed diet attempts, exercise fads and painful lessons learned, and although I still have not reached the state of Nirvana, body love, my relationship with food exercise in my body is infinitely better than it was not only when I started this journey, but even as recently as three years ago.

The journey that has allowed me to ditch my scale, stop logging my food and exercise, eat food that I didn't prepare and easily maintain my weight - something that I never thought was possible for me.

I created the Done with Dieting podcast to give you simple, easy to do and sustainable strategies to help you do the same without all of the drama that I went through.

If you're a woman who's looking to create a better relationship with food and her body, get off the diet roller coaster and free up a bunch of headspace spent on calories, how you should look what you should eat and beating yourself up for not doing what you think you should be doing. You are in the right place.

Let's get started.

When we start a new diet, we are so motivated, right? Depends on how we found out about the diet, maybe we heard about it on the news, maybe a friend of ours told us about it. And we get so super excited, we think about how - Finally, this is the golden ticket!

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I am not immune to that thought about, oh, this is going to be the magic pill that's gonna make me skinny. I remember totally having those thoughts when I was going through my journey, and thinking that this next diet trend was going to be the way that I was actually going to get to my goal.

And it was so super motivating. And I remember getting on the scale after starting the new plan. And really, again, just feeling more motivated and more motivated, because the scale was validating my efforts.

And each time that I would get on the scale and the number would go down. It was just like a shot of adrenaline a shot of dopamine, right? You know, that feel good hormone that's going through your body saying this is it, this is going to be fantastic.

And then eventually those numbers just go down a little bit, right. And sometimes we can talk ourselves through it. We're like, Well, it wasn't a whole pound to this week, it was a half pound, but I guess that's okay.

But sometimes we get on the scale. And the scale says the same number, week after week after week, or the number actually goes up and we wrack our brain. We're like, why is this happening to me? I've been good, right? We keep going through all of the things in our head about why isn't the scale validating what I've done, I've been on plan, I've done everything that the diet told me to do, I did the things that I was supposed to do. And now my body is supposed to do what it's supposed to do, which is lose the weight.

But the thing about our bodies is that they don't have the rulebook that we have, right? But our bodies haven't actually read the diet, our bodies don't know that it's supposed to give up the weight, our bodies actually see weight loss as a threat, our bodies really enjoy having extra fat on us. Our bodies don't know about society's demands for having a skinnier body, or being a lower body fat or wanting to look good in our jeans.

Our bodies don't care about any of that.

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Now, there are a ton of different reasons why our bodies won't lose weight. Now, for sure, the concept of calories in versus calories out is the foundation of weight loss. And the calories in versus calories out approach is for sure the foundation of weight loss, weight maintenance and weight gain. There's no doubting that.

However, there are a lot of other factors that play into whether our body gets rid of fat, or stores it. And for sure we're going to address those in this podcast as a whole.

But today, we're talking about giving up giving up on the plan. And when we give up on the plan. It's not our body giving up. It's actually our brains.

It's a conscious decision to give up and to not follow the plan anymore to decide that the diet doesn't work for us anymore.

And so why does that happen? Why do we give up? Today we're going to talk about what I call thought errors, how our brain lies to us, and what to do so that we can stay consistent. Don't give up on what we truly want. And be able to build self trust, as well as the discipline that we desire so that we can stay consistent in those habits that we know are going to get us to our goal.

So before we get there, though, I have a little story for you. I live in Mexico, and my husband and I moved here about four years ago, we have been renting a house since we moved here with the idea that when we moved we didn't really know if Mexico was going to be the place for us. We have an idea that it would be but we really weren't sure. And so we decided to rent a house.

After about a year. We decided that yeah, this was the place that we wanted to settle down. And so we started looking for a person property, either a house or a piece of land that we could build a house. And in the town that we live in, there really aren't a lot of properties for sale. And so we looked for about a year. And there really wasn't anything that was available to us.

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And then finally, one day, we found this just beautiful, beautiful piece of land. And we talked to the owner, and he was willing to sell it. And we agreed on a price. And we hired a lawyer to go through and do the paperwork and transfer ownership of the land from the owner to us.

And that's when we hit a snag.

Now, this is actually a really long story, which I'm not going to go into the details about. But it took us probably about 19 months for that lawyer to clean up the paperwork on the owner side, so that we could transfer the property to our ownership. And this was all during the pandemic. And so things took a little bit longer than they were supposed to. But also things aren't quite as straightforward as buying land in Mexico as they are in the United States where we're from.

After we purchased the land, then our architects submitted the plans for our property to get permits. And that was a whole long process that I think took four months as well.

And so when we were going through this whole, buying land and trying to build our house, which right now we're still in the foundational phase of our building, it could have been so easy for us to have the thoughts of, Oh, this isn't working, Mexico isn't the right place for us. Maybe we should just start over, maybe we should give up on this piece of land and buy a new piece of land.

But for some reason, those thoughts never came into our heads, or if they did they were quickly shooed out. Because what were we going to do? were we going to start the process all over again from the beginning?

And so I think about this when I work with my clients on their weight loss goals, that when we stand on the scale, and we see the number that we don't want to see, right, because either we've been in a plateau for a period of time, or we've gone up a little bit.

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So we've back slid. We think, why am I doing this? Why am I trying so hard, and I'm not even moving forward.

And so when I think about weight loss in that respect, that why is giving up an option?

Those clients who have decided that giving up is not an option, when they see that number on the scale that they don't want to see, it just further motivates them to go forward.

And so let's talk about motivation for a little bit right now, when we start a plan, you know, when we were starting this process of looking for a house, we have this vision in our head of what life is going to look like on the other side of that goal.

I certainly have ideas of what my office is going to look like, what my kitchen is going to look like how I'm going to feel in that house, I can actually see all of the furniture that I haven't even bought yet, I can see myself cooking in that kitchen.

And when we start a weight loss journey, we see ourselves on the other side of that, and I'm getting goosebumps just talking about this, that we have these ideas of putting on our jeans, looking at ourselves in the mirror, and feeling really freakin good about ourselves. And so because of that, we feel entirely motivated to follow this plan.

We've talked to people who've done this diet, they've told us about it, we're sold on it. And so we do it. And we follow the directions, we follow the guidelines, we follow the rules.

And every time we step on the scale, and that number goes down and it validates our efforts, we get more and more excited, we get more and more motivated to keep following the plan.

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And then one day, we get on the scale and it doesn't validate our efforts anymore. We've backslide, we've gained weight.

And again, we don't know why we've gained weight. Maybe we know that we've quote unquote cheated on our diet and so of course the the number would go up.

But more often than not what happens is we take that increase in weight as a sign That we're not supposed to get to our goal. We take that plateau as an idea that we're failures, and that we should just give up. And this isn't working. And this is too hard. And all of those different thoughts that our brain offers us, in response to just the fact that that number has gone up on the scale.

We don't even know that that increase in weight is actually fat. There are lots of different reasons why that number could go up, it could be water, what happens that we immediately get demotivated?

So I'd like to take this opportunity to talk about what's going on in our heads. When we start a new plan. We're excited and we're motivated.

But the problem here is that we think that we're going to be motivated throughout our entire journey.

But motivation is a feeling. And just like other feelings that we have happiness, sadness, impatience, joy, anger, and boredom, we're not always going to feel that way.

In fact, we can have dozens of different feelings within a day. So to think that we're always going to be motivated to exercise, or we're always going to feel motivated in our healthy eating plan is really short sighted.

And so what we want to do is, when we're starting this new plan, we want to be prepared, that we are not always going to feel motivated.

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Now, the reason that we're not always gonna feel motivated is because of the think feel act cycle. And the think feel act cycle is the idea that the thoughts that we're thinking in our heads will create feelings, and we act on how we feel, or how we think we're going to feel once we do that thing.

So when we start a new plan, we have this thought that this is going to be it, this is exciting, this is going to be the ticket, this is going to be the magic pill to my success. And when we have those thoughts, we immediately feel excited, we feel motivated.

When we feel excited and motivated, what happens is, we do the things in the plan that produce our results.

But we have about 60,000 thoughts in our head, every single day, we have two different parts of our brain, okay, we have what's called the higher brain and the higher brain decides that it's going to go out and it's going to lose weight that it wants to feel a little bit more comfortable in our clothes.

Now the higher brain decides that these are the steps that we're going to take in order to get to that goal.

And then we have our lower brain, the lower brain doesn't care about fitting into our jeans, the lower brain functions on what's called the motivational triad, the motivational triad being that we want to seek pleasure, we want to avoid pain, and we want to do it as efficiently as possible.

The lower brain only works in the here and now. The lower brain doesn't care about what's going to happen in an hour. It doesn't care about what's going to happen next week doesn't care about what's going to happen next month. And so the lower brain is always trying to keep us safe.

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The lower brain is always trying to get us to avoid pain. And so the lower brain is also very negative. And it's also very narcissistic. So it's always thinking negative thoughts, it's always going out and trying to figure out, is that going to kill me? Is that going to cause me pain? Is that going to cause me emotional suffering?

And if it is, it's going to try and avoid doing that. That's why we don't like to exercise, right? Because exercising is hard.

That's why we would rather eat brownies over broccoli, right? Because the brownies taste better than the broccoli does. And so our brain has the 60,000 thoughts in a day. And those different thoughts are going to produce different emotions.

So if I have the thought of this is working, that's going to create an emotion of motivation or excitement. If I have the thought of this isn't working, then what's going to happen is I'm going to feel demotivated, I'm going to feel disappointed.

And so when we get on the scale, and we see that the scale hasn't validated our efforts, our brain is just going and doing what it does naturally, which is offering us ideas and we get to choose whether we want to believe those or not.

Now, there are a couple reasons why our brain would offer us these negative thoughts. One is that losing weight can be very scary. For some of us, we've built related friendships around food. And we don't really know how those new relationships are going to look like on the other side of our goal.

So for example, my husband and I go out for pizza and wine once a week. And because I am a 52 year old woman, and so recently, I've had some hot flashes. And what I've done to avoid getting those hot flashes is to modify my diet a little bit in terms of minimizing the alcohol and the flour that I take, which is exactly what pizza and wine night is all about.

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And so it was a little scary at first, to figure out what does life look like with when I go out on date nights with my husband, if I'm not going to have pizza and enjoy wine, how can I still create that connection with him.

And so for many of us who are on diets, and those relationships with our mothers or sisters, or our partners, are surrounded with food, it can be really uncomfortable to try and navigate that, especially if those people in our lives, see this change as a threat because they don't want to have to change either. Change is totally uncomfortable. Of course, they don't want to change, we don't want to have to change.

But in order to get to our goal, we need to change our habits.

So considering what's called second gain. Second gain is the concept that there are benefits to staying the same. When we're on a weight loss journey, we usually don't think about that. We think about everything that is going to be amazing, the unicorns and the butterflies that are on the other side of our goal.

But we do have benefits to being the size that we are right now. And so thinking about those benefits can help us when we want to give up because then it creates awareness around are the benefits that we have right now.

Do those outweigh the benefits that we have on the other side of our goal?

So what's the fix? What do we do about it? How do we stop ourselves from giving up? Because we know that the things that we do create our results, right? We know that the things that I did last month, are giving me results today. And we know that the things that I do today are gonna give me results tomorrow, next week, next month, and next year.

If we give up on our plan, and we go back to the things that we were doing before, if we give up on our plan, and we do the habits that we were doing at the end of last year

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before New Year's, if we give up on our plan, and we do the things that we were doing before we were on our plan, we know that we are going to be the same size that we were when we started.

So how do we move through this situation, so that we can be successful on the other side so that we can be consistent so that we can build that self discipline?

First, I want you to know that it's possible to half-ass many diets and many eating techniques, we know that doing something is better than not doing anything.

And it's funny, I was just talking with a client about this the other day, she wanted to exercise but she didn't have time to do her full two hour walk. And she was like, well, then I'm not going to do anything. And then she heard my voice in her head saying no 15 minutes is going to do something. And she did and she felt so much better.

And so it's possible that maybe you just need a break. You know, if you're in a calorie restriction, maybe just going to maintenance for a little while, is going to give yourself the mental break that you need in order to get back on plan. Just don't go crazy with it right.

Now, the huge piece of advice that I have for you is don't make any decisions on one weigh-in.

And I want to offer you this thought when you start the plan: I want you to give yourself a deadline. So when you start the plan, I want you to say to yourself, okay, we are going to try this out for a good month, we are going to give it the old college try. And even if you're on a plateau, decide that you're not going to give up and go off plan until some date in the future because then you're evaluating your progress basically on neutral facts, as opposed to something that's emotional, which is your brain saying this doesn't work, which is totally demotivating.

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Now, after that date, you can totally decide to do something different. And it's a really great idea to make a plan. So this week, when I step on the scale, if the number doesn't come up the way that I want it to, then I'm going to go ahead and do this thing. Instead, not just say eff-it and throw our hands up in the air and decide to dive headfirst into a pint of Ben and Jerry's, right? Because we know that that's not going to get you to your goal.

So decide at some point in the future, when you're going to evaluate and then before that time, decide what to do when the number doesn't reflect what you think it should. So that's my huge advice.

Now, there may be times when a plan just isn't right for you, hormonally, all plans are not designed for all people. One person who does really well on a high protein, high fat type diet is not going to do well on a vegetarian type diet. And someone who does really well on a vegetarian type diet is going to do terribly on a diet that cuts out all carbs.

So we need to be really in touch with our bodies, we need to understand how we are feeling. And there are five different biomarkers that I use with my clients to determine whether their plan is right for them.

Things like hunger, energy cravings, sleep and mood, if you're not sleeping well, it could have something to do with your diet, maybe you're not eating enough, or maybe you're not eating enough carbs, maybe you're eating too many carbs, how's your energy, if you're having low energy during the day, that could have something to do with sleep, for sure. But it also could have something to do with the makeup of your food.

And if you're finding that you're having ravenous hunger on a certain plan, that's probably not the plan for you, you might want to reevaluate.

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So when the scale doesn't validate your efforts, when you want to give up, if your hunger, your energy cravings, sleep and mood aren't good, then that's an indication that you should, I don't want to say give up, but shift to something a little bit different.

Now, some last thoughts that I want to leave you with. When we give up on a plan, we usually make it mean that we are failures, that there's something wrong with us as humans, right? That that we don't have discipline, that we aren't meant to be thin, or that we can't do it that we don't have what it takes. And what I want to offer you is the idea that giving up on a specific diet doesn't actually have to mean anything about you as a person.

And so going back to my story about my husband and I moving to Mexico, and renting a house, initially when we moved here, and we were thinking about is it working out or not? I was thinking about if we had to move back to the United States, the shame that I might feel for it not working out in Mexico.

And then I had a complete mindset shift that it not working out in Mexico didn't necessarily mean anything about me that I wouldn't be able to quote unquote hack it right?

Because those are the thoughts that we have when we give up on diets, right? that we couldn't hack the diet. That we couldn't take it that there was something wrong with us. And so when I thought about the idea of returning back to the United States, with it not working out, living in Mexico, I had a different mindset shift in that at least we tried, right?

That most people won't even attempt to move to Mexico. And if it wasn't the right place for us, then it's just not the right place for us. And that it's totally okay. And it doesn't mean anything about us. It just means that it wasn't a right fit between us and Mexico.

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And so I want to offer you that same thought when it comes to your diets when it comes to the habits that you are trying to create that if something doesn't work out, that at least you're trying that at least you're not giving up that at least you're trying to improve yourself.

It doesn't mean that there's anything wrong with you. It just means that it didn't work out that the plan you had scoped out just wasn't the right plan.

So what can you learn from that? And how can you move forward, when we take the meaning out of something not working out for us, when we look at failure, not as something that is about us, but rather that this just wasn't the right fit, then the feelings that go along with that - with ending that plan don't have to send us into a shame spiral.

It can just be you know what, that didn't work out. And now I'm going to try something different.

When we look at giving up from the perspective of the future version of ourselves, who has already lost the weight, like what if she came back in time to you today? and said, You keep going, she is living the life that you have dreamt of? What advice would she give you about giving up? What would she tell you to do?

And so I just want to offer that that when we come from a place of firm belief that we are actually going to get to our goal. Giving up on a diet doesn't have to mean anything.

It's the resilience of figuring out what to do next, that will ultimately create the belief and it's the resilience of being able to turn that around, and keep going, that will ultimately get us to the goal, that we will be so freakin successful.

And this isn't about weight loss. This is about following through with your goals. This is about doing what you desire, putting yourself first because if it's something that's important to you, it's something that you should totally do.

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I want you to keep going, I want you to believe in yourself. And if this is something that's super important to you, I want you to stick to it. Because when you do, you will build the confidence that you desire, you will build the self esteem and you will build everything that you want by being able to accomplish this goal for yourself.

So that's all I have for you today. Have an amazing week. Thanks for listening, and I will talk to you next week.

Hey, thanks for listening.

If you're done with dieting and would like to work with me as your coach, I'd like to invite you to reach out to myself and my team to ask about programs and pricing. Go to elizabethsherman.com/contact to get started today. I can't wait to hear from you.

See you next week.