

Done with Dieting Podcast #7:  
What's it mean to Listen to your Body?



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With your Host  
Elizabeth Sherman

# Done with Dieting Podcast #7: What's it mean to Listen to your Body?

You are listening to the Done with Dieting Podcast Episode number seven.

Hi, I'm Elizabeth Sherman, former corporate high tech executive turned 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.

Hey, everyone, welcome to the show. Today we are going to talk about one of my favorite topics.

But before we get started, I just wanted to say something I am recording this episode. Almost a week after the launch of my first five episodes, I released them a couple days

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ago from when I'm recording this, and I'm just basking in all of the love that I've been receiving. And it feels so incredibly overwhelming, but in the best possible way possible.

What that means is that I'm just sitting here having a little bit of what's called a vulnerability hangover. And the love that I've received from all of you over the past couple days in my inbox and text messages, and emails and from everywhere. I could not possibly be more grateful for everyone reaching out to me and telling me what a great experience they're having with the podcast.

And so I just want to keep that going. messages that I've received from other coaches, from friends, relatives, all saying that they've listened to all of my podcasts because they love them. And that's so amazing. You guys are just just too much. Thank you.

And it's funny, because I was chuckling to myself when I posted the announcement of my podcast on my personal Facebook page, that every so often I get these ideas that in retrospect, are really good ideas, but it's just kind of funny to me how my brain works.

And I when I get these ideas, I think, oh, how hard could that be? It can't possibly be that difficult. And what ends up happening is that I go all in, and it turns out to be way more work than I expected. It's actually the attitude that I had when I competed in my bodybuilding contest. When I started roller derby. I decided three weeks before a half marathon that I was going to participate and run the race. And so it's just funny stories about how I get these ideas. Like this podcast, where I'm just like, Oh, I'm just gonna do that. And then I do it. And then I'm like, Oh, my god, that was that was way harder than I thought it was gonna be.

But all totally worth it, especially if you guys are getting value from it. So anyway, it's been so amazing. Just connecting with so many of you beautiful people.

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So today, let me get on with our podcast, we are talking about listening to our body. And so I have a story for you about this. So I remember when I was on my weight loss journey, being at a party and talking to a friend of mine about how I just felt totally confused about what foods I should be eating that it was really difficult for me to control myself around sugar.

And I remember another friend of ours was there. And she just kind of commented, Oh, that's interesting, because I just listen to my body. And I remember First of all, thinking that she was a total jerk. But I had no idea what she was talking about. Like no one teaches us how to listen to our body. And I didn't even know what that meant. Like, how do you listen to your body? It just didn't make any sense.

Now that I'm on the other side of it, I realize that we've been taught in fact, not only to not listen to our bodies, but to not pay us attention to our bodies to ignore the wisdom that our bodies actually have.

So like, for example, diets tell us how many calories that we should be eating. And if we get hungry on those diets, that we're told that we should just ignore our hunger signals, or we should drink water to quench our hunger signals that we're not really hungry, that we're thirsty instead, which you know, can happen. But in general, that's not the case, we've really been taught to not pay attention to our body and to ignore the wisdom that is how we feel.

And so so many of us, numb ourselves to escape negative emotion. And we eat foods that don't make us feel good. They make us feel good in the moment, but they don't make us feel good long term. How we numb ourselves is through eating through drinking, gambling, online, shopping, social media, and sometimes even Netflix or watching TV.

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So what happens is, we ignore what's happening in our body, and we don't pay attention to what we should be doing. Because we're looking outside of ourselves for the answers to what we should be doing. We think that other people or experts have the answers to what we should be doing.

We should be tuning into how we're thinking, how we're feeling, and the inner wisdom that is our body. Because only we know what is really the right thing for us. No one outside of us can give us the answers to what we should be doing.

And so, I want to tell you another story about basically my awakening, to listening to my body.

For years and years and years. When I was younger, when I was in high school when I was in college, when I was in grammar school, I was a huge procrastinator. And I'll probably tell this story 15,000 Other times, however, this is a really important story, because it's the journey that I took to figure out how to get out of emotional eating, how to start becoming aware of my emotions. And it's also the process that I take my clients through to help them to stop eating for reasons other than hunger and numbing or over drinking. It's the process that I helped them through in order to get more in touch with their feelings and their emotions so that they can become happier.

And so anyway, I was a procrastinator, it really didn't make a lot of sense, because I remember I was a new personal trainer, and a client would call me someone who wanted to hire me would call me and I wouldn't call them back for like, a week. And it didn't make any sense to me. I was like, Elizabeth, why are you doing this? This is against your own personal interest. These people want to give you money. Why aren't you calling them back?

It wasn't until one morning I was listening to an audiobook while I was walking in the morning. The audiobook was Kelly McGonigal calls the neuroscience of change. It's a

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great audio book, and I will put a link for it in the show notes. But she talked about how when we procrastinate. we procrastinate because we are avoiding feeling something it's usually something like anxiety or fear or worry or we're procrastinating because we don't want to feel whatever it is that we're afraid of.

It was like a light bulb went on in my head. So I started paying attention to what was happening in my body when I was procrastinating.

So clearly I knew I was procrastinating. I knew that I needed to call someone I knew I needed to do something, but yet I wasn't doing it. And so during those times I started checking in with my body to start paying attention to what it was that I was feeling. And I realized that what I was feeling was anxiety.

Once I was able to identify what anxiety felt like in my body, that's when I started noticing that I was actually anxious a lot of the time. And it wasn't just in preparation of things that I was supposed to be doing. But in other areas of my life too.

The other thing that it allowed me to do when I was checking in with my body was It also allowed me to start taking a look at my hunger scale. And so what I mean by that is how hungry was I at periods throughout the day. When I was eating was I eating because I was hungry? Was I eating out of habit? was I eating because I was feeling emotional? That whole experience opened my eyes to understanding what listening to your body is all about.

What I want to do today is I kind of want to deconstruct what listening to your body means in the moment, and how it's going to help you in terms of helping you feel better, helping you get to your goal, weight, and everything else that you need to do in order to be a happy and productive person.

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So first, what you're going to do in order to start listening to your body, is to become aware of how food makes you feel, how exercise makes you feel, and also just in general, paying attention to your body. So often, we walk around thinking about the past, thinking about the future. And we're never thinking about what's happening here in the present moment. Through the process of listening to our body, what happens is that we become aware of the present moment, and we become more mindful. And so a lot of times people will talk about mindfulness, in terms of meditation. And I think meditation is great. This is just another way of getting there.

What I want to introduce to you today is one of the fundamental habits that I introduce my clients to when we start working together. And what it is, is it's called a body scan.

First of all, you can do it anywhere at any time, you want to start at the top of your head, and slowly work your way down your body.

And so what you want to do is you want to start the process of what I call notice and name. And what that means is you're going to notice and then put a name to whatever it is that you're noticing. Alright, so starting at the top of your head, you're just going to scan your body, and you're going to notice how are you feeling physically? Do you need to unclench your jaw? Are your shoulders tight from being stressed out and hunching your shoulders? Are you feeling clenched in your stomach? Are you feeling stressed? And what does that actually feel like physically? So how do you know that you're feeling stressed? And then do you need to relax in that process? The second thing that you want to do is you want to start to notice how does hunger feel in your body? Are you hungry? How do you know that you're hungry?

Hunger feels very different in lots of different people. Some people their stomach start to grow when they feel hungry, some people start to just feel an empty feeling in their stomach. Some people get headaches, some people get hangry. You probably know what

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I mean there. Some people get lightheaded or start to feel faint or start to not be able to concentrate. So there are lots of different ways that our body might tell us that we need to eat. And so you just get to figure out what are those ways for you.

The next thing that you want to do is you want to start to notice, how do you feel emotionally? What are the emotions that you're feeling? And how do those emotions manifest themselves? Physically? How does anxiety feel? Do you feel like you have a weight on your chest? Is your heart beating quickly? Is your stomach again clenched? Or are your hands sweaty? Is your face flushed? Do you feel heat when you're embarrassed? So what are all of the different emotions that you're having? And then how can you put physical feelings to each of those emotions.

And I'll tell you, when I started this whole process of getting in touch with my emotions, since I wasn't aware of them before they really came flooding back. And it was really confusing, especially if I was in a very stressful situation where I was feeling lots of different emotions. It was difficult for me to sift through each of them and understand what they were in this process. It will take a while. But it allows you to just get a little bit more in touch with your emotions. And emotions are actually a really good thing because they help you to understand what's going on in your brain. They help you understand what's happening.

And so the next thing that you want to think about is what you're thinking. Examples of that might be, oh I should just finish that bottle. Or I may as well eat this because or I've already blown my diet so I may as well or I deserve a treat. So start to get in touch with those thoughts that you're having in the back of your mind.

And then the last thing that you want to start noticing and naming, and this doesn't necessarily happen with the body scan, but start noticing what's happening around you. So what is the environment like around you? If you're at work? Is it high tension? Or is

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it calm? If you're at a party, is it happy? Is it low energy? Notice just what's happening around you in the environment, as well as what foods are available to you.

Okay, so that's how you do a body scan, you just start at the top of your head, you slowly work your way down, you start to notice how you're feeling physically, you start to notice your hunger signals. also start to notice any emotions that you're having, how those manifest physically. And then finally, any thoughts you might be having that would lead you to how you're feeling as well.

Why this is important is that it starts to create awareness. And awareness is so incredibly powerful. Because without awareness, we can't change what we want to change, right. And with each of us wanting to become healthier, it all starts with what we're doing right now. So that we can get to the place of where we want to be.

So doing the body scan, it allows you to create awareness around your hunger. Are you hungry right now? Are you going to be hungry in an hour? Are you not at all hungry? Are you in fact full?

When you can start paying attention to your hunger signals, then you can become a little bit more proactive? When it comes to deciding what you're going to eat next.

Doing the body scan also creates awareness around your emotions, it allows you to notice, am I bored? Am I angry? Am I embarrassed? Am I feeling shame? Am I feeling guilt? And or am I feeling joy and happiness and contentment, a lot of times we don't like feeling negative emotion. But it also brings us back in touch with our positive emotion as well.

The more we start to notice how we're feeling we can really heighten those times that we're feeling positive emotion as well.

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Doing a body scan also allows us to create awareness around our thoughts. And so it also allows us to become more present in our daily life.

And then finally, doing a body scan allows us to create awareness around how food makes us feel long term. I think that this is actually one of the most important points of this whole practice.

Because when it comes to being on a diet, when we're following someone else's rule about what we should be eating, and what we shouldn't be eating, it's really easy to go off track, right? Let's say that you're out to dinner, you're on a diet, and the diet tells you that you can't drink wine, and you can't eat bread. And so you're out to dinner with your partner, you're having an amazing time. And it's just a special occasion. Maybe if it's someone's birthday, you're celebrating and what's going to happen is someone's going to order a bottle of wine for the table, the waiter is going to put down the bread basket and you're going to think to yourself, that diet isn't the boss of me. I can do whatever I want. I want that bread, I want to drink the wine.

If we're only doing things because someone else tells us to instead of being aware of what happens inside our body, we're gonna eat that bread, we're gonna drink the wine. And then tomorrow, we're gonna feel like crap. And we're gonna be like, Oh, I totally screwed up, I totally went off track, I'm just gonna give up on this whole diet thing, then we're just never going to do it again.

But if we start to notice how food makes us feel if we start to be able to connect the dots between drinking wine and having a poor night's sleep feeling hung over the next day, and then the cascade of effects that results from a poor night's sleep and drinking too much wine, then it at least empowers us a little bit. It puts us in the driver's seat.

When we notice how food makes us feel. Then what happens is when we eat too many cookies and we get the sugar hang over the next couple days, then the next time that we

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see cookies, we may try to avoid them. Or we may decide that I can have one or two, but not the whole bag, right? Because I don't want to feel that way.

When we start to notice and become stewards of our own health, we start to become more empowered around food, and we want to eat food that makes us feel better. And we want to avoid food that makes us feel bad.

This whole body scan sounds very easy, and it actually is, but its effects are so incredibly profound. And so again, why it's important is not only that it gets us out of thinking of in the past or in the future, but it also gets us in touch with our body. So many of us are living our lives with our heads cut off from the rest of our bodies, we're walking around totally in our head, and we get completely resentful of any time that our body needs anything like how dare we possibly need water? How dare we have to go to the bathroom in the middle of the day, don't you know that I have work to do.

What this does is it brings us back in touch with our body, it gets us out of thinking about the past, it gets us out of worrying about the future. And it just gets us present to the current moment. It allows us to pay attention to how we're feeling.

And so it's really interesting to get feedback from my clients about the body scan, about what they like about it and what they don't like about it. And it's just a light bulb that comes on for so many of my clients that they're like, oh, wow, I didn't realize how I was feeling tense all the time, or that my shoulders are in a constant state of being stressed. Or I didn't realize how often my jaw was tight, or I didn't realize that I was feeling sad a lot, or that I was feeling anxious a lot. And what anxiety feels like, I didn't realize that anxiety was this knot that I felt in my stomach.

And so how this habit is going to help you: first it's going to allow you to get in touch with your hunger signals. Okay, so I've already mentioned that noticing what hunger

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feels like for you so that you can start to eat when you're hungry, and then stop when you've had enough.

It's going to allow you to stop eating, drinking or shopping. So all of those numbing habits that we have, it's going to allow you to get in touch with those and become more aware of when you're using social media or shopping or drinking alcohol or eating to numb feeling a negative emotion.

And then it's also going to allow you to understand how different inputs influence how we feel, both emotionally and physically. And this was something that I really became aware of at the beginning of self quarantine, I noticed that I was going on social media a lot. And I started to notice how I was feeling when I was reading certain people's posts, it allowed me to put those people on pause for a little bit because their posts were producing anxiety for me.

And finally, it'll help you to choose foods that will give you energy and then ultimately avoid foods that make you feel bad. Because we don't want to be walking around feeling bad all the time, right? We want to feel good. When we feel good. We're gonna give our body the things that it needs. In order to perform at a high level.

I would love for you to try doing the body scan. Let me know how that goes. And if you have any questions about it, feel free to reach out I love hearing from you.

Also, I just want to put in a quick plug here that the Done with Dieting podcast is still really new. And if you like what you're hearing, and you think that other women who are also done with diets and still want to lose weight can benefit from this content. I'm going to invite you to do two things.

The first thing is to rate this podcast through whichever tool it is that you use to listen to it. So whether it's apple or Spotify or Stitcher.

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And then the second thing is to share it with a friend. This is for them not for me so that other people can get rid of this dieting mindset, improve their relationship with their bodies, and improve their relationship with exercise and eating. Because it's something that's just going to make all of us healthier.

So that's all I have for you today. I'll see you next time. Bye bye.

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](http://elizabethsherman.com/contact) to get started today. I can't wait to hear from you.

See you next week.