

# Done with Dieting Podcast #12: B Minus Habits



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With your Host  
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You're listening to the done with dieting podcast, Episode Number 12.

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.

Hey, everyone, and welcome to the show. Today, I want to introduce a topic called b minus habits.

It's an idea that I recently introduced to a few of my clients, and although there was certainly pushback, I think it's an approach that works well for health because it allows us to lean in to being healthier without the overwhelm that goes along with

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having to do it all – and then the inevitable fallout that occurs when we inevitably fail, as we make the failure mean that we're incapable of doing the things that we want, or that we're

There's a concept for people who create things: things like courses, presentations, as well as writers, artists, musicians and that type of stuff. That is the concept of b minus work,. And what B minus work states is that at some point, good enough is good enough. That we can't aim for perfection because when we do, what we're trying to create will never be good enough, and so therefore it will never be created and allowed out into the world.

The foundation of b minus work is that perfection is the enemy of good enough. And so therefore, doing something that's good enough, is at least going to get it out into the world, get it into people's hands. And it doesn't need to be perfect, you can always go back and make changes to it – but at least it's done.

And so I started thinking about how could we use this same concept when it comes to health and our own habits and our eating.

I was talking to a client of mine, and she was not really complaining about the fact that she's all or nothing type of person. And I use the word complaining, because it was as if she was just stating a fact.

She knew that having this way of thinking about her diet and exercise habits wasn't serving her, and she didn't really enjoy being all or nothing, because she could see that being all in and needing her diet to be perfect, was getting in her way.

And I don't think that she's alone, I think that many of us view ourselves as being all or nothing people, right?

we see this all the time with new year's resolutions, right?

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That people go all in at the beginning of the year, and they decide that this is the year that they're going to get in shape. or this is the year that they're going to go vegetarian, or they're going to lose all the weight.

And so they feel like they need to go all in January 1 or January second and completely overhaul their lives.

Meanwhile, their experience up until that point has been very different. Maybe they have been identifying as a couch potato, or they eat a lot of fast food.

And so when they completely change everything that they're doing, what's happening is that they create a very uncomfortable experience for their behavior change.

we know that when it comes to habit change, that small, incremental changes – those things that are easy to do, that are sustainable, and that add up is the ticket to lifelong success.

And that if we completely overhaul our lives and do everything that is so different than what we're used to, that it will be difficult for us to sustain those changes.

most of the time when I coach my clients in changing their behaviors, one of the things that, I like to suggest is that we simplify what it is that we're focusing on. Also known as constraint.

Meaning that if you want to, become more fit through exercise, and you want to improve your diet, and you want to improve your sleep, we don't do all of those things at the same time. And instead, we choose one to focus on. And when we get that one area under control, then we move on to the next thing, and then we choose the next thing, slowly picking at the low hanging fruit.

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And then that doesn't mean that you can't go back to the first thing again, but that we don't want to tackle all areas of health or all areas of our life at the same exact time.

Because when we think that we need to do it all perfectly. When we don't do any of it perfectly. We throw up our hands and we give up and then we go right back to what we were doing before.

I think that there are three different problems that we encounter, when we want to change our health behaviors. They're all similar, But they're also different.

The first problem that I see is that when we think that there's a right way of doing it, don't we all do that? Right?

We think that there's a right way of losing weight. And we just need to learn that thing. We believe that someone else has the answer – some guru or expert and that we're going to eff it up, or that we're doing it wrong. or that there's a right way of getting from point A to point B and that we have to do it the right way or else.

Or else what? I'm not sure – that its going to take longer or that other people will talk about us, or I don't know.

The second problem we tend towards is what I talked about before, which is all or nothing thinking, which means that we go all in. And if we're not all in, we're all off. So we're either on protocol, or we're completely off protocol. And the problem with this is that when we go all in, we can totally get burned out, because everything that we're used to is different – we're eating different foods, we're sleeping and getting up at different times, we're moving differently and it's all so super uncomfortable. And when it's uncomfortable, then we don't want to do the things we're supposed to do, and eventually, we decide to not do the things anymore.

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The language we use to describe this behavior is “I’m on the wagon” or “I fell off the wagon” not realizing that there’s no wagon

the third problem that we have when it comes to changing our health is that we think that we need to do it perfectly. and this kind of goes along with the other two: all or nothing, and thinking that there’s a right way, right?

We feel like what’s the point in doing it if I can’t execute it perfectly. And so if we're not doing it perfectly, why even try? Or that doing it perfectly means that there's some sort of right way of doing it.

And so anything less than perfect isn't good enough. So why are we even trying? And in thinking back to growing up, and looking at, and looking through 17 magazine, as a young teenager, when I didn't see bodies that looked like mine? I think that I kind of gave up, I had this same all or nothing thinking like, my body couldn't possibly ever look like the bodies that I see in the magazines.

So why even try? And so comparison is for sure at play here.

And how often do we do that with ourselves that we look at other people's plates and think that they must know something that we don't – that they for sure are doing it the right way, or at least they're doing it better than we are. And so we kind of feel defeated after we, after we decide that we're not doing it right.

And so all of these problems, the all or nothing thinking, thinking that there's a right way of doing it. And thinking that we need to do it perfectly, are all keeping us stuck. Because they don't allow for mistakes. And we know that when we're doing something new, there are going to be mistakes.

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Mistakes are part of the process. We should expect them, and we don't have to make mistakes mean anything about our ability to be successful in anything that we set out to accomplish.

There's no such thing as doing it the right way. There's no such thing as perfection, because we are all human, and therefore we are, we are totally flawed. And the all or nothing thinking is just too rigid.

So, as a solution to these problems, I want to introduce the concept of b minus habits.

The idea behind b minus habits is that we don't have to do it perfectly (or A+ work), but that we're doing just enough to be better than we were yesterday. In other words, what is it that you can do today, that is just going to move the needle a little bit closer to where you want to go. Maybe it's something simple, like drinking another glass of water, or eating another serving of vegetables, or going out for a five minute walk. What is one super stupid, simple thing that you can do today, that will get you closer to where you want to go?

And I think it's important to note here that we DO NOT need to do a lot to become healthier. We humans tend to make things more difficult than they should be.

Again, it doesn't have to be perfect. It just has to be better than you were yesterday.

See, because we always think that when we're setting goals for ourselves, that the person that we're going to be tomorrow or next week or next month is this amazing, perfect person, right? We have this idea that future Elizabeth - the Elizabeth that I'm going to be tomorrow - is going to want to eat vegetables when today I just want to eat french fries, the version of myself tomorrow or next week is gonna want to run when today I can barely walk a mile.

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And so what if we set our goals for tomorrow and next week and next month knowing that we're not going to live up to the perfectionist fantasy that we think that we're going to be.

, but the person that we're going to be tomorrow or next day or the next day or next week is pretty freakin close to the person that we are today.

And so why wouldn't We want to set ourselves up for success? Why wouldn't we want to be successful in the future? And I don't think that the answer to that is that we don't want to be successful in the future, we think that the things that we've set out to do seem so simple because we SHOULD be able to do them – that other people are doing it or we used to be able to do it before.

Far too often We look back at the version of ourselves that did this before, like a year ago, two years ago, maybe even five years ago. And we don't feel like we're that much of a different person. But if we're out of the habit, if we're not doing the things that we want to be doing, and we haven't been doing them for a while, getting back in the swing of things can take a little bit of time.

And so having some compassion for ourselves, can really go a long way in terms of setting ourselves up for success, and therefore feeling good about ourselves in the future and what we've accomplished.

Now, you may automatically be thinking something like, oh, Elizabeth b minus work isn't going to work for me.

And in fact, when I've presented this idea to clients in the past, that's often the response I get.

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A few months ago, I was working with a client who wanted to improve her nutrition. Like many of my clients, she didn't have a ton of time, worked a lot of hours, and as a result, her meal planning and preparation really suffered.

At this point, she was eating a lot of convenience and restaurant food. So, we started talking about other options – perhaps packing a lunch with a salad.

What was shocking was that she objected to eating lunch meat because it has so many chemicals in it & she knows it's not good for us.

And it made me laugh because there was a period of time when I thought that bananas weren't great. And if I wanted a banana, I wouldn't eat it because it had too much sugar or was too high in calories. But you know what I would end up eating instead? Cookies!

We do that stuff.

Was she right? That lunch meat isn't the best option? That it can have preservatives and nitrates? Yes. But it was also a better option than what she was currently doing – which was overeating pizza.

The objection here is that “it's not good enough”. whatever small incremental change that we're making isn't enough of a change.

Now this originates from us thinking one of two different things - that we can do more, or maybe that it's going to take too long to get results.

And, you know, here's what I want to suggest for that is that you did not get into your current shape overnight. And so therefore, it's not going to get fixed overnight either. Now, I get it. When we decide that we want something - like to lose weight, We want it the next day, right? We want it yesterday, in fact, but

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science proves over and over again that slow weight loss is most effective and longest lasting. It takes a bit for our body to adjust hormonally to what's happening in our body, and it takes a bit for our brains to catch up to the new way of doing things too.

when we lose weight through methods like fad diets that work quickly, our brains don't have enough time to catch up to the new way of thinking – the new way of doing things. Effective habit change comes from changing our beliefs about food, our bodies and the world around us. That stuff takes time to sink in & really take over.

It's why people who do fad diets who do lose the weight, tend to regain it over the period of the next five years. And so what is the rush in getting the weight off?

So by doing small changes that aren't perfect, but are good enough, we can move towards becoming healthier.

Doing things like drinking diet soda instead of full-sugar; eating 2 pieces of pizza instead of 4. Or walking 15 minutes a day to start instead of an hour.

Now, another of my clients who I presented the idea of b minus habits to, immediately said, nope – that's not going to work

And I was like, Well, why not? She was like, well, because b minus work is so close to a work, why wouldn't I just do a plus work?

Now, here's the thing about being a perfectionist, or doing A plus work. We never think that we're doing enough. It's just more of the 'I'm not good enough' narrative that we have going on in our heads, and this is just another way that it plays out.

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So first of all, none of us are getting an actual grade in our health. There's no teacher in the universe that's telling us what grade we're getting.

At best, our health would be a pass/fail and the tests that our doctors run would be the indication of that.

That being said as we go through our health journey, what we consider to be b minus quality, as we become more skilled in honing in on what habits work for us, will change.

As we practice and experiment with different ways of eating, different physical activities, learning how to manage our stress, and how much sleep we need, we will get better at zeroing in on exactly what we need to do to feel good. What do we need to do to feel energized, limit cravings, have a stable mood, and consistent sleep? When we take the pressure off of weight loss, and focus on the other health related non-scale victories, we'll become more motivated to keep doing what works for us and our bodies

And that, motivation - is actually the next objection that I get from folks - that performing at a b minus level isn't motivating enough.

that it's so super close to what we're doing already, that we really can't see enough of a change in our habits to keep focused on it.

And I totally get that. We want to see quick wins when it comes to our goals. But as I said before, Drastic changes aren't sustainable. But the other thing I'd like you to entertain is the idea that maybe b minus habits will actually get you to your goal – where going all in actually doesn't. – at least not in the long run.

That being said, there's actually another really good reason why we don't want to go all in on doing all the things when it comes to health, or rather, weight loss – and

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that is that when we start a weight loss program, eventually we're going to plateau. It's just inevitable.

If we start out doing all the things, when we hit that plateau, we have no where else to go. We have no tricks up our sleeve or cards to play – to use all the cliches.

If we start out by reducing our calories to lets say 1200 calories, and exercising an hour a day, when we hit that plateau – what are we going to do? Cut more calories? Exercise longer? No. We've tapped out.

By doing the bare minimum in order to get results, what happens, is we have wiggle room. WE can do the next hard thing – cutting out soda, increase the amount of activity, or maybe just adjusting when we're eating most of our calories so that they fuel our workouts.

If we hold back from doing it all at the beginning, we can work in to gradually adding more advanced techniques without feeling deprived or that it's all too hard.

Okay, so now, here's how b minus health works. What I want you to do is I want you to write out all of the things that you want to be able to accomplish. Okay, so when it comes to your health, you know, what is it that you should be doing? Is it you should stop drinking soda? Do you think that you should be eating more vegetables? Do you think that you should be walking or running? Or, you know, what are all of the things that you want to be doing when you think about yourself in as that healthy person that you strive to be? Okay? So write it all out? What are all the things that you need to do in order to get to that version of yourself?

Now, , what I want you to do is look at the list, and choose the low hanging fruit. What is the easiest thing to do. Okay, so that the easiest thing might be adding another glass of water to your day, or swapping whole milk for 2% in your coffee.

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Or it might be having one more serving of vegetables today than you did yesterday.

Okay, so write down a list of all of the things that you think you need to be doing in order to be that healthy person who used to strive to be in the future. And I want you to do whatever will nudge you towards your goal.

Now here's the thing, going back to my clients objection, that b minus work is so close to A work, why wouldn't I just do A work - because A work is going to get me there faster & it's just a little bit more... What I want to suggest is that over time, your b minus habits will change. What you consider to be b minus today will eventually become c or d work - it will become easy & almost like you're not doing anything.

By doing b minus work - by doing the next easy thing on your list - what's going to happen is, over the course of time, the quality of what you consider to be B minus is actually going to get better.

It's kind of like when we start to clean up the house. We start with one area, and then re-evaluate, realize that we still have energy, and so we move on to the next thing. And then when we're done with that, we realize that this other area looks a bit messy, so we continue on.

So the goalpost of what is good enough is constantly moving. And I want to suggest that when it comes to B minus habits, that the goalpost is always moving as well.

So, right now, you might look at me and think that I have the perfect diet, right? You might think that I eat perfectly. I mean, I've had practice in doing this for a number of years.

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And see that's the thing is, I don't think I do. I don't think I eat perfectly. Honestly, I don't even know what eating perfectly means. I think that I have room for improvement as well. We always have room for improvement. Our brains always tell us that we're not doing enough – that we're not good enough.

It's something that is constantly a work in progress. And so if we always try to do a little bit better, those b minus habits will slowly get better and better and better over time. And this is why it works. This is why it's so brilliant.

Because we don't even see that we are trying, We don't see the needle moving. It's not super uncomfortable & we can ease into better health.

Now here's the tricky thing about easing in to better habits: because it's easy, we forget – we don't remember how we used to be. So it's easy to give up thinking that we haven't made progress.

We still see how much further we have to go, and we forget how far we've come. we don't see all of the changes that have happened – the progress we've made. But it's there.

And so if you can just focus on how do i do things just a little bit better, you'll actually get to your goal. And in the process, you are going to be so much more compassionate with yourself, you are going to not see your failures as epic evidence of why you're not capable of achieving your goal, or why you're not destined to be the healthy person or why this is another thing that just didn't work out.

When we focus on B minus work every single day, it gets easier and easier and easier. And that's really the key to success – the confidence competence loop. That as we become competent, we build confidence. And when we feel confidence, we follow through on the thing, which breeds competence.

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When we let ourselves off the hook of having to be perfect, When we can allow ourselves to have compassion for the humans that we are, then we're going to be successful. Because humans aren't perfect. We as humans are not measured by

Okay - So I hope that this has given you some new ideas of how you can implement b minus health for yourself, and I want you to try it out and let me know. How's it going?

Okay? Okay.

That's all I have for you today. Have an amazing week and I will see you next time.  
Bye bye

Hey, thanks for listening.

If the show resonates with you and you have a friend, mother, sister or anyone else who you think would benefit, I'd love for you to share the podcast with them.

You can leave me a rating and review in Apple podcasts which helps me create an amazing experience for you. And it helps other women who are done with dieting and want to get off the diet roller coaster to find it as well.

See you next week.