

Done with Dieting Podcast #27: How To Make Habits Stick



Full Episode Transcript

With your Host
Elizabeth Sherman

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You are listening to the Done with Dieting Podcast Episode number 27.

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.

Hello, hello, hello everyone and welcome to the show.

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So, first I have to tell you that I am so super excited because today the doors are open for the "**Feel Good Sisterhood.**"

The Feel Good Sisterhood is my new group coaching program that I've been talking about the past few weeks. And I finally came up with a name and I love it.

The Feel Good Sisterhood, I just love saying it, it rhymes. But I have finally come up with a name and I have written down everything that's been on my brain over the past few months when I first came up with this idea and what topics that we're going to cover.

You'll find it at elizabethsherman.com/groupcoaching. So, if you have any questions about that and I've written down all the things it's going to be so incredibly epic. Because not only am I going to do some of my best teaching in this group, but what's been amazing is that I have a team of coaches.

Who are also helping out by donating their time in the form of masterclasses and mini trainings that have nothing really to do with health, but kind of. But all of the other things that women- our age are challenged with right now, and they just want to be part of this. So, it is going to be such a rich experience.

So again, if you're interested in learning more, go over to elizabethsherman.com/groupcoaching, that's all one word and check it out.

Now moving on. Last week on my podcast, the episode was all about goal setting and the episode was a lot longer than I had planned and I find it so incredibly funny. Because a year ago, if you had asked me, " Elizabeth, do you have anything to say? I'd be like, no one wants to hear what I have to say."

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But I apparently have lots of things to say because I talk a lot and it's funny. I was talking to one of my clients. She's younger and she doesn't really listen to podcasts. But she was like, how do you find so much to talk about? Like, how does that happen? And I really don't have an answer for you, but I have a lot of things that apparently, I have opinions on.

Anyway, last week's episode was all about goal setting. What I wanted to do this week was talk about the next steps to goal setting. And when we go ahead and set out goals, what tends to happen is we figure out what's the easiest way for me to get to that goal. Which totally makes sense, right? We decide that I want to lose weight and what's the easiest way to do that.

Oftentimes, when we implement change, We do things that are environment related. And when we look at all of the advice that we're given on how to create better habits. That's usually one of the things that people tell us to do. Like for example, if you want to eat better, get all of the junk out of your kitchen.

So, all of those things that you know that you shouldn't be eating in large quantities, that you have large quantities of. Get those out of your kitchen so that you're not tempted to eat them.

There's a really funny phrase that one of my former teachers and mentors says, which is, if there is a food that's in your house, you, or someone that you love or tolerate is going to eat it, and it's true. So, if you have something in your house, it's going to get eaten because that's what it's there for. So, if you don't want to be tempted by these foods, you keep them out of your house.

And in all honesty, when I look back at my path, my journey, I did very much the same thing. I definitely cleaned up my kitchen. I definitely wanted to make sure that things

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were outside of my house that I didn't want to be tempted by. When we wanted those things, we would go out for them. And that's a perfectly fine strategy.

However, several years ago I heard this concept that is called the **NLP** logical levels of change. And NLP stands for **Neuro Linguistic Programming**. And it's a type of coaching and it sounds very fancy, but really all it is, is brain training. And when I learned this concept, it changed the entire way I looked at habit change and it changed the entire way that I looked at working with my clients.

I want to share this idea with you today because when we're able to understand how habit change occurs and what keeps us from being successful. Then we can look at these ideas with a larger perspective and stop being frustrated with ourselves. When we're not making the change that we want to, because we can see that there's something larger at play.

Now be aware that I did not know about the NLP logical levels of change when I was in my journey. So, it's not to say that you cannot be successful without this concept. However, what I want to suggest is that when you're aware of it, it can speed your results.

And that's what we're about here. I don't want you to feel frustrated. I don't want you to not be as successful as you could be. So, if I can help you cut through some of that quote-unquote red tape, then I'm going to do that. Let's dig in on what the NLP logical levels of change is all about.

When we're talking about the NLP logical levels of change, I want you to imagine a pyramid. And this pyramid actually has five different layers to it. And you can Google the NLP logical levels of change and see the actual pyramid. Typically, you'll see it as an upside down pyramid, but I think it makes more sense as doing it just right sized pyramid. Just keep that in the back of your mind, okay?

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So, we have five different layers in this pyramid. And I'm going to walk you through each of the different five layers. But here's what I want to start out with, and that is that up at the top of the pyramid in the very small triangle up at the very top.

Habits or things that we do to implement behavior change at the top of the pyramid are easy to implement. However, they are more difficult to instill lasting change at the bottom of the pyramid, the very bottom, the wide, trapezoid down at the very bottom of the pyramid. Things that are closer to the bottom are more difficult to implement are slower to occur.

However, once we have them centered and dialed in, then everything else becomes easier. So, things at the bottom are difficult to change. But once they're done, they will impact the rest of your life.

Okay, so let's start at the top, the top of the pyramid, the first band is what we call environment. When we make changes to our environment, just like I was talking at the beginning of the podcast, those are things that change how we interact in our space, right?

So, things like a kitchen make-over so getting the bad quote-unquote bad stuff out of your pantry and filling your refrigerator and countertops with things that you want to be eating, that's one example. If you were a smoker, for example, you would break all of your ashtrays and throw away your cigarettes and lighters.

Another example is, When you want to work out first thing in the morning, you put your clothes out the night before to encourage exercise first thing in the morning.

Now many of the health initiatives that government creates for us has everything to do with environment. So, for example, making buildings non-smoking or making public places non-smoking that's an environmental change that actually works pretty well.

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That when governments make buildings and public transportation non-smoking space. That there have been many behavior change on the part of citizens as a result of those environmental changes. We noticed that neighborhoods that have more sidewalks and parks will automatically encourage more movement and togetherness.

So again, environment is really super important as far as health goes. But it's not the only thing. Now, the next layer down is what we call habits or behaviors. And when we want to create a new habit, a better habit, one of the suggestions that we have is that we peg a new habit to an existing one.

An example of that might be, if you want to take your vitamins every day. Putting your vitamins next to your toothbrush, every time you brush your teeth. You then pop a vitamin and it's actually a really helpful tip.

Other ways of instilling new habits or behaviors might be prepping all of your meal items for the week. So not only planning your food for the week, but also doing some preparation. So that it becomes easier throughout the week to eat healthier. Doing all of your shopping on the weekends.

Another habit as far as exercise goes is, when you want to exercise if it's not possible to do it first thing in the morning when you're driving home, drive by the gym. Instead of going home and then going out. So again, reducing friction to support the better habit.

The third band down is what we call skills and abilities. So, what skills do you have that you can rely on to help you to become healthier? So, for example, if you know how to cook, if you have knife skills, you then have the ability to cook a healthy dinner.

A skill might be being able to read a nutritional label or being able to read a menu item and being able to read a restaurant menu and pick out those sneaky words. Like, what's

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the difference between how they prepare something that sauteed over something that's braised. Which one of those things is healthier for you? Do you know that takes skill.

Another example of a skill or ability is being able to put together a progressive workout program or being able to perform exercises without injury. I know that when the pandemic started, and people couldn't go to gyms anymore. Everyone was really freaked out because they couldn't go to the gym. And if you don't know how to work out on your own without a personal trainer there, that's going to make life a lot easier.

How adherent you are to that habit of exercise may get impacted by your ability to put together a workout that is going to make you feel good and reduce injury.

Now, hopefully you can see that as I'm going through each of these different categories or bands in the levels of change. You can see how each one is progressively getting more and more important. And for much of my career when I started out as a personal trainer and a beginning nutritionist. These were the things that I was coaching my clients on.

I was telling them to change their kitchen. I was telling them to peg there exercise to something else that they were doing. I was teaching them habit change. I was showing them how to exercise. I was teaching them how to make good choices when they went to restaurants. But there are inherent problems when we rely on each of these things.

For example, let's talk about environment. If you are relying on the fact that your kitchen needs to support your healthy eating goals. What happens when you go on vacation? And when you come back on Sunday night and there isn't any fresh food in the refrigerator. You need to go to work the next day and you don't have anything to bring with you for lunch.

What happens then? What happens when you prep all of your meals on the weekends? And again, you didn't have time over the weekend to go to the grocery store or to prep

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your food. Because hey, it's summer and we want to spend our time out at the lake, or at the beach, or hanging out with our friends. We don't want to spend it in the kitchen.

So, what happens when we don't have food prepped for us, and we have been relying on that habit in order to be successful with our goals. What happens is, we fail. Because we've been relying on our environment to support our healthy habits.

When I go out for lunch, I don't have my normal lunch with me. And if I don't have the skill of being able to look at a menu item and decide if it's right for me. Then, I'm just going to decide what I like to eat instead of what's best for me.

So again, the problem with relying on environment is that we need to maintain the environment in order for it to help us. And it's similar as far as habits and behaviors go too. Like, those are things that we have to continually dedicate ourselves to, that we have to continually focus on and maintain.

I have an episode that's called Clean Slate Habits, episode number 19. And in that episode, I talk about intentionally using a disruption in your life. Like moving or a job change or something like that in order to become healthier to adopt a new habit. But what can also happen is if we're not diligent about being aware of these clean slate moments, they can also work against us.

So, if for example, I'm used to going to the gym when I drive home from work. Well, what happens when I'm working from home now? I don't have that automatic signal in order to go to the gym. I now have to intentionally do it.

What can happen is these habits are kicked off by something called the habit loop. We have a specific cue; we do the routine and then we get the reward. If the cue changes somehow, then our brains don't naturally go through the routine in order to do the reward.

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Now, although habits are fantastic, getting into good habits can be challenging. While on the other hand, sliding into bad habits, or getting out of good habits can be very easy.

And the third piece to this is our skills and abilities. Now, just because I know how to cook doesn't mean I like it, or it doesn't mean that I want to cook. Knowing how to read a nutritional label, doesn't ensure that I'm actually going to do it. We have these skills and abilities but it's really up to us to implement them.

For much of my career, again, I was focusing on these top three bands, and it would always just throw me for a loop. When I was working with my clients, and they were starting to get really good results and something in their life would happen, and the rug would get pulled out from under them and they would stop being consistent. Even though, they had all of this information, and everything was set up for them.

So, why is it that sometimes habits stick and sometimes they don't?

For that answer, I want to drop down to the last band, the band number five. And then I'm going to come back up to number four. So, the last band is all about our identity. Who we identify us, what labels we use to identify ourselves? So, what do you believe about yourself?

I am an athlete; or I am a mother; I'm a caretaker; I'm a giver; I'm a friend; I'm gay; I'm straight; I'm a woman. When we start to have these labels that we put on ourselves?

The next question that we ask is, what does it mean to be that label? What does it mean to be a woman; what's expected of me? What does it mean that I'm an athlete? What does it mean when I call myself a vegetarian or , what does it mean when I call myself a meat eating American.

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Like, think about those things that we say about ourselves. Think about those labels, how we identify ourselves? And when we identify ourselves, the next level up from there is our beliefs and values.

When we have this identity, we can start to ask the question, What does it mean to be a mother or a wife or a friend? So as a woman, what are my beliefs that I have about myself? What does that mean? What does it mean to be that?

And since most of us wear these labels with pride, what does it mean to be a good woman? What does it mean to be a good wife or mother or friend or employee? And how do those identities influence our beliefs and values, skills habits, and environment?

It's really interesting that when we change our identity, then everything else in the pyramid, everything else in our life, bubbles up to support that identity.

Our beliefs and values support how we identify ourselves, the skills, and abilities that we then cultivate out of those beliefs and values. And then the habits that we create on top of that, and then our environment automatically takes care of itself. Because of whom we believe we are.

You can see here that when we have a strong identity, that everything else on top of that becomes easy. It takes care of the rest.

Now, the problem is that oftentimes these identity shifts don't happen overnight. Occasionally they can. So, you can go from a single woman to a wife overnight, you can go from a wife or a single woman to a mother overnight. And that label right there, being a non-mother and then automatically being a mother, that identity shifts can completely change your life.

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But most of the time, these identity shifts take quite a while to actually happen. And for much of the time, we are acting quote-unquote as if, so we're play acting. We feel like we're frauds, I don't know if you have ever started running before. But when you start running, you want to tell people about it because you're like, yeah, I'm a runner. And you feel like a fraud when you're doing it.

But what's really interesting is that as you get more miles under your belt, as you become better at running, as you identify with being a runner, it just becomes part of who you are.

Now there was a period of time, when I would walk my clients through trying to figure out what our identity actually was and how it related to the other levels in the pyramid. But I don't know that that's actually really helpful anymore.

In episode **22**, called **The Power of Visualization**. I talk about creating a vision and what we're doing in this creating a vision exercise, is you're creating a vision of the future version of yourself.

What can be really helpful is if you start to identify, how does the future version of yourself identify herself? I don't know that it's really helpful to dig into what's my current identity, but we can start to look at what identity labels do I want to cultivate.

Do I want to be a life-long exerciser? Or do I want to be known as an active person or a healthy person, or what are the labels that I want to have as the future version of myself?

And then once we are able to identify what that identity shift is, the next step is to figure out. Who do I want to become? And how does she identify herself? What are her values?

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When we're trying to cultivate a new identity, it can also really help to surround yourself with a group of like-minded folks who also encapsulate and support your goals. Because the people who are currently in your circle, they may have a hard time figuring out. Well, what are all of these changes and how do I fit into that?

So, when we're trying to cultivate a new identity, it can help to surround yourself with a group of like-minded folks who encapsulate and support your goals. There's this idea called the sum of five people. And the idea behind the sum of five people is that we are, in our essence, the sum of the five people that we spend the most time with our health is the average of those five people. Our wealth is the sum of those five people. Our relationships are the average of those five people that we spend the most time with.

What you can do right now is you can look at who do I spend the most time interacting with and what is their health like? Do I want my health to look like that?

Now again, it doesn't mean that you can't move yourself outside of that, if you don't like what you're seeing. So, for example, if you want to quit smoking and you are with smokers all the time that doesn't preclude you from quitting smoking. It's just going to make it a lot harder.

What do you do if your five people aren't the healthiest people, or they don't necessarily support your goals? Are you doomed? No, why that's really important is that a lot of times when we are trying to change our behaviors. What we are really trying to do is we're trying to change the way that we think about food, about exercise, about our bodies, about who we are as people.

When we're trying to adopt these new thoughts, these new ways of thinking. Our new mindset is kind of like caring for a little tiny baby. You cannot leave the baby unattended because if you do, that baby is going to fall and hurt itself. You need to be so diligent about your new thoughts and you need to practice them.

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Because otherwise the old thoughts are going to creep in, our old thoughts are very well-practiced habits as well. They're just not physical habits, they're habits of our mind. When we have new thoughts that we're trying to change our old thoughts, our brain is used to going to the old way. What we want to do is we want to cultivate this new way of thinking.

Although, it's not impossible to change your mind set in the midst of negative mindsets, it can really be difficult. And a really good way of ensuring success in your goals. If it's important to you, is to surround yourself with people who support you and your goal.

Of course, I'm going to suggest that you get some sort of support. Either a gym, support group, class, or a coach or someone near you who 100% can help mentor you or who can help lead the way.

Or you can join the feel good sisterhood as well, my new group coaching program. And what I love about this program that I've created is that it's a six month program. And why that's important is because sometimes it takes a little while to just ease into it.

What I love about this program is that it gives you enough time to gain some traction. It allows you to relax into letting the program work for you. It allows you to let the program just happen.

Now, I've been in 12 week programs and when we have a 12 week program. We start to expect to see results very quickly because we're like, "Hey, time's a wasting, we're moving on here and I'm not seeing results." And if there's one thing that can stop weight loss, in its tracks, it's dressing out about results.

Six months gives you enough time so that there's some urgency, but not too much. And for many of the women who come to me, they've been on restrictive diet after restrictive diet. And they haven't established trust with their bodies yet, because when they start a

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new diet. The body's like, "yeah, I don't trust you, I think that you're going to start taking calories away from me. I'm not going to let go of any of these calories."

What I do a lot of times in working with my clients is helping them establish trust with their bodies and establishing a really solid nutrition program.

They haven't established trust and so many don't see results within the first few months. And there's this really great analogy of planting a seed. And when we plant a seed, so imagine planting an avocado seed or planting, I don't know, an Oak tree seed or something like that, that we don't see anything pop up on top of the soil, right?

But if we were to dig that seed up, we would see roots starting to grow. Oftentimes, the very last thing that we see on a tree is the fruit, right? That's the last thing the tree needs to be well-nourished and established and mature in order for it to create the fruit that we want to eat. Think of weight loss as that fruit.

We need to give our body time and space and nutrition in order for it to become strong and solid and mature. The way that this program is structured, you'll actually walk away having a better relationship with food exercise and your body. Which when you give your body what it needs, it will then repay you in performing at its best level.

So, if surrounding yourself with other amazing women for six months is something that you think would be helpful to help you be successful. I'd like to invite you to head over to elizabethsherman.com/groupcoaching.

To find out more about this group, it's going to be amazing. If you're listening to this in real time, we are currently enrolling, and the program starts August 2nd.

So, head on over there, check out all the details. If you have questions, I invite you to reach out to me and ask me whatever questions that you have.

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Hopefully, they'll already be on the frequently asked questions section. But if they're not, I of course, invite you to ask me any questions that you have, okay?

Okay, so have an amazing week everyone and I will talk to you next time.

Bye- bye.

Hey there! Thanks for listening!

If you're a woman who is done with dieting, but still wants to lose weight, I want to invite you to join me in the **Feel Good Sisterhood**.

The Feel Good Sisterhood is a 6 month group coaching program where you'll learn to apply so many of the tools, concepts, and skills that I teach right here on the podcast.

The way the program is structured, you'll learn crucial skills and tools that will help you to be able to pay attention to what your body needs, therefore ending emotional eating, help you gain consistency and discipline with your eating, exercise, or sleep habits.

As a result, you'll not only end up feeling physically good, but that will also lead to having more confidence, and finally freeing up all of that mental space currently dedicated to your weight, what you're SUPPOSED TO be doing, but not doing it, and then the subsequent negative self-talk that happens afterwards.

To learn more about the Feel Good Sisterhood, go to elizabethsherman.com/groupcoaching.

There, you'll be able to send me a message with any questions you have.