

Done with Dieting Podcast #34: When Motivation Fades



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With your Host
Elizabeth Sherman

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You are listening to the Done with Dieting Podcast Episode number 34.

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 and 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 there! Before we get started, I'd like to invite you to a webinar that I'm hosting on Wednesday September 29th @ 8 pm ET, 7 pm CT, 5 pm PT. It's called How to lose weight forever, and in it, I'm going to be giving away really practical tips & techniques that you can walk away with and be successful with losing weight during mid-life.

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We hear all the time from other women that getting older sucks, and that we can't eat anything - or that if we even look at a carb, we'll gain weight - but I'm calling bs on that.

As women over 45, can we eat like we used to as 25 years old? No. But if you think about it, we probably shouldn't have been eating like that to start with.

In this jam packed webinar, you'll learn:

Why you never want to eliminate an entire food group from your diet - like fat or carbs. And how eating all the foods is actually good for you?

What to do when you're not seeing results on the scale, and what you can do to get it moving again.

How to lose weight without getting tedious - like logging or weighing your food and THE ONE THING that you need to avoid in order to be successful.

Interested?

Join me on Wednesday September 29th @ 8 pm ET, 7 pm CT, 5 pm PT for an evening of learning about your body & how to finally lose weight without giving up everything you love.

Go to elizabethsherman.com/loseweightforever now - on to our regularly scheduled show.

Hello everyone and welcome to today's episode. Today, we are going to talk about motivation, and this is one of those topics that people come to me all the time and

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they're like, "oh Elizabeth, I just can't get motivated, or I lose motivation, or I'm just not motivated."

What I wanted to do was I wanted to talk about motivation today and talk about it in a way that allows us to look at what our expectations are of being motivated of doing what we need to do in order to be successful with our goals and figure out like, how to get ourselves motivated.

Because I think oftentimes, we think that we are just always going to be motivated, right? We think that motivation is something that is outside of our control. And what really happens is that motivation is a feeling. And motivation is a feeling just like happiness is a feeling, sadness, grief, contentment, boredom, those are all feelings.

And I think that when we decided side that we are going to start doing something new; when we're going to start to increase our health habits; when we think that we want to get in shape or start eating healthy, we feel motivated to do it, right?

And when we feel motivated to do it, we think we're always going to feel that way. What I want to do today is break down a few of the fallacies that we have around motivation. And then also, what causes us to lose motivation, and then how to get it back? All right.

The first thing that we need to be aware of is that when we start a new habit, or we have a new goal, maybe we're going to write a book, or we're going to remodel our home, or whatever it is that we have this idea that, "oh my God, I want to tackle this big project, and it's going to be so exciting."

Be aware that at some point, the newness of this project is going to wear off. And what we need from that point forward is discipline; is the ability to understand, "yes, this isn't fun anymore because it's fun at the beginning." We think that it's going to be fun moving forward, but at some point, it stops being fun anymore. And we need discipline to carry

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us through that unfun-ness in order to reap the rewards of whatever it is that we're doing; of whatever it is that we want to feel at the end of this goal being met.

Feelings change just like I said before, "feelings change," we're not always going to be motivated and therefore we're not always going to feel unmotivated either.

Now, here's where most of us fall down and that is that we think, that in order to do the thing that we want to do the task at hand, that we need to feel motivated. And motivation is just one feeling that we can choose from. There are lots of different feelings that we can tap into in order to get that job done.

For example, feeling disciplined, as I mentioned, or feeling committed. What about inspired, focused, or determined? Those are all really good feelings as well and we don't need motivation to be there.

Now, as I was thinking about feeling motivated to exercise, or feeling motivated to eat a better diet, or feeling motivated to do any of those things that you're listening to this podcast about. I started thinking about what makes me lose motivation. Here's the thing, I was thinking about it and oftentimes I can be motivated to do the thing.

But what happens is that thing stops being exciting. The newness wears off, and when the newness wears off, then it just becomes mundane. And I think that it's difficult for us to get excited about something that is just normal, right? It's difficult for us to feel motivated with something that we do every single day.

Be aware if you're trying to fool yourself in thinking that you need to be motivated in order to do the thing. I remember years ago, remember the TV show "Ally McBeal," I used to be a huge fan and in Ally McBeal, they used to play a lot of Barry white music. And one day on my way to work, I had just recently purchased this Barry White CD and I listened to it, and it just put me in the best mood.

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And I remember saying to one of my coworkers, when I got there, I was like, "oh my God, it was so amazing." And I'm sure I sang to him. And I was like, I'm going to listen to this every single day because it just put me into this amazing mood.

And I remember him saying to me, "well, but isn't that going to be boring after a while? And I remember just giving him this look like, "what do you know?" But in truth, we're not always in the mood to do the thing that is motivating, right? I think about that example because after a while the newness of the excitement of that CD wore off and I wasn't always in a very white mood. I know, how is that even possible?

So, be aware that we think things are going to be exciting and motivating, but we don't need to rely on those emotions in order to pull us through. Some of the other reasons that we may not feel motivated is one; sometimes we're just bored. It's the same thing of the newness wearing off.

So, for example, when you don't feel like planning your menu and sometimes, we don't feel like menu planning for the week because we need new recipes. We're bored with the food that we're currently eating. And if we're bored with the food that we're currently eating, chances of us quote unquote cheating, or saying screw it, I don't want to eat that, I want to eat something that's exciting is probably going to be pretty strong.

So, start to become aware of what are the signs that you are becoming bored with whatever routine you've set out, and I love routines. However, routines can create just a rut for us. Start to be aware of when you are getting into that rut. Another example of that might be always doing the same workout.

So, using the same weights, doing the exercises in the same order, and not really having to think about it. Don't get me wrong, not having to think about your workout is an amazing thing. But if you can incorporate a couple different workout routines that you can do in tandem or that you can rotate through, that would definitely help.

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And also, if you find that you are bored with whatever it is that you're doing. Doing something different, like taking a yoga class, or going for a walk, or whatever. Running the same route will also create boredom. Taking a new route can be one of those things that will get you out of this; not feeling motivated feeling.

Now, here's the funny thing about being bored and wanting to mix it up is I find that I also have a lot of resistance around finding a new recipe, finding a new running route, or finding a new workout. So, if you find that you are getting bored with stuff, also start to notice, am I resisting finding something new? Because when we resist finding something new, then we're not going to do it.

It's a catch 22, sometimes we get bored but then we don't want to branch out because branching out can cause all sorts of head drama, right? Now, so if you're bored, that's actually the first indication that you're losing motivation. If you keep doing the same thing without realizing that you're bored, you're going to move into burnout.

And when we are burnt out, sometimes at that point it could be too late. Sometimes we get burnt out because we do too much without rest. I often see this with beginner exercisers or new year's resolutioners is that we have to go all in. We don't give our body enough rest, we go into hard and then we feel like just because one day we're not motivated to do the thing that we're supposed to do that therefore it makes us feel like failures. Therefore, I'm never going to do it again.

So, be aware that when you're feeling burnt out, you may just need a little bit of rest. And the same thing can happen as far as eating goes. So, if you're feeling burned out with the eating the same things over and over and over again without variation, it's possible that you just need to mix that up a little bit.

And again, with both of these, the key to being motivated is to figure it out that you're bored or burnt out before it becomes a problem. So, at the very first sign of not feeling

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motivated or not wanting to do what it is that you said that you were going to do, just be aware, you may need to mix things up a little bit.

Now, when we start a new behavior or a new habit, I generally think that there are a couple of different phases to creating a habit that is sustainable that we don't have to think about anymore. We have the very beginning stages; we have the middle stages that become kind of maintenance. And then, there's the stage where it's just rinse and repeat, and we don't even have to think about it.

Now, in the examples that I just gave you, those are examples of when we're not feeling motivated, but we've already crossed over from that beginning stage into the habit circle. We've crossed over from the beginning stage into a more mature habit, okay?

What I want to talk about next is if you are in the very beginnings of creating a new habit and you're not feeling motivated, what you can do at that point?

Be aware that when we have a new behavior or a new habit, we need to approach that new habit or new behavior like it is a newborn baby. We cannot leave it, we have to attend to it, and we have to nurture it, and we have to love it. And when we move through it, as it becomes more mature and it starts taking on its own life, then we can start to back off a little bit, all right?

But in the very beginning stages, it's like being a mother where you're just making sure that everything is perfect in order for this new habit to germinate. When we're not feeling motivated within the first few weeks or months of creating this new behavior, we need to ask ourselves, am I just in a mood? Like, do I just not feel like doing this today?

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And I think that there's a very soft line between being not motivated today and then also never being motivated to do the thing again. So, if you're all of a sudden, like I never want to do that again, ask yourself, did something happen? Okay.

So, just be aware, is this something that I'm resisting because I never want to do it again or am I just in a mood? Now, if you're just in a mood, just because you don't want to do it one day does not mean that you're never going to want to do it again.

I think that it's really super important like I mentioned before, that if you aren't motivated to do something one day, that you can take the day off. However, be aware that that's a very slippery slope, because if we always let ourselves off the hook just because we don't feel like it, then the next time we're going to let ourselves off the hook again and again and again, okay?

So, just be aware, like, am I just in a mode? Do I not want to do this? And if that happens once in a while, then that's totally okay. Now, the next question to ask is, are you feeling resistance? So, are you resisting doing the thing? And if you're resisting doing the thing, ask yourself, what is the feeling that I'm feeling?

Because when we're resisting doing something, we know that we're resisting doing it, right? It's not like when I decide that I'm going to go exercise and it's in the back of my mind that it just slips my mind. I mean, that's possible but typically when we know that we're supposed to exercise and we're actively resisting it, we're like, "oh yeah, I'll do that later, I'm going to go clean my bathroom right now, okay? Or I'm going to do the laundry."

So, noticing, am I resisting doing this thing? And if I'm resisting doing that thing, why? What is the feeling? And oftentimes I find that with resistance, a couple of different feelings come up; one is worried or anxiety.

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So, for instance, if I'm supposed to exercise and I'm not, why am I feeling anxious about that? So, is it because I'm going supposed to be exercising in public and I don't want people to see me? Or is it confusion? So, I'm really not sure what to do or is it overwhelmed? Like maybe your trainer has given you this whole sheet and you're like, "I don't even know what these exercises are, like, am I doing them right?" And so on and so forth.

So, each one of those different feelings is going to be met with resistance. And when we resist, of course we're not going to do it. And for each of those, there are different techniques to get you out of it. With worry or anxiety, it's just a matter of asking yourself, is that really true? With confusion and overwhelm, oftentimes it's just doing something that's going to get us out of that, doing the bare minimums.

Now, going back to emotions, one of the questions is, do you just not feel like it? I mentioned that before, and I think that this comes up a lot with us. We're like, "yeah, I know I'm supposed to exercise; I know I'm supposed to eat vegetables; I know I'm supposed to drink my water; I know that I'm supposed to do these things; I know I said I was going to, but I just don't feel like it."

And I think that that's fine, but why don't you feel like it? And do you like your reasons for not feeling like it? Is not feeling like it, a good enough answer to blow off whatever it is that you're doing. Maybe, maybe not, you get to decide.

But then another thing to start to ask yourself is, do we need to experience the discomfort of doing the thing that we're supposed to do in order to get to the comfort? And of course, that when I don't feel motivated, that discomfort of going out for a walk when it's hot; for eating vegetables, when I'd rather have ice cream; or whatever it is. That discomfort, of course is going to percolate up to the surface but sometimes it's just not a good enough reason.

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In those cases, what is really super important is that since we are adults, we get to parent ourselves. And this is actually something that is super important. When we are young adults and our parents are preparing us for the world, no one ever tells us that we need to start parenting ourselves.

We just go out into the world and then we're like, "oh, now that I have my own apartment, no one can tell me what to do. So, I'm going to put my feet up and I'm going to eat at McDonald's and I'm going to put the rappers wherever I want." And it's not until we start getting consequences of those actions. Like, feeling terrible or getting cockroaches in our apartment that we start to realize, "oh, there are reasons why we didn't do those things."

When it comes to our health, I always like asking parents; so, if your child did this, what would you tell them? And most often parents tell me that they would tell their kids, yeah, there are sometimes things that we don't want to do. In that case, parenting yourself out of this is actually a really good technique.

Now, if this was a commitment to someone else, you're not feeling motivated, you don't want to do the thing. And you just want to do what you feel comfortable with, which are your old habits, which you know aren't serving you.

If this was a commitment to someone else, what would you do? And that's actually a really good question. So, would you follow through with it anyway? In these cases, what that's all about is talking to ourselves more than we listen to ourselves. And then, we imagine ourselves on the other side of doing whatever it is the thing that we're supposed to be doing.

If it's exercising, and I use exercise a lot in this example today because I think that exercise is probably one of the biggest struggles that most of my clients have. That we just don't want to do it because it's uncomfortable. So, talk yourself through it more

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than you listen to yourself. Imagine yourself on the other side of having done the thing that you're resisting, having done whatever it is that you're not motivated to do.

And then, think about, "oh, am I going to be motivated then?" And oftentimes, once we've done the thing, then we're like, "oh, that really wasn't that bad." That's actually my answer to you today is when we don't feel motivated to do the things that we want to be doing, we just need to do something.

Now for myself, as far as exercise goes, I always make myself show up to do the thing. What that means is every day I put on my exercise clothes and even if I don't feel like exercising, I actually have to go upstairs to my rooftop, which is where I work out and be there. And then the other thing that I need to do, I require that I do is I require that I put at least 10 minutes of work into it.

And the amazing thing that happens is when I show up for myself, when I go upstairs, and I put my exercise clothes on, and I start moving. I give myself permission to stop if after the 10 minutes I don't feel like doing it. But oftentimes what happens is I keep going because action, doing something gets us motivated, it keeps us going.

When we start moving, when we start doing something in accordance with the goal that we're trying to achieve. By sheer fact of moving towards it, by doing something, we will start to get caught up in the motivation of doing the thing. At the beginning, our brain is in another place, we're not thinking about what it is that we're supposed to be doing but think about like writing a chapter of a book that seems so overwhelming.

But once you start putting pen to paper and you just start writing ideas down, then it can be so much more motivating because you're starting to get in the zone.

Now, here's the thing is that by doing something, we start to get motivated. What then happens is the more we do something to get over our motivation, we eventually become

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consistent. And here's the amazing thing is that I no longer need motivation in order to exercise. I have the consistency, I have the track record of being consistent in my workouts day after day, week after week, month after month.

That now I feel like I have the discipline of exercising. And when we have discipline, we no longer need motivation in order to do the things that we want to be doing. And that's what gets us from the beginning stages of creating a habit or building a new behavior into, it just being part of our DNA and part of who we are.

Discipline will carry you through the times of not being motivated. And it is so incredibly powerful because once you have discipline in that area, then you will automatically just do it and you don't even need a reason or to feel good. You can do it when you're feeling angry, you can do it when you're feeling sad, you can do it when you're feeling happy, content, unmotivated, or whatever. It doesn't make a difference.

So, go out there, you do not need motivation in order to get whatever it is done. Do it anyway, show up for yourself. Action begets motivation.

Have an amazing week everyone. I will see you next time. Bye-bye.

Hey, if you enjoy listening to this podcast, you have to come check out the Feel Good Sisterhood. It's my small group coaching program where we take all this material, and we apply it. We figure out what works for us, and we don't ever look at another diet ever again.

Join me over at elizabethsherman.com/groupcoaching. I'd love to have you join me in the Feel Good Sisterhood. See you there.