

# Done with Dieting Podcast #35: Other People's Opinions



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With your Host  
Elizabeth Sherman

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You are listening to the Done with Dieting Podcast Episode number 35.

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 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](http://elizabethsherman.com/loseweightforever) now - on to our regularly scheduled show.

Hey everyone, welcome to the episode. I am so excited to bring this topic to you today because it's something that people come to me all of the time.

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So, today we are going to talk about when people in your life have opinions about your body, what you should be doing to lose weight, whether you should be trying to lose weight, what you're eating, how you should be eating, what you should and shouldn't be eating, and the list goes on. You know what it's like, right?

So many times, people come to me, and they want to change their relationship with food. They want to change their relationship with body. They know that how they're eating, isn't the way that they want to be eating because they see other people having success in listening to their body.

They know that how they're eating, isn't the way that they want to be eating, but it's what they're familiar with. And it's a little scary because their family or friend group is created around a lifestyle of gatherings around food and drinks. Yet, when they're not around their friend group, they're struggling with continuing with those habits.

And they think like, "okay, this is what I need to do." I want to do this; I need to get a hold of my weight; I want to feel better; I want to feel like I did 10 years ago; I want to have more energy; I want to sleep better; I want to be the type of person who can eat only one cookie or who doesn't get all obsessed about the leftover ice cream that's in the freezer.

You know how that's in the back of your mind? Like you're thinking about, "oh yeah, I remember there was leftover ice cream." I know that this is right and it's something that I have to do for me. But then, the people closest to them will say like the opposite. They'll say, "oh, come on, you're fine." You don't need to lose weight; you're being too hard on yourself; you're being too restrictive; live a little; aren't you being too extreme about your diet? Everybody eats and drinks a little bit too much. And anyway, it's all downhill after 45, not sleeping and weight gain are just part of the fact of life and menopause. So, you just need to get over it.

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And that can cause a lot of conflict for a lot of women. When someone's like, this is what I want, and this is the right thing for me, I want to do this. And then, the people in their lives are saying to them, "Yeah, I don't know! I think you're being a little too extreme." So, that's what we're going to talk about today, why this happens and then how to handle it?

Now, let's just start out by acknowledging that people are always going to have opinions about your body and your eating habits. They're going to have a lot of opinions about everything you do or don't do in your life.

And that's just how things work and it's totally okay. So, wanting to be in a place where nobody has any opinions about your choices or wanting to be in a place where people only have supportive opinions, opinions that are aligned with what you want is completely unrealistic. Wanting people to approve of what you're doing is going to cause a lot of head drama and needless suffering.

You're going to spend a ton of time just trying to get everybody on board and everyone to agree when you could instead be using that time and energy to really understand, why it is that you are wanting to do, what it is that you're wanting to do, whether it's losing weight or whether it's eating in a certain way.

And when we understand our relationships with our food and our body, and really learn how to change them. Wanting to get people on board, it really is a fruitless effort. It's like wanting people not to have opinions. And what I want you to focus on instead is, how can you have your own back? And when I say have your own back, what I'm talking about is being able to make decisions, regardless of what other people think and letting go of the drama, the second guessing, or the self-doubt that inevitably goes along with making decisions that other people may not like.

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What matters is what's right for you? What do you want? So, one of the things that I talk a lot about is that no one but you can decide the relationship that you want to have with food and your body. No one except for you gets to decide what healthy looks like for you. And I think that that's actually really important.

And I will tell you this, stepping into that kind of authority or agency with yourself is going to be really hard to do. It's going to be really challenging if you're always trying to get people to approve of what it is that you're doing. Sometimes they're just not going to get it, and that's totally okay.

What matters is, what you do with those opinions that people are going to offer you. People are going to offer you their opinions about your diet, it's just a given. So, I'm not talking about, do we listen to them? I'm talking about what matters is, what happens in your brain, what you think about when you hear their opinions, how do you interpret them? What do you make them mean?

When you hear people say things like you need to live a little, or I just couldn't imagine my life without ever eating a sandwich again, or you just need to lift heavy weights, or you need to move more and eat less. What are you making that mean? That's what matters.

One of the things that I teach is to really understand the habit of how we eat, why we can't stick to a diet, why we feel deprived, or why we can't resist a craving.

It's just the product of our thoughts and feelings and actions. What I call the think feel act cycle, it's always working behind the scenes and it's always working to really create whatever habits it is that we have, whether that's a habit of a craving or whether it's needing something sweet after dinner. And it happens on an unconscious level.

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But I want you to start to bring awareness to it so that you can start to see, "oh, wait a minute, my cravings don't just happen; I don't just eat that; I didn't just eat that half bag of Cheetos for absolutely no reason." It's connected to a thought that then creates this feeling inside of us.

And what we do then is all based on, how we feel or how we think we're going to feel after we do the thing. So, when we decide that we feel terrible, then or that Cheetos are going to make us feel better, then we make the decision to say yes or no to it. And the beauty of studying that our thoughts create our feelings, and our feelings then create our actions.

And really starting to understand how our eating habits, and really starting to understand how our eating habits work is that we start to understand then, "oh, it applies to everything in my life." It can be the lens through which we understand everything in the world because we have thoughts and feelings and we take actions in response to everything, not just whether or not we decide to eat.

And this includes other people's opinions about whether or not we should have a second helping, whether or not we should try the cake, whether or not we should change our eating habits, or keep with the status quo. And here's what I see happen over and over and over again.

So, someone will tell you, you should cut down on your soda or fried foods, right? And you might end up thinking and feeling a little defensive, like, "wait a minute, what's wrong with me? Why are they saying that?" And your initial reaction might be, "well, they don't know what they're talking about, or wait that's just the pot calling the kettle black, right? How many people do that?"

You know what, do they think that I have a problem? Do they think I'm fat? Is that why they're saying that? And so, then what will happen is when people give their opinion

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about whether or not we should go on a diet or what we should be eating, but then here's what will happen when people want you to be their partner in crime, right? Or don't want you to change.

They'll say things like, "oh, you should start your diet next week." Isn't that going to get in the way of the "Bunco night" or it's just one night? Because they don't want to have to change, right? Then, what will happen is in your mind, maybe you'll start to question. Well, maybe they're right.

Maybe I am making too big of a deal out of this. Maybe I am trying to be a little bit too extreme with my body. Maybe I'll miss out and maybe my friends won't want to be my friend anymore, or you'll try to convince the other person that, "no, this is totally something that I need to do or that they need to do it with us."

And that I need you to be on board with my eating habits that you need to support me or that you might get a little angry and think, why can't they just support me? But I want you to notice what's happening in these situations, regardless of the other person's opinion. So much of our energy becomes outwardly focused.

It's focused on those people being defensive towards them, trying to convince them, getting angry at them, feeling embarrassed about what they think. When your focus is on other people, it's always going to get in the way of habit change. Because habit change is a very internal and inward focused process.

The truth is, you don't need a reason to want to lose weight, you don't need any reason. You don't need a good reason to decide to change your habits, you don't need any reason at all. You can just decide that it's something that you want to do. And I think that this is the one place that the health at every size movement has it completely wrong.

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They say that we shouldn't want to lose weight. That all weight loss is because of other people's thought or fat bias. But I think that statement's only true, if we say that we shouldn't want to lose weight because other people want you to, or your doctor says you should.

But what about what you want? What if you just want to feel more comfortable? What if you want to have less pain in your joints? Then, that's totally okay, but you don't even have to have health problems. You don't have to have a health diagnosis; you don't have to be struggling. I think that sometimes we don't actually give ourselves the permission to just want something or decide to do something without having all of this evidence, or reasoning backing up our position.

We can just decide. You know what, this is what I want to do, and this is what I've decided. Because so often we don't realize we can do this, and we end up feeling like we need to defend ourselves. But you don't need to offer evidence or back anything up that you decide to do. You really don't need to offer anyone, any explanation ever.

And in fact, trying to do that is just focusing all your energy again on them. And what we really need to do is focus our energy on ourselves, on our internals, on our thoughts. That's how we're going to change anything in our lives. You're not going to change your relationship with food or your body, if you're putting all of your attention and all of your energy on all the other people in the world, that's not going to help you.

And this is really true for everything, you don't need evidence or supporting papers or good reasons to do anything. You can just decide what you want to do with everything in your life, including the decisions you make around your body. You don't need to prove that it's better, that you never eat sugar or flour again, or that you're okay to reintroduce it, or that it's fine for you to just cut down on it for a little bit of time, you can just decide.

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And this is what I'm talking about, when I say that really you are the ultimate authority that we need to pay attention to what's happening inside of us versus outside of us.

I will tell you a lot of people get confused when I say this, they'll say, we need to put a tax on cigarettes, or soda, or junk food. That'll get people healthier, and my response is, why would we want to do that? We are all adults, and no one likes being told what to do, that's why diets don't work. If I really want a candy bar and it costs \$5, I'm going to freaking buy it. Cost is not going to get in the way. We're the ones making the decision anyway, that's actually how things work.

The truth is it's always up to the person, the individual, unless we're going to lock people up and start taking away our freedoms. It's totally up to us to decide, how much we're going to eat and how much we want to physically express ourselves?

It's always up to every individual to decide what to do and trying to pretend that this isn't true. And trying to pretend that this isn't true, trying to say, "well, you know, some people can't make that decision." I actually think that that's a real problem because what I see happen all the time is that when people are told that they can't do something, guess what happens?

They rebel, and we want to prove that we can. Which is why I watched this happen with me. I watched it happen with so many other people that I work with. People are like, "yeah, I just want to say, screw it; you can't tell me what to do; I can make these decisions." But it's crazy when you think that part of the habit sometimes is just proving that we have agency over our food and it's really the ultimate irony, right?

Because if we really believe that we can do anything that we want, that we're in charge, and that we can make our own decisions, we wouldn't need to prove anything. There's so much freedom and recognizing that people are going to have opinions about your body, people are going to have opinions about how much you eat or don't eat, or what

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you eat no matter what. Either way, people's opinions and thoughts are coming your way.

That's a total given; you don't need to avoid their opinions. You don't need to get their opinions to line up with yours and be in alignment or be convinced that yours are the right ones. All you need to do is figure out, how do I have my own back? How do I stay in my own lane? How do I keep myself focused? How do I keep my energy and my free time focused on me?

If I want to skip dessert tonight, how do I know I have my own back? If I want to incorporate more vegetables in my diet, how do I make sure that that happens? If I want to stop eating cheese because it doesn't make me feel good, how do I have my own back there? And if I want to eat bread, if I make the decision to eat bread, or have a dessert, or drink alcohol for that matter, how am I going to have my own back in those cases?

How am I going to move forward without judgment of myself? How am I going to unconditionally love myself and bring compassion and curiosity to the results that I get without feeling like a big old failure? Or am I going to spend all of my time and energy, trying to convince other people that my decision is the right thing that I haven't failed or that I haven't screwed up? And that this is the new me.

It's really a matter of deciding that your opinion matters more than anyone else's. Which I know is going to feel really super foreign and uncomfortable because we women are taught that we need to doubt ourselves, that we need to seek approval from other people in order to know that what we're doing is right, that the authority over my body is outside of me, that it's not within me.

And I know this because for a long time, it felt really uncomfortable for me as well. If you're used to prioritizing other people's opinions above yours, then it will feel totally

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weird to say, "no, thank you, I don't want to eat that," when your aunt is suggesting that you eat something that she made.

So often, we're focused on if I don't eat that, will she be offended? Will she think that there's something wrong with me? Do they think I'm making the right choice? Do they like what I'm doing? Are they happy?

But really what if the only thing that matters is, am I doing the right thing for me and my body? Do I like what I'm doing? Am I happy with the decisions that I'm making around my body? Do I believe that my opinion matters the most?

Having your own back is really about trusting that only you, and that is really about trusting that you and only you, are the person that will ever know what is best for you. Your loved ones don't know what's best for you. You can listen to this podcast; I don't know what's best for you. Your doctor and the world health organization, they can give you guidelines, but they don't know what's best for you, only you do.

You are the only person because many of us live outside the narrow norm. What does it feel like to step into that type of agency for your body? If you're going to do it, if you're going to take on that type of authority and really truly believe it, it means that you have to be willing to listen to what's working and what's not when it comes to your body and leave behind getting everyone on board. You have to be willing to say, what is working and what isn't working?

If I don't like the results that I'm getting, how am I going to change it? But I really think that's why people start to think that others know what's right for them. Because no one really teaches us how to listen to our bodies and how to determine what's right for us. And then, how to make mistakes without beating ourselves up?

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We aren't taught how to relate to what's working in our life, to what's not working in our life, or a goal that we set without falling into negative self-talk. Think about how many times you said, I'm just going to eat one cookie, or you said I'm not going to have dessert, and then you don't follow through. And then, what happens the next day?

You fall into that negative self-talk trap, right? You say, "oh my God, that was so stupid, why did I do that? I should have known better; I'm never going to be successful." And we slip into this negative self-talk and that's really the problem. Doing that, blocks our curiosity and being able to explore what happened and problem solve for the future.

Because when we're in self judgment, if we're just beating ourselves up, if we're just saying that we should know better. We lose the ability to have insight about, why something didn't work? Why we're getting certain results? Having your own back doesn't mean that you have the best defense and that you can convince other people around you, how right you are.

It's knowing that people are not always going to agree about the decisions that you make when it comes to, what you should be doing? And that's okay, you don't need to be angry about it. You don't even have to be defensive; you can be totally at peace. Imagine what that would look like, imagine what that would feel like?

You have to be totally at peace with yourself as well. Totally at peace that the decision you're making is right for you. That's what's called having your own back. Other people may have different opinions and that's okay. It doesn't mean that you're making the wrong choice for you, it doesn't mean that they're right, and It doesn't mean that they're doing something wrong.

It just means that we all have different thoughts about it. And at some point, we have to decide which perspective we are going to follow? Will they be someone else's, or will

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they be mine? And that's what this whole journey is about and changing your relationship with food and your body.

It's about deciding the thoughts that you want to live with when it comes to what you choose. Not the ones that you've been conditioned to believe by celebrities, or gurus, magazines, or your family. Not the ones that you've absorbed through books, or TV and movies, and not even the ones that advertisers try to sell us.

Not even the ones I offer on this podcast, what do you want to decide? What do you want to believe? And you can really decide to believe anything you want. But you have to go to that place of a blank slate, where food and your body are neither good nor bad and eating treats aren't right or wrong. Even the place where overeating isn't right or wrong.

How little you ate last night is not a badge of honor, it's also not a sin, it's devoid of all meaning. And it always will be, because the point is knowing that none of it is a reflection of you and your worth. It's a reflection of the think, feel, act cycle. And it's an unconscious cycle that most of us don't even realize is available.

And that's what happens when people in our lives say, "oh, come on, live a little, you can eat just one." What they're doing is they're reinforcing their own think, feel, act cycle. It's fascinating, right? They are both going to exist.

What matters is in that moment, when other people have opinions about what you should be eating, and what your body looks like, or what you should wear and trust me, they will. Do you know how to have your own back? Are you just going to slip into being annoyed or defensive, or you trying to prove that you can make your own choices?

Are you wanting to convince people that you know what? I need to do this, this is good for me, you should get on board. Or can you stop and say, you know what? I totally love

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you; I respect that that's your opinion, or that's the way that you think about your body. But this is what I'm going to do, and not defend it, and not explain it, and not feel like you need a good reason for it.

But knowing that you like the decision that you're making and that there's no negative self-talk on the other side of it. Because that's the total key here, whatever you decide, whatever relationship you want to have with food and your body, you get to decide first to do whatever you want.

All right everyone, that's all I have for you today. I will see you next week, have a good one. 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](http://elizabethsherman.com/groupcoaching). I'd love to have you join me in the Feel Good Sisterhood. See you there.