

# Done with Dieting Podcast #40: Stages of Awareness



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With your Host  
Elizabeth Sherman

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You are listening to the Done with Dieting Podcast Episode number 40.

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, welcome to our podcast today. So, before I get started, I just want to do a quick little plug for the Feel Good Sisterhood. It is currently open for enrollment, and it is closing for enrollment on Friday. So, if you're listening to the podcast in real time,

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you want to head over to [elizabethsherman.com/groupcoaching](http://elizabethsherman.com/groupcoaching), and check out the sales page.

I'm telling you; I currently have a group going through this program right now, and I am blown away at the amount of not only success that these women are reporting. But also, I am super impressed with the amount of content that I am able to deliver. I have so many resources available to you.

So, not only are you going to have lifetime access to these resources, but then also I have a bunch of different bonuses that are just going to add to the richness of the program. So, again, if you are done with dieting and you want to make a habit change that makes sure that you never go on a diet again, you need to do this Feel Good sisterhood.

This is just the next step in your journey. I could not gush about it more. So, I'm telling you it's freaking amazing and walking into the new year, having a plan, already getting started on your goals, it's going to be awesome. So, anyway, head over to [elizabethsherman.com/groupcoaching](http://elizabethsherman.com/groupcoaching) and check out the sales page and all of the amazing bonuses that I have for you. All right?

Now, moving on to our topic for today. In episode number 38, I was talking about the stages of change. And I really wanted to talk also about the stages of awareness and learning in that episode but the episode was already getting a little long and so I decided to save it off into its own episode, which is what we're talking about today.

Now, you do not have to listen to episode number 38 in order to understand and get value out of this episode, but they do go together. And I think the stages of change are important to understand so that we know that failure is just part of the process of developing these new habits that we want to create. And that the number one thing that will help you to be successful in reaching your goal is the ability to be resilient. What does that mean?

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Being resilient is the ability to turn over a failure like it's no big deal and move forward with whatever your goals are. So, when you eat something that's off plan saying, "okay, I ate off plan, learning from it and moving forward.

But the stages of learning and awareness are also really important when it comes to changing our behavior too, because awareness is a practice, it's not a destination. And there are these distinct stages that we go through, when we are practicing new behaviors, when we're learning something new, and when we're in the action phase of the stages of change. And you'll see a little bit of overlap between the content that I have today and the stages of change, but I think that you'll see that there are distinct enough as well.

So, there's something called the four stages of competence. I'd like you to imagine a block that's divided up into four squares. So, there are two upper squares and two lower squares and all for sure put a graphic in the show notes. But the two upper blocks are consciousness, and the two lower blocks are unconsciousness. All right? The two left blocks are incompetence, and the two right blocks are what's called competence. Okay? So, we have these four blocks and that's how they're divided up.

Now to start, we're going to start in the lower left quadrant. And I want to take you back to when you were a teenager, and you were learning how to drive. Before you walked into driver's education, you were probably in stage one, which is what we call unconscious incompetence. Okay? That lower left-hand block.

In this stage, we have no idea what it takes to drive. We have no idea around, what the skill is that we need to acquire in order to drive a motorized vehicle. We are unconsciously incompetent in that skill. Now, this is common with many of the goals and skills that we want to cultivate. Learning how to cook, learning how to speak a foreign language, learning how to skate, or play a musical instrument. Something that we both need to think about and use our body physically. So, you can really apply this

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idea to anything that you've ever done before. Paddleboarding, yoga, running a business, or even running a marathon.

Now, stage two, the left-hand side, but above is what we call conscious incompetence. Now, this stage feels terrible. And in order to become proficient in something, we all need to go through this stage. For many of us, we dab our little toe into this area, and it feels terrible because we suck at it. We are terrible at doing the thing that we're trying to get better at. We realized, "oh, my God, there's so much I don't know about this."

And all of a sudden, we're a beginner. And what happens when we're a beginner is our brain just starts rattling off how terrible we are. The negative self-talk that happens in our head just becomes increasingly unbearable. When we're teenagers and learning how to drive, this is where they put us in the simulators. They don't allow us out on the real road. Maybe your parent takes you to an empty parking lot where there's no risk of you hitting a light pole, or another car, or anything like that. In this stage, again, we're beginners, we're just learning how to do this.

Now, stage three is the next block over. The upper right hand quadrant. Stage three is what's called consciously competent. Now, we all love getting to this stage of when we're going through the process of learning how to do things. Because this is where we start to get some wins under our belt, we start to have successes. But it's also a very cerebral process, we have to do a lot of thinking.

In this step, you're going over the processes in your head as you perform them. So, when it comes to driving, you're like, "okay, I have the key, I'm putting it in the ignition, and turning the ignition, I'm putting my foot on the brake, I'm then turning over, releasing the key, Putting the car into ignition and going through all of the processes. so on and so forth, right? And again, we don't love being in this phase because sometimes we move into unconsciousness, and we make mistakes.

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Now, what the ultimate goal is, is to move down into the lower right hand quadrant, which is the unconsciously competent phase, the lower right quadrant. This is where we don't even need to think about doing the thing anymore. We are automatically on autopilot and hopefully for most of us, that's where we are with our driving.

Now, the part in this model that is super challenging for folks is when we're in the consciously incompetent phase. And I remember when we were learning how to speak Spanish, this piece was really super difficult. I made tons of mistakes, and no one likes to make mistakes. This was something that I was talking about in the Feel Good Sisterhood. And I think that it gets really confusing for many of us, when we are in the process of behavior change that we go in and out of proficiency. We want the change so much, but our brain is in a specific habit loop.

For me, when I was learning how to speak Spanish, I didn't allow myself to speak Spanglish for example. But I totally should have, I thought that there was a rule around how I should be able to speak, and I should be able to speak Spanish fluently, even though at the age of 50, I really hadn't spent much time speaking Spanish at all.

And so, first of all understanding the expectations that we have on ourself for learning this new skill, but then also being totally compassionate with ourselves in making those mistakes. It's so incredibly important.

Now, whether we're talking about eliminating cravings, or learning to get consistent with diet or exercise, incorporating more vegetables into our diet, especially when something has been on autopilot for so long. When we want to change how we respond to that habit loop, we will master it in a few different phases.

So, I want to bring you through the phases of awareness. Initially, what's going to happen is we're going to complete the habit loop and then we're going to decide, "oh wait, I don't like how that turned out." So, an example of this might be giving into

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cravings. So, let's say that every day at three o'clock, I dive into the pantry, and I start eating chocolate, or cookies, or ice cream, or whatever it is. And after I eat all of those things, I'm like, "oh, I don't feel very good."

So, what happens is we decide that we are going to make a change. I'm not going to do that anymore. And then, the next day, we have the same example, right? The same habit loop happens. Maybe we can catch ourselves before it happens or maybe we don't. But what inevitably happens is that negative self-talk that happens in our brains, that inevitably makes us feel bad about ourselves. We should be better than this, we should be able to not eat half of our pantry. Right?

And so, what happens is we realize after the fact that we screwed up. And so, if we can get out of that negative self-talk that our brain brings us to, and we can actually get curious about it. We can approach that situation from a standpoint of nonjudgmental curiosity. What we can actually do is we can start to learn. And so, what will happen next is we will be in the middle of giving into those cravings and we'll stop ourselves and we'll say, "oh, I see what's happening, I'm in the middle of it."

Now, at that point, you may or may not be able to stop yourself, but it's still progress because you are in the middle of it, and you now have awareness of what actually happening. And then, eventually, what's going to happen is you will have the awareness, and you will put the ice cream, or the chocolate, or whatever you're giving into a way. And this is huge because oftentimes our brains will still go with the negative consequence. Our brains will tell us, "yeah, but you still gave in, you're never going to be successful in this."

But we have to notice where we're giving into the wins, where we are winning in the situation, where we are slowly progressing in overcoming this. And so, what will happen is, as we go from the backend of the craving or the behavior into the middle of it. And then, eventually we are going to get ahead of it.

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So, eventually we'll get to the place where we're looking in the pantry and our brain picks up, "Hey, you're not hungry, it's three o'clock why are we doing this?" And we will eventually get to a place where we like, "I'll give into it, I will decide consciously that I'm going to eat these cookies," or I'll say, "you know what, I'm not going to do that," and that's a win.

Now again, we are going to move in and out of these phases as well, but I think it's really super important that we notice that we are still making progress. But the key here is to notice movement in a positive direction. It's totally normal to go in and out of awareness. Which of course our brain will focus on where we're not doing it good enough, 100% normal, just notice it.

When we're trying to create better habits, I think it's super important and super helpful to know what we're experiencing is normal. That other people go through this same thing too. And that's a huge reason why I created this podcast for you and also why I created my group coaching program, the Feel Good Sisterhood. Having other people to corroborate that you are not alone, and what you were experiencing is super close to the same thing that others are experiencing is incredibly helpful and it's warming.

And since we're talking about the stages of awareness right now, I think that it's actually really super important to mention that in the Feel Good Sisterhood, we actually spend an entire month talking about awareness. It is such a powerful tool when we can be aware of what's happening, what we're doing, how we're thinking, what it is that we want?

All of a sudden, we're moving from living an unconscious existence into a conscious existence. And I think that it is so incredibly powerful. And one thing that's really neat about observing the women who are in the group right now is that we really haven't even set any weight loss goals at this point.

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Many are actually losing weight just through the process of observing and being aware of not only what they're putting into their mouths, but also how they're thinking, what is going on in their brains as they look at food that's on the table. As people offer them different meals, or different foods, or what is going on in their brains, when they think I want something to eat.

It makes us feel like we belong that we're actually doing something right. And so, We haven't even scratched the surface of what all of the tools are within the program.

Again, I want to let you know that enrollment is currently open for the Feel Good Sisterhood, it's open until Friday, October 22nd and some of the trainings that I'm currently creating are so incredibly wonderful. They will walk you through this entire process. But also, I have a bunch of other coaches who've signed up to offer many other trainings and masterclasses for the folks who sign up for this group.

And honestly, you could not go into a more supported environment. It just makes my heart so full that not only are the women who are coming into this training, going to get some of the best coaching around on body image, relationships with food, information on how to listen to your body, how to create better body awareness. But then, also move on to how to love and accept your body and improve your body image.

So, if this is something that's interesting to you, I'm telling you, you need to check it out and ask me any questions that you have. I encourage you really to take a look at the Feel Good Sisterhood.

Again, you don't have much time though, so go over to [elizabethsherman.com/groupcoaching](http://elizabethsherman.com/groupcoaching). And if you have any questions, I'm going to encourage you to fill out your application and schedule your appointment with me and we can answer all of your questions.

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Have an amazing week everyone, I'll 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](http://elizabethsherman.com/groupcoaching). I'd love to have you join me in the Feel Good Sisterhood. See you there.