

Done with Dieting Podcast #42: Boundaries



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With your Host
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You are listening to the Done with Dieting Podcast Episode number 42.

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 everyone, welcome to today's episode. So, we are talking about boundaries today, and the reason that we're going to talk about boundaries today is because two things happened this week. And I realized how important boundaries are, when we're deciding that we want to lose weight and we don't want to start becoming healthier.

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And so, yeah, two things happen, and I wanted to detail them and let you know how they play into one another. So, the first thing that happened is that in the Feel Good Sisterhood this week, we were going through our goals and vision statement. And what that is, is when we decide that we want to become healthier.

One of the first things that we need to do is we need to create a vision of what life looks like on the other side of success. It can't look exactly like, what it looks like today, because if it did, we would already be there. And so, there's a really amazing worksheet that I went through with the women in the group called the "I am statement."

And what the I am statement is all about, is it's a worksheet that says, "okay, when I'm successful in six months, or a year, or a year and a half from now," whenever it is that I can maintain my weight, my health, my healthy habits, flawlessly without problem. What are the qualities that I possess?

And when I'm taking care of myself, what that means is that we have certain beliefs and values that go along with that identity statement. When I think that I am an athlete, for example, what happens is everything else becomes easy. The beliefs and values that I have about myself. The things that I value in my life, just bubble up from me believing and identifying as an athlete.

When I have those beliefs and values, then I automatically cultivate skills and abilities that go along and support those beliefs and values. And then, I create habits and my environment then automatically takes care of itself as well. And so, typically, when we hear about a behavior change and wanting to become healthier, there's a catchphrase that says, "act as if." And what that really means is that when we act as if we're a runner, when we act as if we're a vegetarian, or we act as if we're someone who is a CrossFit athlete.

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So, whatever those labels that we put on ourselves. When we're first starting out in that area, and we're really excited to be part of that community, we have to act as if we're part of that community. And what happens then is we feel like we're playing a fraud, right?

So, if you've ever been a beginner runner, or if you've ever met someone who is newly vegetarian, they will tell you all about it. And it's not that they're needing validation, but we just want to be part of that community. And so, once we have been an established vegetarian for a long time, or we've been an established exerciser, or runner, or whatever it is that we're trying to do, it's so funny because we no longer need to tell people about it. It's just part of who we are, and it just is our new normal.

And so, going back to the worksheet, one of the things that I was guiding the women through in the group is thinking about, okay, so when I am this person that I want to become this person who doesn't have a problem with food. This person who doesn't have cravings after dinner, or this person who goes to a party, or goes to a restaurant with friends, she doesn't overeat.

What are her beliefs about herself? What are her beliefs about the people that she's with? How is she engaging in her environment that's different than who she is today. And so, as we were going through this worksheet, one of the questions on the worksheet is, who do you have to give up or what qualities do you have to give up in order to be this person?

And we were talking about that, and that piece is actually really scary. When we want to become this person who prioritizes her health, what that inevitably means is that we have to stop doing things that we're currently doing. One of the things that many of us do and identify us, is needing to please people, needing the approval of other people.

We would never when going out with a group of friends say, "Hey, you know what? That restaurant doesn't work for me because they don't serve vegetables." Think about

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how awkward that would be to say that. And in order to take care of yourself and preserve this goal for yourself, right? This person who you are going to become on the other side needs to be able to stand up for themselves. And she needs to be able to take care of herself. She needs to create these boundaries.

And so, something happened this week where a good girlfriend of mine came to town and she didn't really include me in her plans of what she was going to be doing while she was here. And it's funny, I've mentioned this before on the podcast, but one thing that I decided when I moved here is that I really did not want to get sucked into the vacation lifestyle. And it's always really curious when people do come to visit us because they're on vacation and we still have to work. And so, there's always this draw, there's always this pull to take time off with our friends and enjoy them.

However, we can't always do that because we have to work. Right? And so, there becomes this really delicate balance of needing to take care of myself, showing up for myself because it could be really easy every single time someone comes into town that I take time off of work and that means that I don't serve my clients or that I go out at night.

And then, that doesn't really serve my goals either because when I go out and I haven't seen friends for some time, there's usually going to be alcohol involved. And generally, that means that there's going to be a little bit more alcohol than I would like, or I would go to bed a little bit later than I would prefer, which means that I don't get enough sleep, and it all just becomes this cascading effect.

And so, when people come to town, I can totally plan for taking time off, and going out for dinner, and doing things like that. But I need to plan for it and that's one of my boundaries when people come to town is that I need to know what your plans are so that I can plan accordingly.

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And so, this friend did not tell me anything that she was doing. And I had set aside some time over the weekend to spend time with her. And then, I found out that she was going to another local city, she already had plans for that time. And it was really a bummer because when she showed up, she was like, "Hey, let's get together, I'm available after four." And I was like, "oh, I can't do that because I have clients until six."

And so, anyway, having boundaries is really super important because you are either disappointing yourself or you're disappointing that other person. And I have decided that it's way more important for me not to disappoint myself because I am the only one that I need to take care of. I am the only one that suffers the consequences of my behavior.

And so, when we think about holidays, and thanksgiving, and Christmas is coming up. And so, when we think about walking into parties, oftentimes, we want to be the perfect guest, right? We want to take part in whatever the host is has provided for us, we want to enjoy ourselves, and often, what that means is that we want to eat and drink, and just embrace the entire process. And what I want to offer is that potentially you can enjoy everything that the party has to offer and take care of yourself as well.

I know that when we first started living here, one of the things that I for sure do, you can ask all of my friends that I go out with is whenever I drink alcohol, I always make sure that I'm drinking water along with it. And I personally prefer sparkling water, but any water is fine.

And so, when people see me out at bars and I'm drinking water, initially they were giving me a really hard time. But that's about them, that's not about me. Meaning that it doesn't mean anything negative about me, it's just their insecurity about being able to have fun and needing to include alcohol with it. And I'm totally fine with that. I'm also totally fine with people giving me a hard time about drinking water, because again, I'm the one who needs to suffer the consequences of over-drinking if that's something that I'm doing.

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And so, let's talk about boundaries just a little bit in terms of what they are and how to set them. But more importantly, how to enforce them. Because setting boundaries is really freaking simple. All you have to do is say, "if this happens, then I'm going to do this." The more difficult part is actually showing up for yourself and following through on that promise that you've made to yourself.

So, when we're talking about boundaries, boundaries are never something that we do to control someone else. Boundaries are always going to be something that we do from a place of self-love. And that's why it's so incredibly important that when we're setting boundaries that we're doing it from the right place.

Now, in terms of my boundaries around not generally going out during the week, that is actually coming from a place of self-love because I am practicing self-care. I know that my body needs a certain number of hours of sleep. I also know that my body does not do well with excess alcohol during the week and then over the weekends as well.

And so, when I set boundaries about how many glasses of wine I'm going to drink, or how late I'm going to stay out, or anything like that, that doesn't mean anything about the people that I'm with, it has everything to do with me, and me being able to take care of myself, and the future version of myself.

And so, when we set boundaries, boundaries are generally an "if then" statement. So, when you set a boundary, what that means is "if this happens, then this is going to be the consequence." And generally, when we're thinking about boundaries, we are thinking about like physical boundaries, typically. So, if someone comes over to my house unannounced, I am going to do X. Okay?

So, for example, let's say that your mother-in-law comes over to your house unannounced every single time. You're not setting the boundary of controlling her

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because she is able to come over and do whatever she wants. You can ask her not to come over unannounced, but that doesn't mean that she's going to do it.

And so, when you're going to set a boundary, what that means is you decide that when your mother-in-law comes over unannounced and she rings the doorbell, what are you going to do? Are you going to answer the door? Are you going to not answer the door? Are you going to answer the door and say, "I'm sorry, I can't invite you in because of X, Y, and Z."

And so again, it's coming from a place of self-love and being protective of yourself, not controlling the other person. And so, in my situation, people can invite me out all the time. They can come to town and visit and do whatever it is that they do. And if they don't include me in their plans, that's totally fine. I get to decide how I want to handle that.

And so, when we're talking about boundaries, the old version of myself would be like, "oh, if someone comes to town, of course, I need to see them. I'm never going to be able to see them again."

But what this boils down to is we teach people how to treat us. Right? And so, if this happens again, like, think about dating, right? So, if you were dating someone and they called you at six o'clock and said, "hey, want to go out to dinner tonight?" If it was a new relationship, you might be like, "no, you need to give me more notice."

And the same thing is true here, that when you say, "no, I'm not available for that," people will start to understand and get on board. And so, it's the same type of thing that when you tell people, "no, this isn't good for me." If they want to include you in their plans, they totally will. And of course, they're going to want to be considerate with you.

Now, setting boundaries is really scary because what it's doing is it's standing up for yourself. And so many of us have been taught and socialized not to stand up for

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ourselves. Right? So many of us have been taught that we should be grateful for what we have. And what I want to suggest is that the way that we become grateful for what we have is setting standards and setting boundaries around what we allow into our lives.

If you are someone who wants to lose weight, this is for sure a skill you need to cultivate because when we allow ourselves to stand up for ourselves and say, "this is what I'm available to," then everything else will start to fall in line.

And what will happen is the people around you will start to have more respect because you are setting boundaries. And you're deciding that this is what I want to allow into my life, and this is what I don't want to allow into my life. And who can't respect that?

So, when you think about the person who you want to become in the future, we can't think that life is going to be rainbows, butterflies, daisies, and unicorns.

There's going to be some discomfort on the road from where we are today, to who we want to become. Standing up for ourselves, setting boundaries, changing some of those habits, those ways that we approach situations, so that we have our own back, is going to be so super freaking important.

And so, when you decide, "hey, I'm ready to do this," thinking about, "okay, so why is this going to be difficult?" Because the more we can anticipate what's going to be difficult, then we can also anticipate how we want to respond.

So, going back to the holidays, they're coming up, when you're at that holiday party and someone hands you, another drink, or someone goes to top off your wine, what are you going to do? Are you going to let them? Is that what you want to do? Maybe, but maybe not. Maybe part of taking care of yourself is knowing exactly how many glasses of wine you've drank.

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And when someone's always topping off your wine, you never really know, right? Or when someone gives you, a hard time about drinking water, how are you going to handle that? Are you going to cave and start drinking beer or wine or something? Or are you going to stand up for yourself and say, "yeah, you know what? I really need some water right now," and it's totally okay.

So, really thinking through those situations that you're going to be encountering, how do you show up for yourself? It's a really important question.

Boundaries are so important and the more that we can enforce our boundaries, not just think about setting boundaries, but then enforcing them. And again, remember that when we enforce boundaries, it's going to feel terrible. It's going to feel awkward; it's going to feel uncomfortable because we've never done it before.

And we may handle it really poorly to start, but the more that we can learn, the more that we can observe, not judge ourselves for setting those boundaries. And then, moving forward and getting better at it, the easier it will become.

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. I'd love to have you join me in the Feel Good Sisterhood. See you there.