

Done with Dieting Podcast #45: Bare Minimums



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With your Host
Elizabeth Sherman

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You are listening to the Done with Dieting Podcast Episode number 45.

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 everyone and welcome to today's episode. I am so incredibly happy that you are here. I have been getting so many emails from my listeners and direct messages, just telling me how much value y'all are getting out of this podcast.

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And I am so excited because I am almost a year in, and I couldn't believe that it's been going so well. But anyway, right now I am recording this a few weeks in advance, and by the time you get this, it will be just about Thanksgiving time. And with Thanksgiving comes lots of parties, lots of food and such.

So, one of two things happens with my clients typically around Thanksgiving. One is they give up and they go all in on Thanksgiving. And end up feeling terrible after the end of the year and in January, or like, I need to do something different because I feel awful. I've been treating my body really poorly by not getting enough sleep and over drinking and eating the wrong foods and not eating enough vegetables.

And then, there are the other people who enter the holidays white knuckling it, basically. And thinking that they are going to be able to stay on plan the entire holiday season.

And what I want to suggest today is that there's this concept, I've been using this tool with my clients for a number of years now. But it's something that might be new to you. And so, I want to introduce it to you. And it's the concept of what's called a bare minimum.

Now, the reason that we want to invoke this tool is because so often when we start a new diet, when we start a new plan, when we decide that we are going to start a new habits. We feel like we need to give ourselves a runway of six weeks, eight weeks, three months, whatever it is some arbitrary number that we have in our heads. Where we're like, "okay, if I can get these habits under control for a period of time, then I'm going to be okay."

And what typically happens is we look for a period of time in our lives when things kind of settle down, right? When there aren't too many birthday parties when we're not going on vacation, because "whoa," going on vacation means that we can't possibly start a new routine or doing something, right?

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We need everything to be stable so that we can wrap our head around our environment and wrap our head around what we're supposed to do. And so, that we can tackle all of these new habits and really gain some momentum before things start to get in the way. Right? And so, we're going along and we're gaining some momentum and we're doing all of the things.

And then, something inevitably pops up in life. And maybe it's just a busy season at work. Maybe you have a number of parties to go to, or you're going on vacation, or something pulls at your time. And you're no longer able to maintain the environment that you're used to maintaining. You're no longer able to do all of your prep work and exercise like you had committed to.

And immediately, what tends to happen with my clients and all of us as a whole is that we throw up our hands and we're like, "oh, well, I can't do what I used to be able to do or what I've been doing." So therefore, I have immediately failed, and we give up. And I do not want you to use the holidays as a reason for giving up on what's important to you.

You do not have to go from all in on being restrictive with your food to all out and eating everything in sight because you don't know when you're going to get it again. And if you've been listening to this podcast, this is a common theme, right? We have the podcast episode called all or nothing.

We have the podcast episode called B minus habits. And in both of those podcast episodes, I talk about how we can get over all or nothing thinking. And this tool that I'm going to teach you today is how I teach my clients that when life gets in the way, how we can mitigate the damage?

So, there was a period of time when I identified as a perfectionist. And I was thinking about it on my run this morning. I went for a run, and I was thinking about this podcast

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and what I wanted to share with you today. And I really started thinking about the idea of perfection. And the problem with being a perfectionist is that when we decide that something needs to be perfect. Perfection is actually one an arbitrary construct, right?

So, what might be considered perfect for me is different than what you might consider perfect. Right? And we can always do better. That's always the case in anything in life. I can always make a document prettier, or I can always run faster, or I can always eat more quote, unquote, cleanly.

And so, when we have this idea of; what a perfect meal looks like or what a perfect day looks like? The closer we get to achieving that perfect day, the more our brain then moves the goalpost. The more our brain says, "well, yeah, but that was perfect maybe six months ago." But now that we're close to it, I can see where we could really improve more.

And so, the problem with perfection is that we're never going to be perfect. There's always something more. We lose the weights and get to our ideal weight. Right? And our brain is like, "yeah, but we really don't look toned enough. And so, then we get into shape or get the visible muscles that we are looking for. And our brain is like, "yeah, but this area could still use a little bit of work." Right?

So, our brain is always going to find the flaws. Our brain is very negative. And so, in our search for perfection, there's always going to be something that we're going to not live up to. Right? Our brain is always going to come up with the "yeah, buts."

And the brain is always going to move the goal from where we thought we should be to own a little bit further. And so, with that, I want to share this great quote that I love and especially when I started working and putting content out into social media and online for people to consume. And it is "perfection is the enemy of good enough."

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And why I love that phrase so much is because we can always keep trying to make something more and more perfect. And what I love about that is that I might think it's perfect. But when I over-engineer perfection then, it might not resonate with some people. Because some people actually really like a little bit of the rawness, right? Some people want humanness and find humanness to be more of their desire.

And have you ever met someone who's just a little bit too perfect? They're not relatable. And so, here inside of our heads, we think that we need to be perfect. But when it comes to real life and being human, perfection actually gets in our way.

And what this all has to do with our habits is that when we look for the perfect time to change our habits, perfection is again, arbitrary. We decide, what perfection is? We decide, what good enough is? We get to decide, at what point is this just jump in and start going? And I think that that's really important because there's never going to be a perfect time and that perfect time isn't going to last forever.

I've been joking around with a lot of my clients recently because the lie that we tell ourselves as adults is that after next week, it's all going to be better, right? As long as I can get through this project, then it'll be smooth sailing. But there's always something on the other side of that. That's how the bare minimums came to be.

And so, these bare minimums are basically habits that you do when life isn't perfect. So, what we do is within the coaching that I do with my clients one-on-one and then also with the women in the Feel Good Sisterhood. What we are starting to do or what we've been doing is we've been creating these sets of habits that are based on the eight basic habits, right?

That are, "okay, these are the things that I do when life is actually manageable." So, when life isn't too stressful, then I know that I'm drinking half of my body weight in water. I know that I'm eating X number of servings of vegetables. I'm eating protein with each

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of my meals. I'm doing body scans. I'm paying attention to my hunger. I'm eating in response to my hunger and eating just enough, not too much. I'm not overindulging in treats.

I'm moving 30 minutes a day and maybe that movement is running. Maybe that movement is just walking. Maybe the movement is strength training. I'm actually going to the gym. And maybe I'm also managing my stress. I do my bedtime routine. I do my morning routine. And if that sounds all very overwhelming to you right now, I totally get it. But these are things that we work in. Right?

And so, based on where you are right now, you slowly start to add these habits into your day, and you track them. Right? And you say, "okay, what am I doing today?" And you decide, "okay, I'm going to preplan my meals or I'm going to do a little bit of pre preparation of my meals for the week," just so that I can get ahead.

And so, during the week, when things are smooth sailing and life isn't getting out of control. What we can do is we can do all of our habits that we're doing on a regular basis, that we know that if we keep doing these habits, they will lead to feeling better, sleeping better, having a better mood, having a better workout, and ultimately just our body rightsizing.

Now, I am a huge fan of planning. And the reason for that is because things don't happen on accident. So often, clients will come to me, and they'll say, "you know, I just didn't find the time to exercise her." I didn't find the time to plan my meals, or I didn't find the time to prep my meals.

And the thing is, is that when it comes to being intentional with your habits, we always need to plan because things don't happen. Habit change does not happen on accident. We have to plan for it. We have to be intentional about it and we actually have to execute it.

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And so, for my clients, when we're starting out planning and being overly meticulous in our planning is going to be super, super important because if we don't do that, then we're not actually going to be able to execute on the plan. And so, we need to start thinking about the future. We need to think about, "okay, what's happening today and what I need to do fit in with that?"

There are going to be times when you just have too much to do or that you're going to go on vacation and you're not going to have access to the things that you normally have access to. And so, we use planning as a method of figuring out of doing some risk assessment and doing brainstorming around what you can do. And that is actually a huge piece right there. I really want you to pay attention to that.

Because one of the keys to success is when things don't go perfectly, being able to pivot and make new decisions, the best decision that you can in the moment, and really have your back on that. And again, when I talk about having your back, what I'm talking about is not allowing the inner critic to sneak in and criticize you. So, when things don't go as planned, we really need to be able to pivot and make the best decisions for ourselves in that moment. And so, that's really where the bare minimums were born out of.

And so, what these bare minimums are is they are a set of habits that you will do because they are easy. Now, here's the thing, your bare minimums may be different than my bare minimums. And they might be different than someone else's bare minimums. Your bare minimum habits are a set of three to five habits that you know that you can do without any drama or without any problem.

Now, these habits might be downgraded versions of what you're currently doing. So, for example, if you are currently drinking, let's say 50 ounces of water per day, you might say, "okay, well, my minimum habit for water is going to be 30 ounces a day."

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If you're currently exercising five days a week at an hour a day, you might say, my downgraded or my bare minimum is that I know that I can go for a walk for 30 minutes every single day. And so, what you want to do are figure out what are the things that you do on a daily basis that are self-care. That you know, that if I'm doing these things on a consistent basis, I'm doing better than most people.

And so, one of the ways that I'm going to suggest that you get ideas for this is through the eight basic habits guidance checklist. If you haven't gotten that already I'm going to put a link for it in the show notes, but you can go to elizabethsherman.com/habits. And it's a fantastic guide and checklist of all of the eight basic things that, if you are doing these things on a consistent basis, you are going to be healthier than most people.

And so, the concept behind the bare minimums isn't necessarily that you are moving the dial or that you are moving the needle closer to where you want to go. However, what it is doing is it's making sure that the needle doesn't go backwards.

And so, sometimes what we need to do is we need to come up with a framework of those things, my bare minimums, those things that I can do as a minimum level of self-care. That if I do these things, I know that I'm doing okay by my body. And I know that I'm doing okay in order to then ramp up when things do slow down.

And so, those things might be again, drinking water, moving daily, maybe you get your vegetables into your diet through having a smoothie. One thing that I always encourage my clients to do is focus on the eat just enough habit.

We may not be able to control the food that we eat because especially during the holidays, we're going to be going to parties where someone is going to be fixing dinner for us. And so, we might not be able to say, "well, I know that I'm going to have vegetables for dinner every single night." Right.

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And so, when we have those challenges, one thing that we can do is we can totally control how much of that food goes into our body. We can control that I'm going to stop eating when I've had enough food. So, when I'm feeling satisfied versus overeating.

Another habit might be our sleep habit. We can't necessarily control how well we sleep. However, we can control what time we go to bed. And so, one of your bare minimums might be getting in bed by 10 o'clock.

And so, when we can have a set of non-negotiable habits, those things that we know that we can totally control and that they're easy for us.

Then, we can get through the periods of high stress without. Throwing our hands up and diving headfirst into fast food and not working out and saying, "oh, eff it, what's the point," because it all adds up. Something is always going to be better than nothing.

And so, over the course of your journey and your lifetime, these B minus habits or these bare minimums that you have may change because our lifestyle is going to be different. The bare minimums that my clients have when they are in their twenties, when they have more time and more freedom and a little bit more money. Might be different than those habits that we have when we were in our young thirties, when we have young children around, and where we don't have as much time.

And so, instead of going to the gym on a daily basis, maybe one of my bare minimums is I know that I can do a 20 minute workout for instance, at home. And maybe it's not the best workout, like going to the gym and participating in a class, but at least I got it done. And so, these are some of the ideas that you can walk away with and figure out like, what are my three to five habits that I can do on a consistent basis?

During the holidays that I know that if I do these things, that in January, I'm going to feel a heck of a lot better than if I just don't quit. Right? Because that's really the goal. As long as we're unwilling to quit on ourselves, we can still start January and feel pretty

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good about where we are. Now, does that mean that we are going to be more fit in January if we do these bare minimums? Maybe, but maybe not.

But isn't that better than just giving up. And so, I want to encourage you to sit down and think about what are three to five things that I know that I can do on a consistent basis. It might not be a daily basis, but it might be a consistent basis. So, maybe it's strength training three times a week, and then walking the other day.

And I know that when I do these things, I am going to be in better shape than if I don't. Okay. But what can I still commit to myself in doing so that I'm again, not moving the needle necessarily forward. And for some of you, that statement right there may sound terrible. You might be like, "why wouldn't I want the needle to move forward."

And the answer to that is, "well, okay, maybe you can't move the needle forward, but it's a hell of a lot better than just giving up on yourself? Because that's what we tend to do when we can't be perfect. We're like the brain goes from, "oh, well, I can't be perfect because I have all of these parties and I can't control the food. So, "eff it," I'm just going to eat everything and that's not helpful.

And so, through these habits, what we can do is we can really start to have a commitment to ourselves and really start to change our relationship with ourselves. There are two different tracks here, right? There's the "I'm all in track," and there's the "I'm all out track."

And what I want to suggest is there might be a middle track, which is our bare minimum track. And that's the things that I can do on a daily basis. That again, might not move the needle forward but they are good enough. Okay.

So, that's all I have for you in this episode. I hope you go out and find out your bare minimums. And when you do, I would love to hear what they are? Find me on social

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and tell me, what are your bare minimum habits? Okay, that's all I have for you today. Have an amazing week, have an amazing holiday, and I will see you next time. Bye-bye.

Hey, Thanks for listening.

If you're done with dieting, but still want to create healthy habits that are simple, easy to do, & sustainable, I've got an amazing resource for you.

The 8 Basic Habits that healthy people do Guide & Checklist has everything that you need to get started.

And if you do these 8 things, not only will your body be the right size, but you'll probably be healthier than most people you know.

To get your copy of the guide checklist, go to elizabethsherman.com/habits to get started today.

See you next week.