

Done with Dieting Podcast #47: What is Truthful vs Helpful?



Full Episode Transcript

With your Host
Elizabeth Sherman

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You are listening to the Done with Dieting Podcast Episode number 47

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 everyone, welcome to today's podcast. So, before we get started with today's podcast, I have a couple of announcements for you. I'd like you to get them on your mental calendar for the upcoming year.

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And the first is I'm going to be hosting a webinar on January 3rd. And it's all about how to finally be successful in your new year's resolution. And maybe you're someone who is like, "oh, I don't do new year's resolutions." But if you are someone who's like, "you know what?" This year I want it to be the year that I give up dieting altogether, or I finally get my fitness in gear, or I finally stop overeating at night, or whatever it is.

What I want to do is I'm going to be hosting a webinar and it's again called, how to finally be successful with your new year's resolution? And in that, I'm going to give you all of my tips on how to really be successful.

I have 15 years' experience with helping adults through the holidays and I've seen every single mistake out there. And so, I'm going to share with you what some of the biggest mistakes that I see people make and how to avoid those pitfalls because I want you to be successful. Life is way too short to be thinking about your weight and have it consume any more of your mental energy than it already is.

So, January 3rd, put it on your calendar. And if you want to be notified of the information, when it becomes available, I'm going to invite you to sign up at elizabethsherman.com/nyr as in new year's resolution. Again, that's elizabethsherman.com/nyr and I will give you all of the information that you need about how to be successful in 2022. Okay? So, that's my first announcement.

The second announcement that I want to let you know about is that in January of 2022, I am going to be launching the next cohort of the Feel Good Sisterhood. And if you aren't familiar with it, the Feel Good Sisterhood is my amazing six month group coaching program.

And in it, I give you all of the resources that you need in order to be successful with never having to go on a diet again, improving your relationship with food, improving your relationship with your exercise, improving your relationship with your body.

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So that you don't have to consume all of your mental energy on what should I be eating? Can I eat this? Can I eat that? Just be done with it once and for all, and you will never have to go on a diet again, if you go through this program and if you do the work. So, just wanted to get that onto your mental calendar.

Again, if you're interested in the Feel Good Sisterhood, you can get on the waitlist there at elizabethsherman.com/groupcoaching, and I will send you information once it becomes available. So, look for that around the end of January.

Now, moving on. What we're talking about on today's podcast is our beliefs. And when we talk about beliefs, let me define that first. So, beliefs tend to be thoughts that we have, sentences in our mind, things that we think about on repeat. So, when I think about a belief, it's something that keeps coming up for me. It's a sentence that I've thought about multiple times, and I generally believe that it is true.

Now, some of our beliefs will serve us and some of our beliefs won't. When we think about beliefs that serve us, we think about beliefs that are comforting. When we think about beliefs that don't serve us, we think about the term called limiting beliefs.

And I remember when I first heard this term, I had a really hard time wrapping my head around it. I understood the concept that we have beliefs or these thoughts that we have in our brain that we think about on repeat. But I really had a hard time being able to tease out my own limiting beliefs.

And I think that that's actually very common because we are too close to it. It's like, not being able to see the forest from the trees, right? Not being able to see through our own thoughts, to be able to point to them and say, "Hey, wait a minute, that's not true."

Now, through coaching my clients, one of the things that I do as a coach is I'm able to help them examine the thoughts that they do have the beliefs that they do have. And I

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allow them to define, what those beliefs mean? Because it's so interesting how often we will say things that we believe is true. But then, when someone asks like, "well, what does that mean exactly?"

For example, I don't make enough money. If I were to think that thought, what does enough mean? It requires the brain then to put a value on that. Okay, I'll make enough money, when I make, let's say, a hundred thousand dollars. Okay. So, is that really true?

One very common belief is I'm not pretty enough or I'm not thin enough. So then, what I'll do as a coach is I'll ask my client. So, when will you be thin enough or pretty enough? At what point does not enough turn into enough?

And what's so interesting about this idea is that it's never enough. So, anyway, that is just an example of these beliefs that we have, the sentences that we keep thinking in our brains. That when I get to a certain weight, then everything will be okay. Right? That when we have these beliefs that they change how we look at the world around us.

And so, that's really what this whole podcast episode is about is being able to understand how our beliefs color, our perception of what is happening in the world around us, our relationships, as well as our processions of ourselves.

For years, I held the belief that I just wasn't a good student And it's so interesting to look at my past and how I came about that belief. And as a 53 year old woman now, looking back at when I was 16, what happened was that I wasn't performing well in school. My parents took me to a bunch of doctors and had me tested. And what they came back with was that I had dyslexia.

And what was really interesting about that is as a young child, the diagnosis of me having dyslexia never really sat well with me. Because what we know about dyslexia is that

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simply put, between the brain, and the eyes, you see different things on the pages, and it makes it difficult to read.

I never had that problem. I never saw words as being different than they actually are, "I think." Of course, we don't know what anyone else's reality is. But what's really interesting is that just recently over the past year or so, I've been doing a lot of research on ADHD, also known as attention deficit hyperactivity disorder, And how that is different in women than it is in men? 45 years ago, ADHD was not a diagnosis that we had for kids. Kids were either hyper or rambunctious. But they weren't diagnosed with ADD or ADHD.

And what we know now is that symptoms of ADHD in women are very different than the traditional symptoms that young boys experience. Where they're hyper, they're distracted all the time, and they're constantly moving around. Where young girls are more likely to be daydreamers, and not be able to focus, and things like that.

Anyway, my point in telling you this is that no one really knew how to treat me. And I didn't know how to treat myself. As I went through the years, I learned some coping skills to learn how to deal with learning better. But I still had this story in the back of my head, this belief, that I just wasn't a good student. and then the subtext that I wasn't smart. And it wasn't until I started studying for my personal trainer certificate.

I was so worried about it because I really needed to do some studying and I really needed to pass this material because it was something that I really wanted to do. And what was so fascinating to me was that I realized that I could be a good student. I really did have the ability to learn new material. It was just that I was never given the skills to actually learn how to learn.

And now, today, I've completely reversed that story that I had, that belief that I had in the back of my head, that I was a bad student. Now, if I had taken that belief of, I'm just

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a bad student and really 100% believed it, then what would have happened is I never would have gone onto an advanced degree or gone back to school. Because I would have had the belief in my head that, "well, I'm just a bad student. I don't know how to learn new material, and I don't want to do that, I don't want to fail."

Therefore, I can't do that next thing. So, limiting beliefs keep us stuck. And sometimes we don't even realize, what they are?

Now, the thing about limiting beliefs is that we believe that they're actually true. So, for a long time, I believed that I was just a procrastinator. I believed that I was lazy. I believed that I just wasn't a good student. And what's really interesting about beliefs is that we say them as if we're just reporting the weather. We're just stating the facts, "well, this is just true, Elizabeth."

And what happens is with my clients, when they tell me a story about what's happening with them, they do the exact same things. We all do this. What I want to do first is I want to share some of the beliefs that I've heard my clients say, that are just that, they are only beliefs.

And what we need to do next is we need to look at these beliefs through the lens of, "okay, so they may be true, but are they helpful?" when we think about, "well, I'm just a procrastinator, or I'm just lazy, or I'm just not a good student." The way that we say those things, makes it seem like, it's a fact.

And when we wear those labels of, I'm lazy, or I'm not a good student, or I'm just not good at math, there's no room for someone to argue with you. Like I could say, "I'm not good at math." And someone could say, "really?" And they'd be like, "oh yeah, let me prove it to you." Right?

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When we have these beliefs and stories about ourselves or other people, some of the labels that we use are really helpful. Like, I'm a good dresser, I'm really funny, I'm the life of the party, I'm a really good worker, or I am dependable, I'm a good friend. Like, some of those labels really help us.

However, some of the labels that we have for ourselves like, I can't control myself around eating. Like, we say that, like, just a fact, I just can't afford it, he's a jerk, I don't belong, or I'm too old. That's becoming more and more as we age, as we move into the perimenopause menopause years, we tend to have those beliefs, right? That I'm coming to the end of my years, and so therefore, I'm too old to learn anything new.

Like, these beliefs that we have really do not serve us because what they do is they block any sort of creativity, or curiosity, or problem solving around it. Like, when I think, I just can't afford it, what happens is I don't ask myself, how can I afford it? Whatever it is, whether it's a watch or a nice dinner out, or whatever.

So, when we have this belief that I can't do this, or I'm not able, or that's just the way things are, it doesn't allow us to create any problem solving. It doesn't allow us to look at the problem in any other way, other than this is just the way things are.

Now, again, the problem is that our brains can come up with lots of evidence as to why this is true. So, if I hold the belief that I'm just lazy or that I'm just not good at math. My brain can immediately come up with a whole host of evidence, a whole host of different events where this in fact was true.

Therefore, this thought becomes much more believable and much more true. However, what I want to introduce you to is something that's called cognitive bias. I've talked about it on the podcast before. cognitive bias is our brain's way of being right.

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Our brains love certainty. Our brains love being correct. Our brains also don't like gaps in stories, and they like to fill in the gaps in a story with our own interpretation. Let's give an example of this. So, let's say that, when I was in third grade, I did terrible on a test.

Therefore, my brain just came up with, "well, Elizabeth, you're just not a good student." And I started then to believe that. And when we believe that I'm not a good student as a child, without being able to question that, right? What happens then is when I go into future tests, of course, I'm going to think I'm not a good student. I don't test well.

Therefore, what's going to happen when I sit down and start taking a test. I'm not going to do very well. By having these beliefs, what they do first of all, is they create a self-fulfilling prophecy. So, when I believe that I'm not a good student and when I believe that I don't test well, then what happens is I actually don't test well. I don't want to study because I have this belief that it doesn't matter anyway. Of course, I'm not going to apply myself.

I think about all of those years that I held that belief that I just wasn't a good student. And how it could have turned around if I had really done some the thought work around it? What happens then is when we hold a belief, the brain then goes out and it seeks evidence to be correct. The brain loves certainty, the brain loves being right.

When we have this idea and we hold it as true, the brain will then go out and seek evidence for that belief to be true.

Now, let's talk a little bit about where these beliefs come from? , what's really interesting is that many of the beliefs that we hold, we didn't even come up with ourselves. We took on the beliefs of those around us. Our brains aren't fully formed by the age of seven. What happens is in those very early years, we just take on the beliefs of those people around us.

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We take on the beliefs of our parents, or older siblings, or teachers, or preachers, whoever it is who's around us. First of all, who has the power and knowledge that we don't have. We aren't able to question that. But then, also those people like our parents may say things like, "oh, you're just the funny one, you're just the pretty one in the family," or whatever the label is that we have within our family unit.

Then, when we become that label, when other people label us those things, we become them. And some of those labels are actually very helpful but some of them aren't.

Another place that we get these beliefs from is the brain is very narcissistic, meaning that everything is about us. And then, it also doesn't like gaps in stories. So, when something happens, let's say, that a friend breaks up with you or a boyfriend breaks up with you. And you're like, "wait a minute, what happened?" And they don't give us any explanation let's say, then our brain will immediately go to, "I am unworthy, and I deserve this," and make it all about us, and what we did wrong?

Like, anyone who's an over-thinker is going to identify with this because we analyze the situation, and we think about it, and we try to figure out what we did wrong. And through that process, we also take on all of the responsibility of that situation.

Another place that we get beliefs from is news stories from the media. So, I remember back in the eighties, there was a huge news story that went around that said women over the age of 30, have a better chance of being hijacked in a plane crash, then getting married.

And all of a sudden there was a collective freak out of all the women who are over the age of 30 that, "oh my God, if I don't get married now, then I'm never going to get married." think about how the media can influence what our thoughts are on, what's happening in the world? Especially around COVID, around mask wearing, around politics.

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And when we have these beliefs, then, we don't decide on our own. We then, assume the beliefs of the other people who are around us. They say things that kind of make sense. And so, we all of a sudden decide, "oh, well, that must be true too

The last place that I want to share with you, that we will often get limiting beliefs from is allowing those people to take up space in our heads. There's this idea that I share with the women in the Feel Good Sisterhood, which is creating what's called a board of directors. And in this exercise, what we do is the future version of ourselves is the CEO of our future. They're deciding how our life is going to go.

But in those instances where we are uncertain, where we don't have the skills that we want to have. What we can do is we can appoint what's called, a board of directors. And in this board of directors, these people can be real, or they can be imaginary.

But basically, what we do is we have a clue into how these other people think. And so, we can think about, okay, so let's say, that I was on your board of directors and you're trying to decide what to eat at a restaurant. You might think, "well, what would Elizabeth do?"

And when we're thinking about this board of directors, sometimes people sneak onto our board of directors that we really didn't intend to appoint. Those people might be like a mother, or a father, or a friend. That person may love us, but they might not be the best person to take advice from.

When we think about our belief system, it's always really important to think about who is actually saying that. We take our beliefs from all of these different sources. And so, it's really helpful to start asking yourself, "okay, I believe that that's true. But the next step there is, is it helpful? Is it helpful for me?"

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If I believe that I'm not good at math, if I believe that I'm not a good student, those beliefs will probably keep me stuck, if I want to advance in this world. They might not, but they might. And so again, asking yourself, "okay, I believe this about myself, or I believe this about my partner." And when we say these things like they're facts, like that person is just selfish. Is that helpful? Is it helpful when I believe those thoughts? And when I believe those thoughts, I get to decide whether I want to continue believing them.

I'd like to introduce you to a body of thought work from a woman named Byron Katie, and it's called the work. And if you've ever done any personal development work before you may have run across her. But she does a lot of thought work. And what's so incredible about her is that she has distilled her work down into four main questions and then what we call a turnaround.

The four questions are actually very simple, and you can Google Byron Katie the work, I'll put a link to it in the show notes. But the four questions are, is it true? Asking myself, "I'm just a bad student, is that really true?" And I say, "yes, I think that it is true."

The second question is, can you absolutely know that it's true? And that's really where we're teasing apart the difference between what is actually a fact, and what is a belief, or a made up story?

There's a sign in my office that says there are facts and everything else is drama. And how I define a fact is, if we can argue it in a court of law. So, if I believe that I am lazy, or if I believe that I am a bad student, can I stand in front of a judge and prove those things? How do you prove that you are lazy? How do you prove that you are a bad student? What's the measure for that? Is it grades?

Because I don't think that that's true. And can you absolutely know that this belief is true? It really starts to add in some doubt about it.

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So, the third question is, how do you react? And what happens when you believe that thought? This is so key because when I believe that I'm lazy, I don't really have a lot of energy to go do things, right?

When I have the thought that I'm lazy, it really doesn't require anything of me. It doesn't make me want to go out and be productive. It doesn't make me want to tackle my to-do list. What it makes me want to do is actually sit on the couch and watch TV and probably eat a bunch of stuff. Right?

When we evaluate how these thoughts are in our brains, and then what they cause us to do, what actions they cause us to take? That's really where things can get really interesting. So, what do you do? How do you react? And what happens when you believe that thought.

This is so much of the work that I do with my clients, because when we start to digest and really take a look at how we think about ourselves? How we think about food? How we think about other people? What happens is when we start to tease apart those different thoughts and really think about how believing these thoughts makes us react, makes us act and do things. That's where the real work is.

The fourth question is, who would you be without this thought? Now, I love this question as far as well, any of these false beliefs, right?

And when I believe that I'm lazy, I feel really down on myself, I feel just lethargic. I don't feel like I want to do stuff. I just want to sit in my pajamas and watch TV. Who would I be without that thought? It feels very light, right? Like, when I think I'm lazy and then I'm like, "oh, I don't have to think that thought." I can think something completely different. I can believe that I'm not lazy. That maybe, we all have lazy times. Then, it opens up this entire world.

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We can use these four questions in any plethora of food, or exercise, or health-related areas as well. So, let's say that I have this belief that I hate exercise. I hate to sweat. And so, "is it true? Yeah, it's true." Can you absolutely know that it's true? Well, I think it's true. Is there any time that it might not be true?

And so, I know that I really do love the feeling of exercise. Right? And there are times that I do like to sweat. Like, when I'm in a sauna, for example. How do I react? And what happens when I believe the thought that I hate to exercise? When I believe that thought, what happens is; I don't really feel like going for a walk, do I? I don't feel like going and putting on my exercise clothes. I don't feel like doing these things.

And who would I be without that thought that I hate to exercise. I might be someone who thinks that exercise is okay. I love these four questions. Okay, let's do another one.

So, the next one is that I can't control myself around food. Or you might believe that there are certain foods that you can't control yourself around. So, for example, guacamole, or brownies, or cookies or something like that. Like, I just can't control myself around sweets, or pastries, or chocolate. We all have some of those thoughts. Right? And so, is that really true?

And when we start to question, is that really true? Can I control myself around chocolate? Well, in the morning, I can control myself around chocolate. In the evening, when my defenses are down and I'm tired, maybe I can't control myself around chocolate.

So, really asking the question, is it always true? And then, how do I react and what happens when I believe this thought? When I believe that I can't control myself around chocolate, or brownies, or cookies, what happens is I give up, I don't even try to control myself. Right? And then, who would I be without this thought, that I can't control myself around chocolate?

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Like, who would I be if I believed that I could potentially control myself around chocolate. It's an interesting concept. Right? When we start questioning these thoughts that we have like, "okay, it might be true, but again, is it helpful?"

Is it helpful to believe that my partner doesn't support me? Is it helpful to believe that I just can't afford it? Is it helpful to believe that I've ruined my metabolism after years of dieting? Is it helpful to believe that once you're in menopause, that you can't lose weight anymore? Is it helpful to believe that I don't like to cook? Okay? Like, really asking yourself, what the cost is of having some of these beliefs.

We can change the stories that we tell ourselves. The challenges being aware of the lies that we tell ourselves, because these are all lies. Anything that isn't a fact, that isn't a hard and fast circumstance that you can argue in a court of law; is really just your brain coming up with an objection. And the key to being successful in anything you want to do is to stop believing those things that are not true.

If someone else can accomplish, what it is that you want to do? Then, we know that it's no longer a fact and that it's only something that we've come up with in our brains.

Now, how to become aware of our limiting beliefs? The first thing is we could start writing. So, that's something that I teach my clients to do and the women in the Feel Good Sisterhood is to do something called the "thought download."

Where all you do is you just write down all of the things that are coming up in your brain. And then, you start to evaluate it. And you can do that by going through each of those four questions on every single statement that you write in your thought download.

But one of the other ways that we can start to evaluate, what our limiting beliefs are; is our limiting beliefs are typically the same beliefs of those within our family unit. Start to

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observe the beliefs that other people have, and what they say around you, and whether you agree with them or not.

And when you can start to observe other people's limiting beliefs, you can start to pay attention to what yours are. It's easier to notice what they are in other people.

The next step is oftentimes, we'll want to completely change our limiting beliefs from what they currently are to something on the other side and make them absolutely positive. So, in my example of, I'm not a good student, what we can do is we can start to create better thoughts.

In episode number 24 of the done with dieting podcast, called affirmations are BS. I talk all about how to change your belief system and going through a process that's called ladder thoughts with bridging phrases. What we tend to want to do is go from "I am a bad student" to "I'm a great student." And we don't necessarily want to just flip the negative statement to a positive statement because it's too unbelievable.

But what we can do is we can ease ourselves into a more positive statement through doing something called ladder thoughts and bridging phrases. So, if that's something that you're interested in learning more about, I would highly recommend that you listen to episode number 24, called affirmations are BS. And I'll put the link to that in the show notes as well.

What we're doing with ladder thoughts and bridging phrases is; I would say something to the effect of "I'm considering that maybe I'm not a bad student or I'm open to the idea that I could be an okay student." really softening that phrase until we start to seek evidence. Again, going back to cognitive bias that when we start to believe these new thoughts, then our whole perception and belief system can change as well.

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Now, again, going back to beliefs for just one second here is that we don't have to change all of our beliefs. We just want to change those beliefs that aren't serving us anymore. We want to change those beliefs that are keeping us stuck and moving us forward.

So, when you start to notice that you have a belief that is not serving you anymore. It can actually be really helpful to start asking yourself, "okay, so how can I believe something a little bit different and where did I get this belief from in the first place?" Do I want to keep believing it?

Because what's the harm in believing something that's more positive? At least with believing something that's more positive, you have a chance of actually making it come true. Whereas when you believe something that you don't want to believe, that's keeping you stuck. You actually have a 0% chance of moving beyond that. That's all I have for you today.

Oh, and don't forget January 3rd, I'm hosting a webinar called how to finally be successful in your new year's resolutions. Again, that's January 3rd and if you want to sign up and get information about it, go to elizabethsherman.com/nyr.

And if you're interested in the next cohort of the Feel Good Sisterhood, get on the wait list now because I do give something fantastic to those who are on the wait list. And you can sign up for the waitlist by going to elizabethsherman.com/groupcoaching.

Have a great week everyone and 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.

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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.