

Done with Dieting Podcast #79: The Skill of Problem Solving



Full Episode Transcript

With your Host
Elizabeth Sherman

[Done with Dieting Podcast with Elizabeth Sherman](#)

Done with Dieting Podcast #79: The Skill of Problem Solving

If you've ever had the experience where you hit a roadblock and totally gave up, you are not alone. I think it happens to all of us that there's a little voice in our head that says, I guess this just wasn't meant to be.

But today, we are talking about the skill of solving problems. The skill of solving problems is a skill that will help you not only in your health habits, but it'll also help you in other areas of your life.

See, what happens is we all know what we should be doing. The problem comes up when something gets in our way, and we don't know how to deal with it. The skill of solving problems is a skill that is going to enable you to work through that problem, and then be able to apply it when this situation happens in the future.

You need to listen to today's episode. If you've ever had a problem, whether it's with eating, or exercise, or sleeping, or even your personal life. Today's episode is a must listen.

Let's get started.

You are listening to the done with dieting podcast. The podcast for women in midlife, who are done with dieting, but still want to lose weight and feel good in your clothes.

You know that diets don't work long term. But you feel like there's this secret that everyone else knows that you just haven't figured it out yet.

I am your host, Elizabeth Sherman. And I've helped hundreds of women get off the diet roller coaster, change their relationship with food, exercise, and their bodies.

Done with Dieting Podcast #79: The Skill of Problem Solving

Through this podcast, my goal is to help you too.

Welcome. Let's get started.

Hey everyone, welcome to this episode of the done with dieting podcast. We are on episode number 79. In last week's episode, I was talking about the skill of building trust.

And today, I'm going to be talking about the skill of problem solving. Because I think that when we talk about losing weight and being healthier, so many gurus and fitness professionals and so on and so forth. All of those folks, we know what we should be doing.

We know that we should be eating more vegetables. We know that we should be drinking more water. We know that we should be exercising and things like that. And we know that we need to develop habits. Habits are a really big thing, especially when you think about James Clear, he talks a lot in atomic habits about building habits that help you to become successful.

But I think one of the things that really is downplayed when we're talking about losing weight and becoming healthier is skill and ability formation. I really don't think that we talk about that enough. Because when we're talking about for example, making decisions about eating. Those decisions don't happen in a vacuum.

I'm sure that so many people here, you might be listening right now, and you do not live in a vacuum. You have other people who are a part of your life. You have children, you have partners, you have mothers and fathers, and family members, and friends. And so much of our culture is built around eating. And built around eating food that isn't always the best for us.

Done with Dieting Podcast #79: The Skill of Problem Solving

There's a concept called the five people. Meaning that we are the average of the five people that we spend the most time with. And so, when you look at weight or income levels. We generally find that those are pretty much the same around all of the people that we hang around with. Like attracts like, right?

And so, when we talk about doing something that's so drastic, like changing our eating habits or changing how we eat. That's going to be scary. Navigating tricky situations, like going out to dinner or having family get together is going to depart from how we normally do things. And it's a skill.

So, there's skill involved in being able to set boundaries. And then, not only set boundaries but reinforce those boundaries. So, establish them. And then, there's also skill involved in handling conflict. Like we can't just take it, and then feel terrible about ourselves.

What typically will happen is we put off making that decision addressing the problem. And then, it eats us out from inside. And what we want to do is generally for those of us who are very familiar with emotional eating, we will often stuff that down. Right?

And so, we talk a lot about what to do. We talk a lot about the habits that we need to establish. But we don't really talk a lot about the skills that we need in order to have lifelong success for anything.

And so, whenever we have a goal, whether the goal is to become more fit, or to eat better, or drink more water, or whatever the goal is. We know that the goal can be broken down into a series of skills that we need to learn. And the process of building up a skill, because all skills can be learned, right?

We're not born out of the womb with learning how to make delicious food or play a musical instrument or anything like that. Those are practices. Practice is what actually

Done with Dieting Podcast #79: The Skill of Problem Solving

builds up the skill. So, when we have a goal, then that's broken down into skills and then, we feed a skill through practice. And practice is really simply just a series of pointed action towards the practice.

So, when we talk about a yoga practice, we talk about doing yoga on a daily, weekly, whatever basis. When we talk about the practice of building self-trust, that practice, that skill of self-trust is built over days and weeks and months of doing something, committing to it, following through with it, and then having our own back on the other side of it.

And so, today I want to talk about the practice of problem-solving. And I was just recently introduced to this idea from my coach and mentor. And I thought that it would be a really amazing topic to share with you here.

Because when we're talking about problem-solving, what I see happen with so many of my clients is that we hit a roadblock, we hit a barrier, and we just give up. Problem solving is the idea that we have a problem, and we solve the problem.

We come up with ideas of how we can get around this problem. So often, I see folks who say, oh, well, I had planned on making dinner, but then something happened where the family overrode me and they said, no, we want to have pizza instead. So, that's just what I did. Or they'll say something like, my day just got too busy at work, and I just wasn't able to exercise. So, I just didn't.

When something is so important to us that we hire a coach, or we join a group coaching program, and we really commit to it. We at least owe it to ourselves to put a little effort in, in order to get over those road humps.

And so, what I want to share with you today is this idea behind problem solving. And I'm going to give you a couple of different examples of how to apply it into your life.

Done with Dieting Podcast #79: The Skill of Problem Solving

And I also want to share that being good at problem solving, breeds confidence. Breeds confidence that you can then get make anything happen.

If you are good at problem solving, you can do anything that you want to. Problem solving is a skill that will help you not only in eating and exercising and your health. But this skill of problem-solving will also help you in your personal life, in your relationships, whether they are romantic or platonic or familial.

So, all of the problem-solving ideas that I'm going to be sharing with you here today are going to be transferable to other areas of your life. And when we have, I don't want to say fewer problems, but when we can get rid of those problems that we really can get rid of that are low-level problems. When we can get rid of those, then we can focus our brain power on the big stuff. Like the really big things that keep us awake at night.

When we believe that we are good at problem solving, that we can actually figure stuff out, it completely changes our approach to any problem. Then, we can also use it on those things that keep us awake at night.

There's a book by a woman named Carol Dweck, it's called mindset. And I love this book. I read it years ago. And what this book is about is generally there are two different types of mindsets. And what we mean by that is there are two different types of mindsets, one being the fixed mindset and the other one being the growth mindset.

The fixed mindset is the belief that all skills and abilities are fixed. So, I am either an athlete or I'm not an athlete. I am either gifted in music or I am not. I am an artist or I'm not. I'm good at math or I'm not. Versus the growth mindset is the belief that I can learn anything. And when you start to believe that you are a good problem solver, that actually goes into the growth mindset.

Done with Dieting Podcast #79: The Skill of Problem Solving

And I will tell you that once I read this book, it completely changed how I viewed myself and how I viewed my obstacles and my roadblocks. Because I then knew that as long as I practice something, as long as I kept at it and tried it and kept going at it, that I could accomplish anything that I wanted. And this skill that I'm going to talk about today, problem-solving. If you learn how to solve problems, then it will also open up your world as well.

Now, I've talked before about when we fail and what we make it mean. And what I want to share with you is that failure really is only what we make it. But generally, what happens is when we think we failed, our inner critic starts piping up. Our inner critic starts telling us all of these things that we did wrong, and why we suck, and why we're never going to make it, and dah, dah, dah, dah, dah.

And I've mentioned before on this podcast, if you've ever talked to me before. That the one thing that judgment blocks is what's called nonjudgmental curiosity. And nonjudgmental curiosity is really the approach that we want to take whenever we've messed up. Whenever the expectations that we had going into a situation don't match the reality.

So, when something happens and things don't go as planned, what happens is we will often judge ourselves. And when we judge ourselves, what that does is it stops us from learning. And what I want to share today is these five steps for problem solving will allow you to get over any judgment.

Because what it does is it immediately brings us into any problem-solving ability. Once we can start problem-solving, then what happens is through these five questions, we will start to explore how I can make this better for myself in the future. And I really feel like these five things are the answer to going from I've screwed up to okay, now, how am I going to fix it going forward?

Done with Dieting Podcast #79: The Skill of Problem Solving

And so, the goal here is to really become our own authority in our own life. I mean, who doesn't want that? So, the first question that you're going to ask, is this even a problem? And I remember in episode number 20 with my client, Annie. We talked about something called the crouton incident.

And the crew tan incident was a situation where she was in a plateau and I suggested, hey, let's try getting rid of some flour just to see if that kind of jumpstarts your weight loss again. And she nearly freaked out. She freaked out because she was so tied to these crew tans.

In answering this first question, is this even a problem? Like her brain was making it a huge problem. And oftentimes, when we ask this question in the moment we may come back with, yes, this is a problem.

And so, the second question is why is it a problem? And for her, it was because I really liked my croutons. Okay. So, why is that a problem? It's just a temporary solution.

Step number three is what are some solutions? Now, here's where it gets really interesting. There are four different categories of solutions. What's the easiest solution; what's the best solution; what's the temporary solution; and what's the long-term solution.

And then, question number four is what was the cause of the problem. And that may be helpful in some situations, it may not be helpful in others. But take that one with a grain of salt. And then, finally, how do I prevent it happening in the future? And so, this is really where the brainstorming happens, and this is where the learning happens. Okay?

So, what I've done is I've created three different examples and we're going to walk through this situation in each of those three different situations. So that you have an idea of how to apply this work.

Done with Dieting Podcast #79: The Skill of Problem Solving

The first problem is I've hit a plateau. The second problem is I don't have time to exercise today, my schedule got too crowded. And the third problem is I really hate cooking. This is something that I work with my clients with all of the time that they're like, oh, it's dinner again. I don't know what to cook. I'm tired of cooking. This is a huge problem. Okay. So, we're going to go through each of those.

In the first one is I've hit a plateau. And so, what you're going to do is you're going to get on the scale and the scale is going to read the same thing that it has read either the past week, or two weeks, or three weeks, or whatever it is. Okay.

Now, you're going to ask yourself, okay, "so self, is this a problem?" Now, you think that this is a problem, right? Because you're like the scale isn't moving and the scale should be moving. But is it really a problem?

As far as plateaus go, I want to suggest that potentially, if you're really doing all of the right things, then maybe it isn't a problem. Maybe this is just how your body loses weight. So, let's say that it is a problem. The next question is why it is a problem. And you might be thinking, well, it's a problem because weight loss is hard. And because I've been doing this for two weeks, or a month, or however long, and I don't want to be doing this anymore.

Even that answer is really telling. Because we don't want to be doing anything on our way to weight loss that we're not willing to do long-term. And so, really kind of evaluating, why is this a problem? Why is it a problem, the scale isn't moving?

And so then, step number three is what are some solutions. These are just some, these aren't necessarily, I don't want you to take these solutions and use them in your own life, necessarily. But the easiest solution might be to mix up your workouts. And it depends on what it is that you're doing. And all of these solutions are really dependent on what it is that you're doing.

Done with Dieting Podcast #79: The Skill of Problem Solving

So, maybe add in a little high intensity interval training or another solution, really easy solution is maybe taking the day off from quote unquote exercise. If you've been hitting it really hard. And maybe do some yoga or do some walking.

Really, changing your workouts a little bit so that you're giving your body some rest and relaxation. Because if there's one thing that stops a plateau, it's stress. So, those are just some ideas of what could be the easiest thing to do in that case.

The best solution might be to really get back to logging your food and workouts to see, am I really doing what I think I'm doing? I was talking to a client the other day and she was like; I've been religious about this. And what was so funny, it was that the past three sessions that we've had, she had admitted that she had not been religious.

And so, really questioning ourselves like we think that we've been really adherent to our program, but have we given it the full shot. A temporary solution might be to have a refeed day. Give ourself permission and plan it advance, so that our rational brain is making the decisions, and then have our own back on the other side. So that our lower brain doesn't allow us to have that negative self-talk on the other side of the refeed.

And then, the long-term solution might be to hire someone, to help you with an exercise program, or nutrition, or have someone help you by reducing stress. Okay. And of course, I'm going to put my hat in the ring there. And if you need help with a plateau, I am here to help.

So, you can work with me one-on-one, or you can work with me with the Feel Good Sisterhood which is open for enrollment right now. So, if you haven't joined yet, what are you waiting for? You can learn these techniques real time. Okay?

Step number four is what was the cause of the plateau? Now, the body is something that's organic and something that we really don't have a lot of control over. So, we really

Done with Dieting Podcast #79: The Skill of Problem Solving

don't know, but we might be able to guess on the other side of it, once things start moving again.

And then, how do I prevent it in the future? Well, as far as the plateau goes, we might not be able to prevent a plateau. But what we can do is we can plan for what we're going to do when it does happen again. And this is a huge thing that I try to teach my clients around when we start out a new program, not going all in. Because we know that we're going to have plateaus. And so, what do we need to do to get around it? So, that's how this whole thing works.

Number two is I don't have time today. My schedule got crowded, something happened. Okay. So, is this even a problem? And again, the answer is maybe. I think it depends on what it is that you've been doing up until now. Because if you've been working out consistently, then maybe it isn't a problem to have one day off. And to do whatever it is that you need to do.

It really depends on what you did yesterday or last week. And so, if you've decided that yes, this is a problem, then why is it a problem?

And maybe it's a problem because you've just started exercising and you really feel like you need to get a couple wins on your belt in order to be successful. Or maybe because getting stronger is one of your goals and you can't get stronger if you don't exercise. Or maybe you have a race coming up and you really needed to train today. Okay.

So, those are some of the reasons why this might be a problem. And then, what are some of the solutions? The easiest solution would be to totally blow it off. And then, have your own back on the other side of it. The best solution might be to establish some bare minimums or habits when this comes up again.

Done with Dieting Podcast #79: The Skill of Problem Solving

So, what is the minimum baseline of things that I can do if I can't go out and meet with my trainer or go out and workout, like I'd like to. Then, what are some of the bare minimums that I can do. And really kind of brainstormed that.

The temporary solution might be to go for a walk when you can or do squats, like when you're on a conference call. Or do counter pushups when you're waiting for something. Adding in movement throughout your day. Or you could reschedule your planned workout for later in the day or tomorrow, if it's a possibility. Maybe fit in 10 minutes of walking on periodic breaks.

So, there are lots of things that you can do that are just temporary solutions, right? And then, finally, the long-term solution would be to figure out how to establish better boundaries around work, and childcare, or household help, or whatever it is.

How did your schedule get crammed up where you didn't get your workout in that you had planned to do, that you wanted to do? And how do you prioritize exercise in your life? Maybe it's getting up a little bit earlier when you know that.

So, what was the cause of the problem? Maybe the cause of the problem was prioritizing other people's wants over my own needs and not enforcing my boundaries. So, therefore I need to learn how to establish boundaries. And if this resonates with you, I'm going to put the podcast of boundaries in the show notes so that you can listen to that one. How to establish boundaries.

And then, finally, how do I prevent it from happening in the future? Well, maybe you schedule it in the morning when things don't get in your way. When I started scheduling my workout first thing in the morning, that's when I really got consistent. Because nothing gets in your way at seven o'clock in the morning.

Done with Dieting Podcast #79: The Skill of Problem Solving

If your current exercise program is at five o'clock in the evening, after you get home from work, then people always want to go out for drinks or things come up during the day that crowd that out. So, maybe shifting your workout to a part of the day that really doesn't have that problem is more of a long-term and better solution, so that you don't have this problem in the future.

Problem number three is that "ugh, I have to cook dinner again." Why is it that I have to cook dinner again? And it's so funny in the Feel Good Sisterhood I had today, I actually coached one of my clients, Fawn, on this today.

And so, why is this a problem? It's a problem because dinner always falls on me. I have to make it, I feel resentful, and it feels like such a burden. And so, why is it a problem? And it's a problem because I don't like doing it. Again, I feel like it's a burden and I just wish that I had some help.

And so, what are some solutions? Some solutions might be like the easiest would be getting dinner delivered. And you might be surprised to hear me say that. But I have never thought that you can't be successful in your goal and have to prepare 100% of your meals.

When I talk about food prep or food planning with my clients and in the Feel Good Sisterhood, you can totally eat out. But it's about making good choices. And so, getting dinner delivered is totally an option. It might not be a great option because it's more expensive and you don't have as much control over it. But it is an option.

The best solution might be to get your kids and partner to buy in on the menu for the week, so that you don't have to make that decision all yourself. And then, get help from them. So, get them to help you in the kitchen so that it becomes a family thing. And it's not your burden. Again, this has to go with the skill of asking for help and being able to receive it. I'm talking the skills here today.

Done with Dieting Podcast #79: The Skill of Problem Solving

A temporary solution might be to get meal delivery kits. Just until you have an arsenal of menus to choose from. I loved using the meal delivery kits. They don't have them here in Mexico. But before we moved to Mexico, I was using them when we were having our house packed up.

And it was fantastic because it really alleviated all of that mental drama from having to think about, oh, what are we having for dinner tonight? And do I have enough ingredients and all of that stuff. So, meal delivery kits are a huge, huge benefit. They just tend to be a little bit more expensive.

And then, the last question is what's the long-term solution. And the long-term solution might be to get myself, my kids, and my partner to take turns in preparing dinner. Maybe get ourselves some cooking lessons.

One of my favorite things to do for new graduates, college graduates, as well as high school graduates is getting them cooking classes as far as knife skills. When you learn knife skills, everything in the kitchen becomes so much easier. Okay, so that's the long-term solution.

Now, what's the cause? The cause is that I'm just tired and I'm putting too much pressure on myself. And so, when we talk about meal planning, one of the things that you may do is notice which days of the week do I tend to get more tired and how do I plan meals for those days. So that they're easy, and enjoyable, and I have my own back. I set myself up for success.

And then, finally, how do I prevent it in the future? And maybe the solution to that is working out a system of food prep and meal planning that works for my health and for my family.

Done with Dieting Podcast #79: The Skill of Problem Solving

So, there you have it. The key takeaway that I want you to grab from today's episode is that so often, whenever we're presented with a problem, we just shut down. And shutting down is never the answer. Giving up is never the answer. Especially, if this is something that's important to you.

Now, of course, this is going to take some work and it's going to take some practice. But again, it's a skill that you can learn and it's a skill that you can employ in order to help you to be more successful.

Now, I am of course, going to invite you to join me in the Feel Good Sisterhood. The Feel Good Sisterhood is open for enrollment right now. So, if you have not enrolled or if you've been looking at it, now is the time to enroll. I only enroll a few times a year.

And so, this is a great opportunity for you to learn the skill of problem solving, for you to learn the skill of self-trust, for you to learn the skill of nonjudgmental curiosity. Instead of that inner critic, just barking at you all the time. Well, you just screwed up, learn how to employ these skills. So that you can be successful and never have to go on another diet ever again. All right?

That's all I have for you today. Have an amazing week, everyone go join the Feel Good Sisterhood, we're open for enrollment until the end of July. We start August 1st. I'll talk to you later. 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.

Done with Dieting Podcast #79: The Skill of Problem Solving

Join me over at elizabethsherman.com/groupcoaching. I'd love to have you join me in the Feel Good Sisterhood. See you there.