

Done with Dieting Podcast #90: Liberation vs Fixation



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With your Host
Elizabeth Sherman

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Have you ever been obsessed in your mind thinking about food? I know I have. I've been in situations where I've been at dinner and completely checked out with dinner with my friends. Thinking about my food, or what I'm going to order, or seeing the chip basket in the middle of the table and being completely in my head and completely checked out of the conversation.

If this is you, today's episode is going to be a must listen. Today, we're talking about liberation versus fixation. And what we're talking about is being free from thinking about food so much, so that you can live like, we think that other people live. Having a relationship with food free from thinking about it all the time.

Today, I'm outlining the steps. 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.

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

Welcome. Let's get started.

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Hey everyone, welcome to episode number 90 of the done with dieting podcast. I am so excited that you are here joining me today.

Before we get started, I just wanted to tell you how much I love hearing from all of you asking questions. And I am going to be doing a Q and A episode really soon, but I love hearing all of your questions, love hearing from all of you saying how valuable the podcast is.

And all over the results that you're getting from just the advice and the tips and techniques that I am sharing on this podcast. It is so awesome to hear from you. So, keep those messages coming. I love to hear from you. I love interacting with my listeners and I hope you like interacting with me as well. Whether it's on social media or through email, whatever your daily dose is. I love it.

The other thing I wanted to mention is that a few episodes ago, I created an episode called 'how to create your own meal plan.' And in there, I had a call to action where if you wanted to have help, if you wanted to receive help in figuring out your own meal plan, figuring out your own food uniform, that was an option for you.

And all you have to do is reach out to me at hello@elizabethsherman.com. And I have already started working with a number of you on those meal plans and we are getting amazing results. So, if that is something on your radar, if you want to create your own meal plan because we are about to approach the holidays, right?

This is the beginning of October and soon we will be in mid-November and December. And one of the huge strengths that you can have going into the holidays is knowing ahead of time, exactly what you're going to eat. Even, if you're going to a party where you have no idea what you can eat. That doesn't mean that the rest of the week or the rest of the day has to be a wash. Right?

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So, if you want to get ahead of your meal planning and get some good meals put together and take charge of your health before January starts. I'm going to invite you to get some help on creating your own meal plan. So, that's all I have for that.

Now, today, we are talking about liberation versus fixation. What does that exactly mean? Basically, what it's about learning how to break bad habits. And this podcast episode was actually inspired by one of my clients, Sam. So, Sam if you're listening, you completely inspired this podcast episode because we were talking about how to get off of alcohol, how to get off of sugar.

And Sam was like, this is never going to happen. It just felt so surmountable because she had built up this habit of creating of drinking a glass of wine every night and then it is leading into some chocolate.

And what a lot of my clients come to me about which is something that I did myself is wanting to not care so much. Wanting to have a relationship with alcohol or wanting to have a relationship with chocolate, or chips, or whatever your kryptonite is. So, wanting to have a relationship with that food, that thing that is like no big deal. Like, you could put me in a room with all of the wine that I love, or you could put me in a room with all of the chocolate chip cookies, and I would be able to not resist the cookies.

Remember, they used to do that on the biggest loser. I was a huge, biggest loser fan. And they would put someone into this room that had just tons and tons of sweets in it. And if they didn't eat anything, then they got points for their team. And so, the entire time that that person was in that room, they were completely white knuckling it because they wanted the sweets. They wanted the treats because they looked so incredibly good.

And all of the treats were all of their trigger items. They had chips, they had pretzels, they had cupcakes. They had gummy worms and sweet and sour gummies and all of that

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stuff. And when we really desire it and we're telling ourselves, no. That's where willpower comes into play.

And what most of us don't want when we are going through this process is we don't want to have to use willpower when we're at a party or when we're in our own kitchen. Because willpower is a muscle. And eventually, we run out of willpower. So, what happens is throughout the day, we bite our tongue, we will order the salad instead of the French fries at lunch.

And we have all of these decision points within our day that we have to make. And some of them are no big deal, but some of them really require a lot of willpower. And so, by the end of the day, when we're frazzled and we're tired, we're basically tapped out for all of our willpower. And so, it takes such an incredible amount of resistance to have to keep doing and going through that willpower.

And so, what most of my clients want and what I wanted for myself was to not use willpower, but rather be okay with the cookies sitting there in front of me. So, going out to dinner and having the chip basket there. And not having to think about it, not having to look at the chip basket and tell myself, no, no, no. But rather, just not really wanting it or being okay with wanting one or two and then not going elbow deep into the chips. Right?

That's what we all want. We all want to be able to eat a moderate amount of something that we crave and be able to stop. And so many of us don't have that little switch. And so, what I want to talk to you about today is installing that switch so that you can eat sweets or eat those foods, like a quote unquote normal person. Okay.

Now, before we get into the episode a little bit. I do want to put a caveat here. And the caveat is that if you listen to this podcast, you probably know that I'm a fan of 'you, do

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you.' And what I mean by that is if you don't have a problem with sugar, I'm not telling you that you need to cut sugar out of your diet.

If you don't have a problem with your relationship with alcohol, you do not have to change it. I'm going to be talking about sugar and I'm going to be talking about alcohol. But only to those people who really want to change their relationship with alcohol and sugar or flour or whatever it is that is your kryptonite.

If you are someone who is fixated on, when am I going to have chocolate again? Or when am I going to have chips again? Or you have a lot of judgment about yourself after you eat those things or drink those things. Then, this episode is for you. By no means, am I telling anyone that you should give up sugar, or flour, or alcohol.

These just tend to be the things that most people struggle. Okay. So, if you want to get to a point in your relationship with that food where you're like, yeah, I could take it or I could leave it. Then, this episode is for you. Okay.

Now, how do we get to the point of I'll have some if I want it. And where this episode started from was that Sam asked me, we were setting up some guidelines around her drinking alcohol. Because her alcohol was kind of like the gateway to the other foods that she was overeating.

And her question was okay, so in this interim time, when I haven't really gotten a hold of my alcohol. What happens if I just want a glass? And that's where I think this all really stemmed from. Like, how do you get from the place where you have to have a glass to the point where you can take it or leave it and you can have a glass if you want it. Or have a cookie if you want it. Okay.

So, how do we get there? And so, if you're a fan of this podcast, you know, that I'm not a huge fan of rules. They can feel boxy. They can feel suffocating for a lot of people.

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Some people love rules because what it does is it allows them to know what are the various shades of gray, right?

But the reason that I don't like rules is because when we have too many rules, then when something happens and we can't follow the rules, we have to know how to be able to break the rules. Okay.

And so, I'm not a huge fan of rules, however, I think that rules and planning can actually be really helpful. And I'm going to explain how that is but be aware that when I'm talking about the rules and I'm talking about planning, these are really going to be temporary solutions. Right?

Now, you need to know what your preferences are. As far as rules go, and as far as planning goes. And so, when we have too many rules or when we have too many planning things going on, we can feel like it's all a little bit too much. So, what we want to do is you need to figure this out for yourself. Figure out, what is the bare minimum that I need to do in structurally in terms of planning in terms of rule following, so that I can adhere to the plan. Okay.

Because one thing that we really do not want to do is create too many rules or over plan because when we over plan, then sometimes what happens is we can't follow the plan because we haven't taken into account some other things. Like going out to an ad hoc dinner or something like that. Okay.

Years ago, when I was in my dieting days, I bought into the idea that peanut butter was a great snack. And so, I used to eat peanut butter right from the jar. And what I found out was that I really couldn't control myself around peanut butter. And once I dipped my spoon into the peanut butter, then I really had a hard time putting the jar back away and backing away from the peanut butter.

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And so, for me, during that time, what I did was I actually banished peanut butter in that form from the house. And today, we have so many more options. So, we have those little Justin's single serving containers, so you can really control yourself a little bit more that way. And so, if I had to do it again, I would probably do things a little bit differently, but I banished peanut butter from the house initially.

And then, eventually, I brought it back in, but I used it only for cooking. And what that did was it gave me enough distance from the peanut butter to really be able to have a healthy relationship with peanut butter.

And so, regardless of what you eventually want the outcome of your relationship with this food or drink to be. What I want to suggest is that when you can adopt the mindset of, we're just trying this out to see what happens and look at it as an experiment.

And so, what I'm going to do next is I'm actually going to go through the steps that I guide my clients through when we are trying to wean ourselves off of sugar, or change our relationship with alcohol, or whatever it is, whatever food it is that we are fixated on, that we feel like we can't live without.

What we're doing here in this episode is I'm going to outline the process for you. And so, again, if you can adopt this from the mindset of; let's just try this out and see what happens. What can eventually occur then is that it takes all of the pressure off. Because when you go into this, thinking, I'm never going to eat sugar again or I'm never going to drink alcohol again. Then, what happens is it puts so much pressure on ourselves about that thing. Right?

And so, what I will often do with clients is I will use this same process when we're trying to figure out if they have allergies or intolerances to gluten or flour or sugar. Cause what I notice is that when we have sugar and flour in our diets, especially for women of midlife, what happens is we get a lot of hormonal imbalance because of it.

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Okay. So, the very first step that you want to take when you are deciding that you want to wean yourself off of sugar, flour, alcohol, or any other substance. What you want to do first is you want to come up with a list of reasons of why you're making this change. And the list of reasons can be as many or as few as you want.

So, I've actually done this before. I've done this with stopping eating after dinner. I've also done it in terms of my relationship with alcohol. And I'm going to share both of those lists with you. Just so that you can see what mine are, you can obviously take some of the items from my list or you can add your own, obviously. Don't do anything with my list. I don't care.

So, the first list is why I want to stop eating after dinner. I want to stop eating after dinner because one, I don't need it. Two, sometimes I eat too much, and I don't like how I feel. Three, I want to honor my body's hunger signals. Four, I want to establish trust with my body. Five, it doesn't make me feel. Six, I want to see what I'm capable of. Seven, I want to see what's possible. Eight, I love my body. Nine, I want to feel good. Ten, I respect my body too much. And eleven, it's not in alignment with my teaching. Okay.

So, that's just a list of the reasons why I wanted to stop eating sugar after dinner. I also have a list of why I wanted to limit my alcohol. And so, those items are one, it makes me gain weight. Two, I don't like it as much as I think I do. Three, I sometimes overeat, and I don't like it. Four, it doesn't support my goals. Five, it's not helpful in my relationships. Six, I don't sleep well when I drink. Seven, I sleep better when I don't drink. Eight, I don't want to poison my body with alcohol. Nine, I want to think clearly, and alcohol prevents that. Ten, I want to be my best. Eleven, I want to live my best life. Okay.

And so, the reason that we're creating these lists is well, for one, what I found was that it would be after dinner. And I would be kind of rummaging around the kitchen, looking

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for something to eat. And my brain would say, well, but we're not supposed to be eating. And I would literally, get confused as to why I shouldn't be eating chocolate after dinner. I'd be like, wait a minute. Why did we set that rule up? I don't understand. Like, I would literally forget all of the reasons why I wanted to make this change.

One of the things that I did was I wrote it out every single day. By writing it out every single day, what it did was it solidified it in my brain. And it would allow me to remember my reasons. So, when it came time that I had a craving for chocolate, or when I had a craving for alcohol, it wasn't a surprise. And I wasn't all confused about well, why did I come up with that rule? I don't understand. Okay.

And so, that's the first thing. What you're also going to do at this point is when you have a craving for that thing, I really want you to pay attention to the thoughts that your brain offers you in response to saying, no, we're not doing that. Because this is where your brain is going to get really super creative.

And it's going to come up with things like well, if you don't have it now, you're never going to be able to eat chocolate again or drink wine again. Like, well, when are we ever going to be able to do that, you're giving it up forever. And it's going to feel very believable. Your brain is going to tell you it's a special occasion or it's just one, come on, live a little, it's no big deal. These are the things that your brain is going to do. Okay.

Now, the next thing that you want to do after writing this list out is the 1.0 version. And this is a very diet mentality. I'm going to call that out right now. But what we want to do is we want to create guidelines around when we are going to allow it and when we're not. And the reason why we're going to do this is we are going to limit the food or eliminate it for a period of time. And we are going to do that because we want to understand your reasons for doing it. And I'm going to come back to this in just a second.

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But we want to understand and get really crystal clear on your reasons for doing it. And that goes back to the list. Why are we doing this in the first place? And it cannot be weight related only. Like, if you're saying I'm giving up chocolate because I want to lose weight, your brain is not going to accept that as a good enough reason. What's going to happen is your brain is going to say, well, but you can make that up tomorrow. Okay.

And so, it's really important to understand all of your reasons for wanting to change your relationship with this food item.

Now, again, limiting it or eliminating it is control, it's dieting. But what this is going to do for us is it's going to allow us to see and understand the objections that our brain offers us when we're craving that thing and when that craving kicks in.

And so, when that craving kicks in, we get to observe why our brain is showing up as the toddler that it's going to show up as. Because it is going to have a fit. It is going to have a conniption fit if you have been eating chocolate every single day. And then, all of a sudden, you say, no. Okay.

Now, first of all, that might not be the best technique. And so, when we're talking about limiting or eliminating some of these food items, really understand what an effective technique is going to be for you. I don't necessarily suggest that we go cold turkey with all of it. Alright?

Now, remember that this is a temporary situation. This is a temporary thing that we're doing. We're going to do it for a month. We're going to do it for two months. We're going to do it for six weeks. We're going to do it for two weeks. Okay. So, remember that this is temporary, and you are going to decide ahead of time, how long you're going to do it for.

And then, this is still in step one. You're going to do a body scan and notice how you feel as a result of the elimination. So, really starting to notice, oh, when I don't drink

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alcohol, I sleep better. And oh, like after a week of not drinking alcohol, I start to notice that my anxiety is being reduced. Or I'm noticing that I'm just much more aware of all of these other things that are happening in my life.

I'm starting to pay attention to how the wind feels on my skin. I feel a little bit more awake. Coffee smells so much better to me. Food tastes so much better. So, when I start to eliminate these things, what we really want to do is start to notice how does your body feel when you are off that substance.

And again, pull out the reasons when your brain comes up with objections. Get back on plan when you give in. And if you do give in, that's totally okay. Don't see that as a failure. Don't see that as a reason to give up. What you want to do is get curious, just get back on track and say, you know what? We're just going to start over again. It's okay.

Now, once you've done that for a period of time, you are more than welcome to add it back in. But if you're doing the body scans, if you are noticing, how you feel when you give this food item up or the alcohol. What you're going to start to notice is when you do start to add it back in, pay special attention to how it makes you feel.

So, how do you feel when you have one glass of wine at night? How do you feel when you have two glasses of wine at night? How is that impacting any other piece of your life? Same thing goes with flour and sugar or dairy.

So, how do you feel when you start adding the alcohol back in? How do you feel when you start adding the sugar in, the flour, the dairy. Okay.

Now, the title of this podcast is liberation versus fixation. And what we really want to do is we want to create a relationship with food where you are not fixated on the food. Where you feel liberated of the food, you feel liberated of the alcohol. And so, only you can know how you're thinking about food or alcohol. If you feel obsessed with it, then maybe it's better to eliminate it for a period of time.

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So, I have a podcast on moderation versus abstaining. And there's definitely a way, you really need to know whether you are someone who can moderate or whether you are someone who needs to take it all out of your diet or not. And so, if you haven't listened to that episode and you want to change your relationship with food or alcohol. I'm going to recommend that you listen to that.

And so, some people can moderate certain foods or all foods while other people need to cut it out entirely, and then start to add it back in. That is completely up to you, which one you want to do. But what I want to suggest is if you are someone who's like, you know what? I want to keep this in my diet. I want to keep sugar in my diet. I want to keep alcohol in my life.

Then, what I'm really going to suggest that you do is that you create rules or guidelines around when, where, and how you are going to take that food in. So, for example, I am in the process of changing my relationship with alcohol. And some of the guidelines that I've put around the alcohol is I'm going to allow myself to have one glass and I'm going to do it when I'm out to dinner.

So, no more drinking wine at home on a Saturday before we go out, for example. No more pouring myself a glass of wine when I'm making dinner. These are just some of the guidelines that I've set up. And what's so interesting is when I've set those guidelines up, what happens is that I start to notice, oh, you know what? It's four o'clock on Saturday, I'd really like to have a glass of wine. And then asking myself, wow, that's so curious. Why do I want that?

And I noticed that I was using alcohol as a form of entertainment. I was using wine as a way of entertaining myself because you know, it was just before dinner and I was getting a little bored and antsy, and I was like, huh, what is there to do? Not really anything, I don't really want to watch TV. I don't want to do all these other things. Maybe I'll pour myself a glass of wine.

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And so, it became really interesting to me in noticing my own relationship with alcohol, how I was using it in a way to yeah, entertain myself to prevent boredom. And so, when we can just observe ourselves and get really curious, like, oh, I'm having a craving for chocolate right now, but I'm not really hungry. I wonder why I'm doing that. And really getting curious with yourself, you'll start to get to know yourself so much better.

Now, when we start to change our relationship with food and alcohol, with chocolate, with treats. When we start to change our relationship with these treats and alcohol, what we really also want to pay attention to is the language that we use in response to these foods.

So, when we're in the diet mentality, we're thinking, I can't have it. I'm not allowed to have it. It's not on my plan. My plan doesn't allow it. I don't get to. Okay. But when we really change our relationship with it, when we really start to notice the benefits of not having this food in our diet, in our daily consumption. What we're going to start to notice is how much better we feel.

And then, we change our language and say things like, well, I could have that, but I don't want it anymore. And I don't want it. Or I drink as much as I want, or I eat as much as I want. The thing is, that I want to feel better more than I want to eat that thing. We want the food or the alcohol to be irrelevant to our lives.

Now, here's the thing. If I asked you, do you want to give up your desire for pasta? Do you want to give up your desire for chocolate, for ice cream, for chocolate chip cookies, for alcohol? There are a lot of people who will say, no. I still want to desire to eat pasta. I still want to desire to eat pizza. I still want to desire to drink alcohol. Okay.

If that's you, first of all, you don't have to do this. But if you're unwilling to let go of your desire for sugar, pasta, or alcohol. Then, what we really want to do is we want to create a life that is much more desirable for you and compelling than the food that you

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want to eat. When the positive result becomes so much more compelling than the food or drink, we'll no longer feel powerless against the food.

And I want to put in another caveat here. That I think when we start this journey of really desiring alcohol, and then wanting to have less of a relationship with it. Or really loving chocolate chip cookies, and then really not wanting to eat them anymore. We think that when we're on the other side of it, that we're never going to crave this food again.

And I just want to tell you, that I hadn't experienced this weekend. And I really need to tell you this because, well, it's the truth. And that is that this weekend, I went to Costco, and I bought one of those large packages of Costco cookies. And if you have not had Costco cookies, these things are freaking amazing. At least, they are here in Mexico. And there are enough to feed a small army.

And my husband is actually out of town right now as I'm recording this episode. And he wasn't here when I bought them. I bought them because I wanted them. I knew that I wasn't going to really be tempted to eat the entire box. Otherwise, I would not have. And my intention the entire time was to put them in the freezer after I had one or two.

On Saturday, I bought them. I think I had two cookies on Saturday. And then, I had one on Sunday. And the rest of the day as I was working around the house, I saw these cookies and they are so incredibly delicious, and I wanted to keep eating them. I would see them on the counter, and I really wanted to eat more. But I didn't.

And the reason that I didn't is because I knew that it was going to be more difficult for me to quote unquote detox from eating the cookies because I knew that once I ate more, then I would want more, and more, and more. And I really enjoy how I feel, how my body feels when I'm not eating sugar and I'm not eating flour. I don't get hot flashes. I don't feel lethargic. I don't crave it as much.

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And so, the reason I'm telling you this story is because you will still have cravings. You will still crave the alcohol. You will still crave chocolate. You will still crave chips, whatever it is that you are trying to get off of. However, the more distance you get from that, the easier it will become.

I promise you; the beginning is always going to be the hardest step. After that, it becomes easier, and easier, and easier. But it will never go away. Maybe it might go away for some things, but it might not for others. And so, you have to expect that.

Now, if this is a process that you want to try out for yourself. If you want to change your relationship with food, with alcohol, with cookies, with pasta, with pizza. I'm going to invite you to work with me either on a one on one basis, we can work on this together. Or you can work on this in a group setting in the Feel Good Sisterhood, because this is the type of stuff that we are all trying to do. We all want to create a better relationship with ourselves and our bodies and with food.

We don't like feeling powerless around food. We don't like feeling like there's cookies in the refrigerator right now, or there's cookies in the pantry and they're calling my name. No one likes having our brains hijacked by sugar. And so, if this is something that you want to get off of, I can help you.

So, what I'm going to invite you to do is reach out to me by going to elizabethsherman.com/consult and you can set up some time to talk to me about the steps that we would take. What working with me would look like. What program is best for you. One on one or group.

All right. That's all I have for you today. Have an amazing week, everyone. Bye-bye.

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Hey, Thanks for listening. If you're done with dieting and would like to work with me as your coach, I'd like to invite you to reach out to myself and my team to ask about programs and pricing. Go to elizabethsherman.com/contact to get started today.

I can't wait to hear from you. See you next week.