

Done with Dieting Podcast #91: What Type of Eater Are You?



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With your Host
Elizabeth Sherman

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Are you a Monica, or a Phoebe, or maybe you're a Rachel. We love quizzes, don't we? We love to be able to identify ourselves. And yet, what's so interesting about that is that we also hate being put into boxes.

In today's episode, I'm introducing you to the different types of eaters that I've noticed over the 17 years of working with women. Which eating style or dieter are you? Sometimes we think that we'll never be done with dieting. But in this episode, I'm gonna share the different eating styles. And I want you to know that just because you're one type today, doesn't mean that you have to stay that way.

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.

Done with Dieting Podcast #91: What Type of Eater Are You?

Hello, hello, hello. Welcome to today's podcast episode number 91. Now, one thing that I've always been curious about is when people are surprised by the way that I eat. When I go out with people for dinner, they come over to my house or something like that. They'll ask me, are you eating that? I think that most folks believe that my eating is perfect. Whatever that means for them.

Recently, someone thought that I ate according to the keto meal plan. I don't. Because I have very little bread in my house. Some folks think that I should be a vegetarian, or I would be a vegetarian. And some think that I follow a specific diet, but I really don't. I eat all the foods.

And if you follow me on social media, you'll notice that I don't really like to talk about what I eat or how I eat only because I think that it keeps folks stuck. When someone who is deep in diet culture starts to notice like, okay, what is Elizabeth eating? She's found the secret. And so, I'm going to do that too. That's not serving her because our bodies are completely different.

And so, as a coach, I like to help my clients understand things like, how many of servings of different foods make you feel good? How many vegetables should you be eating and which ones? Because not all vegetables surprisingly, will make all of us feel great. How often should you be eating and how many meals so that you aren't hungry. And that your body is functioning at its optimal level.

And so, here's the thing. No book or out of the box program can help you with that. And if you schedule a consult with me, I can't even tell you that. What we have to do is we have to figure out what that means for you.

You might want to stop dieting and you may want to or you might not want to lose weight. But more than that, I'm going to bet that you just want to feel good. You want to stop the mental drama around food in your body.

Done with Dieting Podcast #91: What Type of Eater Are You?

And so, after 17 years of experience, as a coach supporting women in midlife, I've observed that generally, women fall into one of the following different types of eaters. I'm going to outline exactly what those eaters are. And in my journey, I actually went through each of these as stages. But be aware that that is not required.

And so, chances are if you're here listening, you're probably falling into one of these different categories. And when you hear the categories, you'll begin to understand why it's so super hard to follow any sort of advice because following cookie cutter advice, isn't going to get you where you want to go. And none of us, again, fit into these exact boxes. Okay, ready?

So, eater number one is what I call the unconscious or the overwhelmed eater. Now, how do you know if you fall into this category? If you fall into the unconscious or overwhelmed category of eater, then you're probably doing everything out of convenience.

Time isn't something that you feel like you have a lot of. You're thinking, what is the easiest thing? Which you know, doesn't always serve you, right? The foods that you buy from the store, the choices that you make for dinner and lunch are probably grab and go choices. You're probably buying prepared foods and you're doing all of this because you feel overwhelmed, and you don't have a lot of time.

Now, there's absolutely no judgment at buying prepared foods. Absolutely not. Be aware that we're not judging. What we're doing is we're just saying that this is where things are. It's just where you are right now. And time unfortunately, takes precedence. So, how much time it takes to prepare and potentially, eat your meals plays a huge part in why you make the decisions that you do make. And you aren't thinking a lot about planning.

Now, because of that you're probably eating and doing something else at the same time. Right? You're probably not being present with your eating, which can make you feel like

Done with Dieting Podcast #91: What Type of Eater Are You?

you haven't eaten when you have because you didn't really taste your food. And so, you don't remember eating. So, you may overeat just so that you can experience the pleasure of eating, even though you're not hungry.

You're not thinking about planning your meals or your day or anything like that, because you don't think that you have enough time for that or that it's going to take too long. Or if you are doing some sort of planning, then the planning goes out the window because other people's schedules, those people that live in your house with you, your partner, and maybe your kids. They're hijacking your plan. Right?

They're like, oh, I have to go to band practice, or oh, I'm not going to be home tonight, I'm going over to Rachel's. And so, you're sitting there alone and you're like, well, if I'm going to make all of this food for myself, I'm not. Right? Or you're so exhausted that you don't feel like making dinner. And if we're being honest, right? No one else in your family is going to make it either.

So, the easy decision is the one that gets made. Some of the symptoms that you might be experiencing in this category of overwhelmed or unconscious is you might be feeling a little lethargic. You might not be getting good sleep or feeling anxious. You might also be feeling stressed or overwhelmed and sluggish. You might have cravings, hot flashes, or night sweats.

Now, for the unconscious or overwhelmed eater, the idea of self-care seems like a luxury. And I talked about that in a previous episode, working in your life versus working on your life. You're like, self-care, what? Wait, what? What is that? I don't even know.

So, your self-care, your life feels out of control. Like you're constantly playing a game of catch up. And it feels like you're always putting out fires, which feels super freaking stressful and overwhelming. And when you get to the end of the week, you just can't

Done with Dieting Podcast #91: What Type of Eater Are You?

help but binge into chocolate. And you've noticed a large amount of weight gain perhaps, and it almost feels like it happened over night.

You've experienced frequent brain fog and you have lower or inconsistent energy, and you might even feel that there's something wrong with you. You look at other people and you're like, how is it that they can do it and why can't I? And the problem is that when we ask a question like that, the answers that our brain comes back with are just not productive.

Your brain is going to answer a question like that with, well, I must just be lazy, or it must not be important to me. And you've asked yourself, why can't I just stick to a diet? I'm sure that there's a method out there, I just haven't found it yet. And the thing is that you're super capable in other areas of your life. You have a great job, you have great kids, and you're in a fantastic relationship. You just have so many other moving parts that you can't keep up with at all.

There's a lot of shame that goes along with the overwhelmed or unconscious eater. And we do everything that we can to not allow anyone else to find out what hot mess we are. Right? I remember thinking things like, gosh, if anyone knew they would just be appalled at my diet.

And so, we're constantly giving ourselves these pep talks and saying, girl, get it together. You just need to get ahead of this stuff. Or the lie that we all tell ourselves even myself is after this thing, it'll get better. Right? So, after this month, or after this project, or after summer, when the kids finally leave for school, then things will get better. Right? It's the lie that we all tell ourselves.

If we're in this place, we know that we cannot continue. You know right now that you're like, I can't keep living my life like this. That something needs to change but we have more questions than we have answers. And so, you have no idea how to get out of it. If

Done with Dieting Podcast #91: What Type of Eater Are You?

someone were to ask you, okay, so how do you get out of this? You're just completely stunned. You're like, I just don't know. I just don't know. Okay. So, that is the unconscious or overwhelmed eating style.

Now, if you're able to move past that category and move into the next one as I did, you'll probably find yourself as an all or nothing eater. And what the all or nothing eater does is the all or nothing eater has periods of being perfect and then periods of going back into the unconscious or overwhelmed. Now, if you're able to move past that category and into this one like I did, you don't have to go through category two.

Now, if you're an all or nothing eater, you've probably had some successful weight loss attempts in the past. So, either as a younger woman, you didn't really struggle with your weight. And now, that you've hit perimenopause or menopause you're like, what the heck just happened? Or you've always been a yo-yo dieter. And so, losing the weight and then regaining it. Weight loss has never really been super easy for you.

So, you're either on a diet or you're off the diet. And when you're on the diet, everyone in your family knows that you're on the diet. Right? And you're probably making them do it too. But they're probably sneaking out and eating off the diet. Because they can't be so super strict. And so, they're sneaking out for burgers, and pizza, and then not telling you about it. Right?

They've been through this before and they know the pattern that you're super strict with the rules. And when you're weighing and you're probably weighing your body and logging your food on a daily basis, the diets and the rules don't seem to serve you.

But the problem arises when you either make a mistake or things don't go as planned. You can be adherent to the diet for a really good amount of time. But when things don't go as planned and you make a mistake, the wheels come off. Right? And when the

Done with Dieting Podcast #91: What Type of Eater Are You?

wheels come off, that's when all hell breaks loose. You're like, give me all the ice cream, give me all the French fries.

And when you eat something that wasn't on the plan, you immediately think, well, I really just screwed up. I may as well eat some more. I'll try again on Monday. Right. Do all of these things sound familiar to you? If it does, then you know, you're not alone. So, again, I'll try again on Monday, and you have those good days and bad days. And you know what controls whether you have a good day or bad day, right? It's the scale. The scale totally rules you.

And so, when you are having your good days, everything is good. Right? But when you have an off day, you go through a little bit of what we call last suppering. And last suppering is I don't know when I'm going to get this again, I better eat at all. Okay. Now, the thing is that again, you have so much going for you. You're probably super knowledgeable about all the food and exercise.

In fact, you're probably one of those people that keeps up on the latest products in the grocery store and fancies yourself as aficionado when it comes to the best brands that you can buy for the lowest calories. And you share that with all of your friends. You probably cook and you can probably cook really good healthy food, which is a huge plus. But you're over complicating things. And you think that you need more information.

Now, if we're being honest, this is the phase that I was in when I became a personal trainer and nutritionist. I believed that there was a magic pill and there was this nugget of information that I just kept searching for that if I consumed it, if I knew what it was, it would suddenly make everything makes sense. It would make me skinny.

Done with Dieting Podcast #91: What Type of Eater Are You?

But yeah, it's kind of crazy to think about it that once I would get this piece of information, that suddenly, I would be adherent to all the things that I knew that I should be doing.

I also consider being in the all or nothing phase, what I call the professional dieter. Now, the professional dieter is very similar. However, professional dieter doesn't have those out of control switches. The professional dieter is completely white knuckling it.

And when you are a professional dieter, you don't believe that you can eat whatever you want. You believe that you have to follow the rules. You believe that weight loss is difficult and you're afraid that if I have ice cream, then I'm going to lose control. And so, you are on a constant restrict cycle. But you've gotten really good at it, whereas the person who's on all or nothing has not gotten as good at controlling and having willpower over the types of tasty foods that are available. Okay.

So, as a professional dieter, you believe that you have to follow the rules. You believe that weight loss is difficult, and you have a fear that if you miss a workout, that you'll gain all of the weight back. Or if you go on vacation or have a weekend away where everything is completely unplanned, you kind of have a little internal freak out or cringe inside. I used to do that all the time.

And for many women in this stage, you feel like you're in a battle with your body. That everything feels difficult because you eat a healthy diet. You cook and you don't eat a lot of processed foods, but you cook to maintain control over your weight. And when plans deviate from what you expect, you have that internal freak out because you're afraid that you're going to lose control.

You also feel really super resentful of other people who don't seem to struggle with their weight or folks who ultimately find success using that against yourself and feeling like it's unfair because you're trying so hard, right? You feel resentful of other people's

Done with Dieting Podcast #91: What Type of Eater Are You?

success, and you probably use exercise as a way to burn off calories that you overate. Because quite honestly, that's what we've been taught. Okay. So, that's what I call the all or nothing phase and then also the professional Dieter.

Now, most women who have struggled with their weight stay in these three different categories. The unconscious or overwhelmed eater, the all or nothing eater, and or the professional Dieter. But there's actually another category which is the liberated eater. Now, as the liberated eater, you eat whatever you want. But that doesn't mean that you eat all the things that you want. Right?

You know that you can eat ice cream, or cookies, or cookie dough, pretzels, or chips, whatever it is. But you pay attention to how those foods make you feel when you're eating it. And then, also how they make you feel afterwards. You don't feel like food has control over you. You feel totally in control around tasty food. Food is not the main event when you go out to dinner or go out to parties. You can go to a party and leave and not feel like you overdid it. You can eat one cookie and put the package away.

And as a liberated eater, you are not thinking about food 24/7 or beating yourself up about what you should or should not be doing. You're not taking your cues of what to eat from other people. And instead, you're tuning into your own desires to make your decisions.

So, you can totally go out to dinner with other people, and they're all eating pizza and you order a salad because you like the salad. You are not feeling resentful of having to eat the salad because everyone else can eat pizza, except for you. It's a completely different way of looking at your food decisions.

Sure. You absolutely get cravings, but they're not nearly as intense as they used to be. And you make decisions from an empowered place, understanding that if you do drink alcohol, you might suffer the consequences of not sleeping, of getting a hot flash, or

Done with Dieting Podcast #91: What Type of Eater Are You?

getting a headache. You have your self-care dialed in and you know what lifestyle behaviors you need to do on a regular basis so that you can manage your menopausal symptoms. Things like sustained energy, getting rid of your hot flashes, stable mood, load cravings, and you sleep through the night.

Now, you occasionally still overeat. I'm not going to say that that's going to go away. But it's not to the extent that you used to do it. And when you do, do it, you don't make it mean something about you. That you're a failure. You're able to enjoy a fabulous dinner out with your friends, or your partner, or eat ice cream with your kids, or your grandkids, and totally enjoy it for what it is and put it behind you. You don't dwell on things and beat yourself up because of it. And all of that overthinking is gone.

One of the things about the liberated eater is just the absence of pain, the absence of overthinking self-doubt. And I would love to tell you how it is but what I can tell you is really what it is not. And what it is not it's not constantly thinking about food. Like having that conversation with yourself on loop. All of that is gone.

You know, what food your body does well on, and you know how much you can indulge without suffering the consequences. And all of that overthinking is gone, and all of the food chatter is gone too. You'll be able to concentrate on other things and it is so incredibly liberating.

So, first, I want to tell you, that becoming a liberated eater is not a unicorn. I remember when I was in my overwhelmed stage and when I was in my all or nothing stage. That I would hear about people who could eat one cookie and I just could not fathom how that was even possible. Like, I would eat five or six. And I was like, I don't know any other way. But I was able to learn how to eat just one cookie and I teach my clients this every single day.

Done with Dieting Podcast #91: What Type of Eater Are You?

So, becoming a liberated eater is not a unicorn. But here's the thing, nobody teaches it. It's not something that's completely elusive and quite honestly, it is possible for everyone. Even, you. I know that you're completely dedicated, and I know that you've tried everything out there.

I talk to women all the time about this. But quite honestly, the system is rigged against us because all of the nutritional advice and all of the health advice that's out there, it's designed to keep us dependent on others. It's designed to tell us what to do instead of following your own inner wisdom.

It's just cookie cutter stuff, meaning that everyone is parroting the same exact stuff. If you do A, then that means that you should get result B. And if you don't get result B, then that means that either you didn't follow the plan or there's something wrong with you instead of there being something wrong with the strategy. Right?

It's totally ridiculous. Most diet and exercise programs aren't personalized to work with women in midlife where your hormones are at right now, and how your metabolism functions not to mention that most weight loss advice is based off of studies where the participants were college aged men.

I recorded this episode to give you hope. There's a better way, a way that doesn't feel so difficult and hard. A way where you can rediscover, how you were meant to eat before you received all of those messages about diet culture. Don't eat that or it will make you fat, right? And you need to banish all tasty foods. You can't eat them. Right?

But you live in a world where tasty foods exist. It would be really nice to be able to eat them without second guessing yourself and feeling guilty or just giving up.

Now, if you want to ascent to the liberated eater, I'm going to invite you to work with me. We can work together privately, or you can join my group coaching program, the

Done with Dieting Podcast #91: What Type of Eater Are You?

feel good sisterhood. Where I teach my clients exactly how to change their relationship with food, themselves, and exercise so that you can become a liberated eater too.

And I guarantee, that when you start to listen to your body and eat and move with your best self in mind, your body will thank you by becoming the body that you have desired. Schedule a consult with me to find out how to move from the type of eater that you are and become a liberated eater in the process. Go to elizabethsherman.com/consult to schedule your call.

Have a great week, everyone. I'll see you next time. Bye-bye

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.