

Done with Dieting Podcast #122: When We Judge Food & Health



Full Episode Transcript

With your Host
Elizabeth Sherman

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When I use the word judgment, what do you think? Is judgment good or is judgment bad? Should we be judging people? Should we be judging ourselves? Most people tell us that we shouldn't judge. But you know what? I think it's impossible not to.

Join me on today's podcast where I'm talking all about judgment. And what to do about it. Can you get rid of it completely?

Tune in to find out.

You are listening to the done with dieting podcast. The podcast for women who are experiencing perimenopause and menopause symptoms and want to feel better - like they did before their body started changing.

I am your host, Elizabeth Sherman, Master Certified health, and life coach for women in menopause and peri menopause. I've helped thousands of women manage their symptoms, get off the diet roller coaster, and change their relationship with food, exercise, and stop fighting with their bodies. And I do it through a feminist lens - which means exploring how we are socialized as young women has a huge impact on our current relationship with food & exercise, our bodies, health, and ourselves.

What's different about this podcast is that we're exploring your health from all sides, not just food and exercise. We also address the mindset shifts that will make you happier and lead to better health.

My goal in this podcast is to illustrate that the reason diets don't work long term is because your health doesn't exist in a silo. Your health and your weight are a symptom of the OTHER parts of your life and how you show up. I want to help you to feel good and live the life you desire from a 360 degree approach: body, mind, and soul.

Welcome. Let's get started.

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Hey everyone, welcome to today's podcast episode number 122. And today, what we're talking about is judgment. In all fairness, I actually had another podcast planned for you today, but I really started thinking about this conversation that I had with my client yesterday. And this podcast just came out of nowhere and I just needed to talk about it.

What we're talking about today is judgment. And here's how the conversation went with my client. So, yesterday, we were talking about food. The podcast that I actually had planned for today, I'm actually going to talk about next week. So, you're going to have to wait for that one. But that one is all about people pleasing.

And so, I was talking to my client about her people pleasing tendencies and how we eat in order to please other people. We will make choices about what to eat or what to drink in order to influence someone that we're eating with or someone near us. Their impression of us. She had brought up the idea that if she only had two glasses of wine at dinner, then she would come off as self-righteous to the other people at dinner.

In another conversation that we had, she was talking about how birthday cake, for example. If she was at someone else's party and they had brought like grocery store birthday cake and offered her some that she would eat it, but then she would feel really bad. And if she were to turn it down, that again the other person would think that she was self-righteous about it.

And it was so interesting to me that self-righteous was a judgment that someone might have about her or that she was judging that she would feel self-righteous when turning something down.

Now, earlier in the conversation, we were talking about other foods, and she had just mentioned on a whim that she loved all types of fish, but she didn't like shrimp. If someone offered her shrimp, she doesn't like shrimp. And so, she would say no, but yet that wouldn't come across as having this self-righteous feel to it.

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And so, it's so curious to me how we can have these different feelings about different things in general, different foods in this context. But in different feelings about foods. And in one context, we're judging it as bad, and in another, it's just kind of neutral. And so, that's what I wanted to talk about today.

So, first, be aware, and I think that this is really super important. When we think other people are judging us, we are actually judging ourselves because we don't actually know what other people are thinking about us. We don't know what their thoughts are. Right? Unless they actually come out and say it like, Elizabeth, you're being self-righteous right now.

When we are judging ourselves, when we're like, if I eat that, then they're going to think I'm a pig. So, that's an example of when we judge ourselves, or we think other people are going to judge us.

When we're at a party or when we're at dinner, we're afraid to reach for that second dinner roll, for example. For fear that other people are going to have thoughts about us. And so, when we project, because that's what we're doing. We're projecting our own thoughts onto other people. What we're really doing is we're just judging ourselves.

So, that's the first thing that's actually really super important. We don't know what other people think. And again, this ties into the podcast that I'm going to be sharing next week on people pleasing. Because we think we can control other people's judgments of us by doing a certain thing or by not doing a certain thing.

But in truth, we can't, people might think that I'm being a pig, even if I have one dinner roll, right? Or if I have one chip. So, we don't know what other people are thinking about us unless they actually tell us.

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Now, when we're talking about judgment in general, the human brain is first of all, very "judge-y". And so, there are three different things that we judge. We judge ourselves, we judge others, and we judge situations or circumstances.

Now, here's the thing. We are constantly told that judgment is bad. We're constantly told that we shouldn't judge. However, this is impossible. So, I'm going to give you permission to go ahead and judge. Because when we have judgements and then we judge ourselves for having the judgements, it doesn't make a lot of sense. Right?

What we're doing is we're just feeling worse about feeling bad in the first place. Because when we are judging other people, to be honest, those people cannot feel our judgment. When I'm judging other people, I am the only one who feels the judgment of that judgment. I know I'm getting a little meta here.

But it's actually really important to understand that. When we think other people think something of us, we don't actually feel their emotion. So, right now, there's someone out in this world right now who's judging me. And I have no idea that they're judging me.

You might be judging me right now. Thinking that I'm not explaining this well, and I have no idea that you have this judgment because I can't feel your judgment. Only, when I judge myself can I feel that emotion. So, that's actually really important to understand. It's part of the way that I coach my clients using what's called the think, feel, act cycle.

So, I can only feel my own emotions, I can't feel other people's emotions. And why that's important is because we try to control other people's emotions about us all the time. We want people to like us. Of course, we want other people to like us, but we think that we can manipulate people into feeling a certain way about us by doing certain things. And that isn't necessarily true. And I'm going to get more into this next week.

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Now, we're told not to judge. Again, this is impossible. The brain is very negative. We have thousands and thousands of years built up where our brain is on a constant mission to understand who is going to hurt us and how do we avoid that.

Our brain is a self-preservation machine. We are constantly on the lookout to avoid pain. What happens is we are constantly judging everything that comes our way and says, is that going to kill us? Is that going to hurt us? Is that going to cause us pain? And so, we judge ourselves, we judge other people, and we judge situations as positive or negative so that we can be one step ahead.

Now, the other piece to this is that the brain is narcissistic. What I mean by that is we are constantly taking in information, and we are asking ourselves, what does this mean for me? How is this impacting me? And that's really important as well because it's natural to be completely self-centered.

We are self-centered. Like everything that we do, we give ourselves this superiority that we're helping other people, but really, we're doing that so that we can feel good. So, what happens is we're told not to judge. And again, it's impossible. So, why that's important is when we judge ourselves for judging, it's really something that we can never get out of.

And so, what makes this worse is that when we judge ourselves for judging, we're in this endless loop of judging a situation, then punching ourselves in the face because we shouldn't have done that, right? We're like, oh, you shouldn't have done that.

So, I used to be super freaking judge-y. And quite honestly, I still am. But what I do now, I don't make it mean anything about myself or what I'm judging. And so, it's okay, I'm giving you permission. It's okay to judge. What's not okay is to act on that judgment. And so, I'm going to give you some examples here.

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Now, in this process, what being aware of the judgments has done for me. It's allowed the strength of my judgments to actually be weakened. And so, I think that that's actually really important there. Because when we think about judgment, we think about judgment being a yes or a no. Either I'm judging or I'm not. And I really think that judgment is a continuum. It's not an on or an off. It's not binary. Because judgment isn't a binary, it's actually very nuanced.

We can judge things as good, and we can judge things as bad. And we can actually feel neutral about things as well.

Going back to my client. Some of the things that she said were one that sugar is poison. That's a very strong statement. And so, of course, that statement creates a very strong feeling associated with it. She also said, wine isn't good for you. Now, that's a judgment as well. However, it's not as striking as sugar is poison, right?

So, wine isn't good for you. It's like, okay, wine isn't good for you, but it's not going to kill me, maybe. Maybe she thinks that. And then, another judgment that she said was, I don't like shrimp. She was judging shrimp as bad. Now, each of those different statements has a completely different weight associated with it. And that's what I mean by judgment isn't binary. That judgment has nuance to it. We can have very strong judgements and then we can have neutral judgment.

Now, where we get into problems is when we have very strong judgements, we will often feel like those judgements are fact. So, my client right now probably believes that sugar is poison that that is a fact. However, not everyone believes that. Right?

After our conversation yesterday, I wrote her a text this morning to continue our conversation about judgment. And I wanted to share a little bit, not the actual text but share a little bit with you about what I told her. And so I think, that it's really important

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when we are looking at judgment, whether we're judging ourselves, whether we're judging other people, whether we're judging food, whether we're judging anything.

The way to know that you're judging something is when you hear the word should. You'll also know that you're judging something when you feel a negative emotion. So, when you think that's bad or that you worry about something. Then, what we're doing is we're preemptively judging.

When we have negative emotion, we are generally judging something. And so, we actually judge a lot. And once we become aware of how judgment feels in our bodies, then we can become hyper aware of it. We weren't born with these judgements that we have today. We have picked them up through a lifetime of interacting with other people. And we've taken on their thoughts and beliefs about things.

When I'm having a conversation with someone, and that person gives me their opinion. They are offering their judgment about whatever it is that we're talking about. Oh, that's fantastic. That's a judgment. Oh, that's so bad. That's a judgment. So, when we have conversations with people, they are always offering us their thoughts and beliefs about the topic that we're talking about.

We get to decide whether we want to buy into those thoughts and beliefs. And so, as young children, we were born not having a judgment in our brains. But we naturally picked up judgements from all of the people around us. Our parents, our teachers, our preachers, our family members, everyone in society. Reading newspapers, listening to the news.

Now, we have social media where everyone offers their opinion about everything. And so, we are constantly being bombarded with judgements about something being good or bad. And as children, we don't have the capacity to question a lot of those beliefs that are being put on us. And so, we grow up believing certain things.

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We have judgements about food, we have judgements about the weather. We have judgements about money. About working, about what is a suitable type of job for ourselves or our loved ones. We judge what is an appropriate expression of our sexuality. What's moral. What's good. What's bad. How we should act. What's quote unquote professional. What's socially acceptable to do. We have so many judgments about our bodies and what we should do as women.

It can be really super helpful to start questioning all of these things that we have judgements about. I started doing this about a year ago. I started questioning it. So when I started hearing myself say the word should or shouldn't. I would ask myself, wow, is that true?

Who decided that it was true? And does everyone agree? Does everyone in the world agree that it's true? This was especially helpful when it comes to behavior. My behavior and the behavior of other people that exist in the world. And so, if everyone in the world does agree or does not agree, asking yourself, why don't they?

So, I want to share an example with you. A few months ago, I was actually in an airport, and I saw these kids, they were horsing around. And immediately, I had this thought of they shouldn't do that. They're not acting civilized. And then, I stopped myself for a second and I was like, wait a minute. Are they not acting civilized? Who decided that they're not acting appropriately? Who am I to judge how these kids are acting? Who decided what quote unquote civilized means?

What I ended up understanding was that many of the judgments that we have in this world about how we should behave. How we should act. What we should and shouldn't do. How we should interact with our friends. What we should do in response to a friend, or a partner, or our children, or how we should act as mothers, or wives, or people who are in good standing in this world.

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All of that is made up. Like someone decided and we all bought into it. Like, who decided what a woman should look like? Seriously, who decided this? This is what's called internalized oppression. Someone else decided that a woman should be thin, A woman should be tall, she should have this type of hair.

Something that I need to do a podcast on is I have decided not to shave anymore. It has been a fascinating thought experiment on my body image. I'm going to share it sometime. But anyway, who decided that women should shave their legs and their armpits? Who decided this that hair on a woman that is natural is unsightly? We've bought into it.

Who decided that youth was more beautiful than women in middle age? Who decided that women were better homemakers than men? Who decided what a marriage should look like? And how couples should manage their finances?

Like these are questions that I talk to my clients about all the time because we have such shame about all of these topics, and we have all of this shame because we don't fit into the box that someone else has told us that we should be fitting into. Someone else told us that we should look a certain way. Someone told us that we are no longer beautiful now that we've hit 50. That we're dried up, that we're no longer relevant, and we've bought into it.

When we feel shame about a topic, we don't want to talk about it anymore. But knowing that these judgements, these beliefs that we have are 100% made up. And they were probably made up by some white dude, right? We didn't even have a choice in this.

When we decide that, when it becomes so super clear that we did not buy into this, that we didn't have a seat at the table when they were deciding, we get to make our own rules.

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That's actually what I wanted to talk to you about today. When we have judgment, first of all, be aware that it's totally natural to feel judgment. But what we can start doing is we can start questioning where those judgments came from and whether they're something that we still want to buy into. Judgments that we have about ourselves, judgements that we have about others, other women, men, the society at large. Like we get to decide what we want to believe going forward.

Now, you might be thinking, but Elizabeth, I want to know if people are judging me. Okay, why? Their judgment is only hurting them. When you take the stigma away from when you take the sting away from whatever they're judging you for. Like maybe people don't like my curly hair, I don't care.

That's them feeling a certain way about me. I've made peace with my hair. I've made peace with my age. I've made peace with my body. So, if someone else is judging me for my body, They can go suck it. I don't care. And so, this is where the work is.

When we can look at ourselves and be completely shame free that this is where I am. And I'm telling you, like this work is some of the most important work that you can do. Because going forward, it makes no sense to continue beating yourself up for something that you really don't have any desire to change.

And so, what I mean by that and I talked about this in another podcast called "What are you willing to do?" So many women that I meet are beating themselves up for not being able to stick to a specific diet. And then, they're also beating themselves up for their body for eating a certain way. When we can do what we want to do as far as our eating goes, I don't want to say strict enough, but when we can create a way of eating that suits our lives and promotes good health and has just enough treats in it that make us to feel good and don't overdo it. Then, our bodies will become however they're meant to be.

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It doesn't make sense to beat ourselves up about our body shape when we are doing everything that we can to be healthy. And so, we need to just drop that. So, I've ranted long enough.

If you want to do some of this work, this is good stuff to do to help yourself to have more peace in your life. When you can get rid of all of these judgements that you have about yourself, your life is going to be so incredibly good. I am going to invite you to work with me.

So, if you're interested in doing this work, in dropping the judgements that you have about yourself, of how you should be acting, of how you should look, of everyone else around you. This work could not be more important to living a life that you desire. Because when we can stop the judgements and stop living what we think other people think that we should be doing.

Then, that is creating an authentic life. You do not want to go to the grave regretting anything. And this is part of it. So many times, we don't do the thing that we want to do because we're afraid of other people's opinions about it. If you want to live a truly authentic life, I'm going to invite you to schedule a consult. Go to elizabethsherman.com/consult and let's figure out if one-on-one coaching is right for you, or if you want to do this work inside the context of my small group coaching program, "the Feel Good Sisterhood."

All right. Go out and be judge-y, but don't judge yourself. Okay? Have an amazing week, everyone. I will talk to you next time.

Bye-bye.

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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.

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