

Ep #5: Diet Words



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Natalie Brown

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This is *Weight Loss Success* with Natalie Brown, episode five.

Welcome to *Weight Loss Success* with Natalie Brown. If you're a successful woman who is ready to stop struggling with your weight, you're in the right place. You'll learn everything you need to know to lose weight for the last time in bitesize pieces. Here's your host, certified life and weight coach Natalie Brown.

Hey, everybody, do you remember in elementary school when you would raise your hand and your teacher would call on you and you would ask, "Can I go to the bathroom?" And she would say, "I don't know, can you?" Do you remember this?

Her purpose being, obviously, to drive home the grammatical lesson that if you are asking if you are capable of going to the bathroom, with the word, "Can," only you would know that. But if you were wanting her permission to be excused from class to go use the bathroom facilities, that language that you would need to use is, "May I go to the bathroom." Semantics, right?

Our elementary school teachers were onto something though here. Language matters. The words we use matter because words strung together into sentences that we think and believe are what create our feelings, which to me makes the words the most important thing to focus on when we're trying to lose weight.

The words create motivation, excitement, anxiety, hopelessness, deprivation, restriction, misery, and success. So, let's talk about the words today.

I threw a couple of words in there that may have caused you to start sweating a bit; deprivation and restriction. Yikes, right? These are two words that send a shiver down most of our spines.

I have clients come to me who have extreme reactions when they think of changing what they eat or eliminating a food group. I call it PTRD, or post-traumatic restriction disorder, where I see my clients practically curl up in a

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ball in the corner in terror at the thought of starting a new plan or program because of this feeling, right?

I'm sure you can relate if you've ever taken extreme measures or tried a crazy diet to lose weight quick. We are always enticed by the idea of fast and easy weight loss. How many pills, programs, and plans have you bought into based on the promise of it being quick, easy, painless, and even guaranteed?

That's because your brain's job is to help you avoid pain and seek pleasure and comfort in the most efficient way possible. So, a fast, easy exit from the misery you feel around your weight ticks every one of those boxes. We can escape the pain of being overweight and enjoy the pleasure of getting to our natural weight quickly; pain avoided, pleasure experienced, energy conserved. Check, check, check, right?

One small tiny issue here though is that food also ticks all of those boxes. To your toddler brain, pain means danger. And we use food to escape it. Food muffles the discomfort and perceived danger of uncomfortable emotions and it creates pleasure for our brain in the most efficient way possible.

Our toddler brain is not about long-term solutions. It's about short-term answers. So, the quick fix easy answer weight loss programs entice our toddler brain. They are short-term answers.

The irony here is that in our haste to escape the pain of being overweight and unhappy about it, we take extreme measures and feel the painful feelings of deprivation and restriction. And most of the time, we end up quitting and overeating the foods we are restricting and gain any quick weight lost anyway.

You've all heard the phrase, "Haste makes waste," right? Okay, so about 17 years ago, there was a commercial weight loss program that was everywhere. They had a catchy jingle and the commercials were on all the

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time. And this was before we could skip commercials or not watch them, so we had to see them. They were on all the time.

And they promised fast results. So, my toddler brain, that was tired of hiding my stomach and wearing maternity pants even though my baby was 18 months old, signed up and I lost over 30 pounds in something like five weeks, like a crazy short amount of time.

I remember having to go buy new clothes because nothing fit me, and trying on a size of pants that I had never seen before. I mean, obviously I knew it existed, but not for me. People saw me and they were shocked at the change, probably a little worried, if I'm honest. Though, at the time I thought it was awesome and I was not concerned.

Some of you are probably now going to message me and ask me what program it was so you can hurry and sign up because your immediate gratification toddler brain thinks it sounds like an amazing program that works.

Wrong, it was basically just starving myself and calling it a healthy diet. I felt terrible the whole time, even though I liked the way I looked. All of the restriction made me feel super-deprived and a little bit crazy.

There was this moment, in the midst of all this starvation, where after giving my son a handful of flavored mini marshmallows for a snack, I downed the remainder of the entire bag in like one minute because I was feeling so deprived. I don't even like those.

And I remember, in the midst of it, being like, "What am I doing? I'm just eating marshmallows." Inhaling them is a better word for it. but I felt like I couldn't stop. I'm sure you've been there at some point. Maybe not with colored marshmallows, but in some other dark corner of your pantry eating some random food, seemingly against your will.

So, what is this all about? Well, it really comes back to words. Deprivation means the lack or denial of something considered to be a necessity. When

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we consider or have the thought that pizza and chocolate chip cookies are a necessity, and then we deny ourselves or tell ourselves that we can't have these foods, we feel deprived. Deprivation is a feeling. It's not something you are. It's something you feel.

Pay attention to the word "Can't" here. We say, "I can't eat pizza. It's not on my plan," or, "I can't have chocolate chip cookies, they're bad for me." But remember that from the elementary school example? Only you know if you can or can't. It's not for some one outside of you to determine. And yet, that's what we do.

The thing that makes dieting feel like dieting instead of deciding is our relegating the choice to something outside of us. When we think, "I can't," we feel like something outside of us is controlling the decision. And if the rule comes from outside of us, so does the enforcement of the rule and the consequence.

That's why, when we're thinking, "I can't," and feeling deprived, we then find ourselves participating in eating that feels out of our control. We've put all of the control outside of us.

So, we think that the rebellious eating that ensues is rebelling against that outside force that is telling us what we can or can't eat. But it's really rebelling against ourselves. Think about it.

Who feels the overfull stomach? Who feels the bloating? Who sees the weight go up on the scale? Who feels the guilt and shame that comes from the judgment of our behavior? The diet or program or group leader you are attributing the rules and control to does not feel it. You do.

The truth is, if you're an adult human in the world, you can eat whatever you want; any food, any amount, any time. Now, you may argue that if you are allergic to peanuts, you can't eat them. But even if you have a deathly allergy, you can choose to eat that thing.

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No one has the power to tell you, you can't, except you. It's always your choice. And even if a plan or something else outside of you tells you, you can't eat something, and you don't eat it, it's not the plan forcing you to do that. It's still you choosing not to eat it.

You're always choosing what goes into your mouth and what doesn't. Telling ourselves that we can't eat something is a lie. And that thought usually creates deprivation. And deprivation typically drives quitting and eating that very thing we keep telling ourselves we can't have in large quantities, among many other things also in large quantities.

Can't is a poison apple. It looks and sounds noble and helpful and pretty, but it is usually a weight loss killer. So, let's stop it already with the can't. If you have decided you want to limit your intake of sugar and flour based on your desire to manage and control your fat storage hormone insulin, and as a result you tell yourself, "I can't eat chocolate chip cookies," you will feel deprived.

You're denying yourself of a food you think is a necessity. When you tell yourself you can't eat chocolate chip cookies and you feel deprived, you may refrain from eating them using sheer willpower, but you will hate every minute of it. And eventually, your willpower will run out and you will eat one, which will turn into 10, and then into a three-day eating all of the things episode, am I right?

This is kind of like if you give a mouse a muffin or a moose a muffin, or whatever that book is. Do you remember that? There's like a million versions of it. Like, you do this, then this happens, and this happens.

So, let's look at some alternatives to, "I can't." What happens when you think, "I am choosing not to eat chocolate chip cookies..." How do you feel?

Now, you may not feel good. But you may not feel deprived. And that's kind of what we're after here, right? So, try that thought on, "I am choosing not to eat chocolate chip cookies."

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What about thoughts about what you are choosing, like, “I’m choosing foods that align with my goals,” or, “I’m choosing to eat foods that fuel me. I’m choosing foods that help my insulin rest. I am taking care of me with every bite...” trying on some different versions of your diet words.

Notice how you feel when you think, “I can’t,” versus, “I choose.” If you can eat whatever you want, what will you choose to do? I think what you should choose to do right now is subscribe and rate and review the podcast because I’m giving away some goods to some lucky peeps who do this; some goods, my friends.

I have a handful of \$100 Amazon gift cards that I want to make your Prime dreams come true, and a pair of AirPods Pros for one of the luckiest among you. I love mine so much and I wear them every day to cancel the noise I don’t want to hear and deliver the noise I do want to hear, like my favorite podcasts.

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Thanks for listening to this week’s episode of *Weight Loss Success* with Natalie Brown. If you want to learn more about how to lose weight for the last time, come on over to itbeginswithathought.com. We’ll see you here next week.