

Ep #6: Pivotal Weight Loss Moments



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Natalie Brown

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

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.

Hello everyone. Six episodes and counting. I will keep being amazed at the fact that I have a podcast and keep announcing my amazement to you all on an ongoing basis, so just get used to it. It's happening. I hope I never get used to this and it feels this fun forever. I love it. I love being here.

I wanted to title today's podcast Great Moments in Weight Loss, as an homage to Great Moments with Mr. Lincoln at Disneyland. If you're unfamiliar with this attraction, that makes perfect sense because I don't think anyone ever goes in it. It's just inside the entrance, just to the right after you head under the train bridge, and I think for most people, it's just a part of the charming scenery of Main Street, USA, unless you grew up going to Disneyland with my family.

For my dad, it's a perfect respite from the heat and a place to sit down, and so he would drag us in there and spend 20 minutes resting while we were bored out of our minds and wishing we were on Space Mountain. Taking a beat to regroup and take care of yourself, like my dad did with Mr. Lincoln is similar to one of those pivotal moments that I want to talk about today.

But first, for those of you who also had a dad who dragged you into the Mr. Lincoln ride and want to laugh about it, check out Disneyland Lincoln ride gets scary by Studio C. It's a super funny sketch. Just give you a few minutes to laugh.

Okay, so if you think about it, your weight loss journey is made up of moments. The moment you decided to start a new program, the moment you see a new number on the scale that you haven't seen, the moment you

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realize you've eaten an entire bag of Cheetos unconsciously, and for most of us, the moment we decide it's too hard and we quit.

I think there are three pivotal moments that determine our weight loss success. If we can focus on these three moments, instead of having a moment where we quit, we can instead experience the moment where we realize we're at our goal weight and we will never go back because we are changed. So good.

The good news about these three moments is that they happen over and over again throughout our journey. We have lots of opportunities to build our skills here, and create success in each one of them. The first moment is the before moment. This is the moment before we eat, where we decide what we will eat.

Most people think this is the moment, the only, the most critical moment because if we decide right, we will lose weight. And if we decide wrong, we will be off the wagon and climbing back up the scale. A lot of pressure on this moment, right? No wonder we freak out so much about what to eat, how much, the macros, the points, the carbs, the bad, the good.

This moment is also where the battle usually ensues. The tug of war between what we can and can't or should and shouldn't eat starts up full force. And the willpower defense weapons engage. This is the moment where we feel restriction and we feel deprivation and all the, it's not fair that I can't have what I want/eat my favorite foods/have to do all this planning conversation happens in our heads.

But it doesn't have to be this way. This before moment doesn't have to be right before, when our toddler brain has the reins. We can make these decisions long before the moment of eating, when our adult brain has control of the situation.

When we know our adult brain is in charge of the decision-making, it makes it much easier in the moment to say no to our very persistent toddler brain.

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I'm sure we have all witnessed or - okay, let's be honest, been the mom at the grocery store in the checkout line with a very persistent toddler.

The toddler is all about immediate gratification. She sees something or the 25-somethings made of sugar that are all right at eye-level in the checkout line and think she must have them immediately or she will die. And she makes it known, loudly and relentlessly that this is what is happening.

We can see this mom, just got off work, she's had a long day, she wants to get home and get dinner made and do what needs to be done so she can go to bed. And this toddler doesn't care about any of that. She just needs a KitKat and a bag of Skittles and she needs them now.

And this mom, in the face of the tantrum-ing toddler and all of the judgy eyes on her, relents and gives the child the sugar so they can get out of there. The grocery checkout line at the height of this emotion is not the time to try to have a rational conversation with the toddler. You can't reason with a tantrum-ing toddler.

The time for conversations is before this moment, when everyone is calm and open to discussion. So that's why planning what you will eat ahead of time is so important. It doesn't make it so your toddler brain doesn't want the thing it sees in the moment. It just makes it possible to say, "Hey, remember what we talked about? We're going to have a treat when we get home, after dinner."

There still may be tears and some protesting of course. Changing the way we parent our brain takes some time and some patience. With consistency though, the toddler brain comes to understand that the adult brain is in fact in charge. And we no longer have total meltdown mode every time we go to the store.

So decide well before the moment of eating what you will eat. I recommend that my clients plan their meals the night before. You have a pretty solid idea of what's happening in your life tomorrow. And you can usually plan pretty accurately according to it.

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So you can make this plan with your adult brain that's able to see the long view, not just what's right in front of you. You can decide with your goals in mind what you want to put on the plan. You can ask what foods serve your goals, what foods help you get closer to the person you want to be, what's realistic for you, what do you want to commit to that you know you will stick to.

And then you get to wake up and carry out your plan, knowing the decision have already been made. Doesn't that sound so lovely? Well, it won't be. It will not be as neat and tidy as that because you can't remove your toddler brain from the equation altogether. Your toddler brain, when it sees the salad you have planned for lunch, will start whining about how it wants a burger and fries instead. Or it wants to skip the salad and just eat ice cream.

This is where we find the next pivotal moment that we usually plough right through. The during moment. Your toddler brain is convinced pizza is the best choice, even though your adult brain already decided on chicken and broccoli. So it's time to take a beat and regroup. This is the Mr. Lincoln ride of your weight loss journey.

You have a plan, your brain doesn't want to follow it, and what we want to do is create some space to investigate why. The space doesn't have to be three hours. It could just be three minutes, but as soon as you notice your brain wanting to argue with the plan and eat something else, stop. Set a timer for 10 minutes or 30 minutes or whatever you decide, and question it.

Why do I want this other food? Why does it feel important right now? Does this other food serve my goals? How am I feeling right now? How will I feel if I eat it? How will I feel if I don't eat it? Will this matter tomorrow? What would my future self advice me to do in this moment? What am I really looking for?

At the end of the time you set, you can decide if you want to eat the thing or not, but you'll be doing it consciously with your adult brain instead of your

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in-the-moment toddler brain. Think of how many things you eat without thinking, without knowing why. Imagine how many things you would not have eaten if you took a beat to regroup before deciding to put it in your mouth.

This eliminates the how did I eat this many Oreos, or I have no idea what happened, out of control, against our will kind of eating scenarios that cause so much frustration and weight gain, ultimately. You're not going to want to do this in the moment. You're not going to want to stop. You're going to want to shove the food in your mouth to quiet the tantrum of your toddler brain.

You'll feel really uncomfortable as you're questioning and refraining from eating. That's okay. When we have these strong urges for things and we don't answer them, it's like having an itch on your back that you can't scratch because you're driving your car down the freeway. It's super annoying. It feels very urgent and it makes you want to go to any lengths to make it go away.

But you don't because you don't want to get into an accident, so you just tolerate it. And eventually it subsides. I have never had an itch last and last indefinitely, no matter how much it felt like it would in the moment. So you may decide at the end of your questioning period to eat the thing anyway, and that leads us to the third pivotal moment, the after moment.

Inevitably, you will have some during moments where your toddler brain wins and you eat the thing. And this, to me, is the most pivotal moment of all. This is the make or break moment. The moment that ends most weight journeys because this is where we become our own worst enemy.

After we eat the thing, all of the judgmental and often kind of vicious self-talk starts running in our brain. We start to question and doubt our commitment and our capability, we use it as just more evidence of how broken we are, and we start to feel shame about our inability to control

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ourselves and guilt about breaking our commitment and embarrassed about our lack of willpower and frustrated that this happened again.

And here's one thing I know for sure. When we are feeling shame, guilt, embarrassment and frustration, it is highly unlikely that we will be reaching for roast chicken and veggies. For most of us, we escape these uncomfortable emotions by slipping into a cool pool of apathy.

This is where the screw it, I don't care, I'll try again tomorrow dialogue begins, and we know then it's the beginning of the end. So this moment, this after moment is where you really have the chance to change the conversation and create a new future for yourself. This is where your real power lies. This is the moment your future self will thank you for the very most.

Because this is where all of the learning and growth happens. This after moment is your opportunity to be honest about what happened. Decide what you want to make it mean, what you want to learn from it, and how you move forward. Your most powerful tools in the after moment are curiosity and compassion.

What I've found about curiosity is that it's impossible for it to coexist with judgment. When you're curious, you can't be judgmental, and vice versa. And when you are compassionately curious, you open yourself up to even deeper understanding.

Now, you may think that any time you're asking questions, you're being curious. Not so, my friends. It is not the question in and of itself that signals curiosity. It's the nature and the quality of the question. So if you're asking, what's wrong with me? Or why can't I do anything right? You're in essence saying something is wrong with me and I can't do anything right.

That is judgment disguised as a question. It's not the same thing as being curious. If you ask what worked in this situation, what happened, your curiosity will lead you to learning. So after the moment, I want you to get specific, get curious, and then get on with your life.

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We have a tendency to catastrophize what happened. We were out of control, we binged on everything in sight, we threw it all away, we totally screwed up, we fell off the wagon completely. I hear these things all the time from my clients.

When your brain does this, get specific. What exactly did you eat? What? What food? How much? What exactly did you eat? Then you can get curious about it. Why did you eat it? What did it provide you in the moment? Maybe it was joy, fun, relief from boredom or stress.

What will you learn? What will you do differently next time? How do you want to feel about it going forward? How will you let it go? The most important question in this after moment is what now. That is totally up to you.

Okay my friends, in this after-the-podcast moment, will you please, please rate, review and subscribe? I really want your feedback so I can keep making helpful podcasts for your weight loss journey and we can get the word out to as many people as we can that this exists, that it's here, and that I can help them too.

I also happen to have some \$100 Amazon gift cards that are burning a hole in my pocket, and a pair of AirPod Pros I really want to give away to some lucky listeners who rate, review and subscribe. So head over to itbeginswithathought.com/podcastlaunch for all the details. I will see you soon.

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.