

## Ep #18: Food Rules



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With Your Host

**Natalie Brown**

[Weight Loss Success](#) with Natalie Brown

## Ep #18: Food Rules

This is *Weight Loss Success* with Natalie Brown, episode 18.

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. So we wrapped up the launch giveaway last week, but I just have to keep up the review love. It's so much fun for me to read your reviews and hear what's helping you and what you're loving about the podcast and how you're changing the way you think about weight loss with what you learn here.

So I decided each week, I'm going to choose a review to share here on the podcast. And if your review is chosen, that means you are in for a treat. Not a food treat of course, but I will be sending you a special gift, a thoughtfully curated package of some of my very favorite things.

If you want to be eligible, review the podcast on iTunes, which is super easy. You can find the write a review button on your mobile phone or even if you're listening to it on your desktop through iTunes. And then head to [itbeginswithathought.com/review](http://itbeginswithathought.com/review) to submit the title of your review to me.

So today's review is from Brittle. The title of her review is, "Yay! Podcast!" I share your enthusiasm, Brittle. Podcasts are my favorite. So she says, "Stumbled on her Facebook post, literally right after I had baked some chocolate chip cookies to eat my emotions, LOL." Seriously, I totally get that.

"I've been receiving her emails and love those, and now the podcast. Love the tips she gives us in every episode. It helps to take the overwhelm and noise in our heads about losing weight away. Simple and to the point and very helpful."

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Thank you for listening, Brittlee, and for your review. Don't you love it when the universe helps you out? It's like, there's a different way to cope with emotions, other than cookies. Let me help you. Listen to this podcast. Read some of the stuff this lady writes. I love it. So good.

Okay, let's talk food rules today, shall we? When I say food rules, I mean all of the beliefs and judgments and parameters that you put on food and eating. For example, the diet industry and the culture we live in have been telling us for years that all we have to do is eat less and exercise more to lose weight.

So you may have a food rule that says you have to just eat less and exercise more and you're good. You've probably also heard that you should eat six smaller meals a day to keep your metabolism moving. So you may have the rule that eating more frequently is better and not eating enough will damage or slow your metabolism.

If you grew up in the 80s and 90s like I did, it was the height of the low-fat, low-calorie diet craze. We were all starving ourselves and eating things like Red Vines because they were low fat. Do you remember that? When everything said low fat and fat-free on the packaging.

Everything from candy to crackers was advertising their low-fat status. I didn't realize that when you remove the fat, they have to add a bunch of sugar in to make things palatable and that sugar is in fact what is making us fat. Not fat.

I remember eating Snack Well's cookies and Hot Tamales and drinking Diet Coke and truly thinking I was eating healthy because it was low fat. And at the time, the rule was fat is bad. Kind of like the gluten-free labeling of things today. Without knowing much about it, even if you don't have gluten-intolerance, many of us have adopted a gluten-free is better rule because we see the labels saying gluten-free on everything and we hear people talking about it.

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The longer you've been alive, and especially the longer you've been conscious of your weight and trying to lose weight or not gain weight, the longer your list of food rules has likely gotten. I kind of imagine it like a binder full of random pieces of paper and Post-It notes sticking out and there's pages of books in there and things ripped out of magazines and posters folded up and jammed in because that's how it works.

We hear something from a friend, we adopt it as a rule. And we listen to a podcast about something else and we adopt rules we learned from that. And we read a pamphlet at the doctor's office and we adopt a rule or two there. We see someone's Facebook post and we adopt a rule from there.

Then we sign up for a program and we've dropped some of the rules we heard on the podcast for a whole bunch of new rules of this program and on and on and on. So there's a whole bunch of ruffraff in our brains creating confusion and anxiety.

And for a lot of us, total apathy because we feel like we can't win. We can't do anything right because of all the conflicting rules we're trying to follow, and so we will therefore never get this. Our brains really like rules. We like them because our brain wants as much predictability as possible.

Predictability means safety and since our brain's job is to protect us from danger, it's all over the safety and predictability. We think if we follow rules, we will be able to predict outcomes. If I do this, then this will happen. If I eat leafy green veggies, my heart will be healthier. If I eat too much fat, I will get fat and have high cholesterol.

And so by paying attention to and following the rules, I will be able to have some control over what may otherwise be uncontrolled and therefore dangerous. So I want you to think about some of your food rules. I want you to dig deep.

Think not just about the wheat over white bread rule but all of your random rules too. Like, I once did a low-sugar diet that told me that bananas and raisins were high-sugar fruits and so I spent a chunk of time having the rule

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that those things are cheat items. That's another rule I subscribed to, that there are two categories of foods. Foods that are acceptable and foods that are cheat items.

All fun, entertaining food was in the category of a cheat, and everything else had its own categories. I also spent a period following a rule that told me the way to not overeat was to drink a glass of water or eat an apple before a meal, so then I would be full and eat less at the meal.

Another rule, as I mentioned, I followed for many years was that low fat was healthy. So anything with low fat on the label I just considered a health food. So many of our rules around food and eating we adopt in the name of health and weight loss.

We think that following the rules will lead us to freedom in our bodies. But I think it's the opposite. Think of all those rules like bars in a prison cell. Every rule you adopt and hold on to is one of those bars. So that rule you adopted when you were seven about rice cakes being basically calorie-free, or the one you picked up when you were 15 that told you that candy is fine if it's low fat, or the one when you were 22 about cream soups contributing to heart disease are all bars in the mental prison of all of your food rules.

Our judgments about whether or not something is good or bad or healthy or unhealthy and all the rules we use to punish ourselves thin are actually keeping us stuck right where we are and are often creating bodies that are feeling more and more limited in the way that they move around in the world.

And the most detrimental part of living by these endless lists of food rules is that it puts all of the power and control over what we do or don't do outside of ourselves. It's like these external rules or bars are the only things keeping us in control.

We rely on the newest, latest diet or fad to tell us what to do and we in turn ignore our own inner wisdom about what our body needs and how to take

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care of ourselves with love. This leaves us feeling like we don't have a choice. We have to, we can't, need to, shouldn't, aren't supposed to. The rules are deciding for us. We don't have any power.

And when we feel disempowered, our brain's response is to try to take back the power. That's why we so often find ourselves rebelling against these food rules that we've created. As humans, we're wired to become independent creatures.

Ever notice that toddlers are constantly saying no and mine and I'll do it myself? As humans, we are driven to assert our independence and figure out how to take care of ourselves. The irony of all of this is these rules are your own rules created by your own brain.

No one is threatening you if you don't follow them. Your life, not on the line if you don't follow them. Your loved ones are not in danger if you don't follow them. Unless you have a food allergy, none of these rules are absolute. None of them are laws. None of them are set in stone.

Even if you do have an allergy or some other physical limitation with food, you can still totally choose to eat that thing. You may end up in the hospital, but you can break that rule if you want to. In fact, all of these rules you have are just your thoughts about these foods. By and large, they are not facts.

If there is even one person on Earth that would disagree with you on this rule, then it is your thought and not a fact and is therefore optional and changeable. Steven C. Hayes put it so beautifully when he said, "Like a lion trapped in a paper cage, human beings are generally most trapped by the illusions of their own mind."

So how do we break free of these rule prisons, these paper cages, and let go of these rules? I think the first step in making any change is becoming aware of where you currently are. So make a list of all of your food rules. All of them.

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Think about different food groups, holidays, food in relationship to weight loss, what you think is good or bad, or even a list like I mentioned of foods that are okay and foods that are considered cheats or whatever you call them. What dictates what you eat and don't eat?

I want you to question all of them. I'm not saying I want you to live a life without any rules. But I want you to be aware of your reasons for the rules and love your reasons. I want you to be aware of your rules and what they are creating for you. I want you to see that the rules are choices and if they are not serving you, you don't have to keep following them.

I don't want you to be doing things because you should or shouldn't based on your rules. I want you to be doing things because you want to and you think it's the best thing for you. It's the difference between being intrinsically and externally motivated. One works temporarily and one long-term.

I want you to ask yourself of each rule, is this true? How do I know? Does living by this rule help me? Do I gain anything from listening to it and living by it? Is it keeping me stuck? Does it hinder my progress? Does it get me closer to my goal? Does it help me be the person I want to be? What would my life be like without some of these rules?

And then once you've questioned and created clarity around the rule and why you have it and what it's creating for you, you can make a decision. Do I keep it or do I let it go? Some of these rules you may really like and want to keep because they're helpful, but if they're not, let them go.

Okay beautiful people, if you love the podcast, if you are learning, if it is helping you, will you please rate and review it on iTunes? Then, head to [itbeginswithathought.com/review](http://itbeginswithathought.com/review) and submit the title of your review to me. That link is also in the show notes for your convenience and 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

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last time, come on over to [itbeginswithathought.com](http://itbeginswithathought.com). We'll see you here next week.