

Ep #24: Homeostasis



Full Episode Transcript

With Your Host

Natalie Brown

[Weight Loss Success](#) with Natalie Brown

Ep #24: Homeostasis

This is *Weight Loss Success* with Natalie Brown, episode 24.

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. Today's review that I want to share comes from Laura and she says double thank you's. "Thank you, thank you," is the title of her review.

She says this. "I'm so glad I found this podcast. My original plan was to listen while I was doing other things, but after a few episodes, I went back to the beginning and started over, listening with pen and paper in hand. Every episode gives me something to contemplate and new ideas to open up to. Thank you so much for taking the time to do this."

Thank you, thank you, Laura. This is exactly what I intend for you all to do with what I offer here in the podcast. Contemplate, reflect, answer the questions I pose, and not just in your mind, but sit down with pen and paper like Laura's doing, and write down the thoughts your brain offers you.

Look at your answers to the questions with your eyes. Read the words that your mind is creating. You'll see them in a whole new way, and like Laura says, find new ideas to open up to. I love it. Love it, love it.

So we recently got a kitten in our house. She was actually my daughter's birthday present so she's technically my daughter's but we all love her and we help take care of her. We also have two big dogs and another cat at my house and a bird, while we're on the subject.

Yes, we're crazy, yes, it's chaos, yes, we love it. But I digress. So when we first brought her home, this kitten, we decided it would be wise to have her stay in my daughter's room with the door closed to keep the dogs and the

Ep #24: Homeostasis

other cat out, to give her a chance to kind of acclimate to this new home she was in full of strange people and sounds and animals.

She came from a home with 10 other kittens. They had two mama cats that both had litters about the same time, so they had a bunch of kittens, six kids in the home. So we learned really quickly that she wasn't used to and didn't like being alone and she also wasn't 100% litter trained yet.

So we took turns hanging out with her 24 hours a day for a solid week to make sure she was going potty and playing and adjusting. My daughter did the lion's share of the work because it was her baby, which included being kept up all night sometimes by this tiny nocturnal kitten, and for multiple nights in a row.

So one night I went up to tuck her in and to say goodnight, only to find her just lying there crying. She was like, "Mom, I'm just so tired." And heaven help my mom heart. So I took her down to my bed. I tucked her in. I swear she was asleep before I even got to my bedroom door.

And then I took the night shift. And it was rough. It was a very late night of being pounced on by this little kitten, followed by her finally curling up and falling to sleep on my head. Not even kidding. I posted a picture of this on my Instagram this week so you can see the reality. It is @itbeginswithathoughtcoaching if you want to go follow me.

But anyway, hilarious, and just her face in the picture just tells you everything. So my question really for you is have you ever slept with a dog at your feet or a kitten on your head or even a child in your bed? It is not comfortable.

I woke up a few different times with some seriously painful neck muscles from my head just being like, kind of holding her up. Her being on my head and all. But here's what I think is so fascinating about it. I didn't move. I didn't roll over, I didn't move her, I didn't do anything about it. I was just so tired and it was okay-ish, and at least she wasn't pouncing on my anymore and so I just went back to sleep.

Ep #24: Homeostasis

I didn't move, even though it was uncomfortable because it was simply easier to stay where I was. How often do we see this same phenomenon in life and weight loss? We tolerate okay-ish because it's harder to figure out how to make a change or truly take care of ourselves than it is to just stay in the relative discomfort of our current lives and bodies.

We settle for it's fine instead of going after our dreams. This is largely because of the set points that are established based on our bodies and our habits. Our body and brains' dedication to homeostasis. Homeostasis is essentially the maintaining of balance or equilibrium.

Our bodies are homeostasis-maintaining machines. That was a mouthful. Our systems are constantly and automatically regulating our temperature, our thirst, our immune system, our blood pressure, our weight. And so many other systems to stay at the established set point of functioning.

I think the most helpful analogy to illustrate how homeostasis works is that of a thermostat. A comfortable temperature is set. You pick a number, and then the thermostat kicks on, either the air conditioner if the temperature goes above that set point, or the heater if it goes below, ensuring that the temperature remains constant or balanced.

When it comes to weight loss, that's why we see plateaus throughout the process. Your body fights hard to regulate your weight. Sometimes I imagine little alarm bells going off as the weight starts coming off. Your body going into panic mode like find the leak and repair it before it's too late.

This is great news for eventually getting to your natural weight and being able to then successfully maintain it, but sometimes, it creates frustration as we go through the process and feel like we're doing what we need to be doing and yet we still see our weight loss slow down at times.

Now, I just want to make a quick side note here. With extreme calorie restriction, you'll see weight loss but not a change in the set point, which is

Ep #24: Homeostasis

why it is near impossible to maintain the loss, and there's usually a rebound back to or even above the previous weight.

If you, like me, watched *The Biggest Loser*, and then the study that was done on *The Biggest Loser* contestants, this is kind of the issue. They had extreme calorie restriction, lots of exercise, but not a change in the set point. Your body is fighting to maintain homeostasis, even with your weight.

So to kind of go back to the thermostat example, it's like with extreme calorie restriction, it's like bringing in a fan to cool down the house instead of just lowering the temperature on the thermostat. It may temporarily lower the temperature of the air in the house, but once you turn off the fan, the thermostat will kick on to get the air temperature back up to the set point.

We have to change the set point. And with our bodies, with our weight, we do that by increasing our insulin sensitivity, by paying attention to not just what we eat but when we eat, and the kinds of foods that we're eating do in our bodies, by nourishing our bodies with whole foods and also giving our bodies a chance to consumed our stored fat by letting our insulin dip and it then pull from our stored fat. That's how we do this. That's how we change the set point of our bodies.

But I'm not going to go into tons of detail on that. If you want to learn more about this topic of insulin resistance and sensitivity, I highly recommend you read *The Obesity Code* by Dr. Jason Fung. I think it's an amazing resource. He has YouTube videos and a podcast, all sorts of info going into more detail about this. I really want to focus on the mental aspect of it as well.

So let's go back to the plateau. What typically happens when we see the scale stop or slow is that some version of this thought then shows up. It's not working. Which is usually followed up by I knew this would happen. I'll never be able to lose weight. I'm broken.

And then when we think that, we feel discouraged, we feel frustrated, we feel hopeless, and we dive headfirst into a large pizza or a gallon of ice

Ep #24: Homeostasis

cream, thereby confirming that we will never lose weight. But that moment between you stepping off the scale that hasn't moved and the pizza, that is your moment.

We've talked about this moment before. This after moment is so important. That moment, not the number on the scale, is what will determine your success. Believing the lie that this number means it's not working and never will guarantees you quit on yourself.

But what you believe and then do in that moment is your choice. So imagine you believed something different. I want to just offer you some alternate thoughts to try on and choose to believe instead. I'm going to figure this out. I wonder what's going on. My body is awesome at maintaining. I am going to try some different things this week and see what happens. My body is efficient. Weight loss is inevitable if I keep going. I'm learning how to lose weight and this is part of it.

When you believe different thoughts, you will create different fuel and you will do things differently. Simple as that. There may be things happening in your body that are keeping your weight the same that aren't working, but that doesn't mean that it never will. It just means that there's more to discover.

Another way homeostasis affects our weight loss is in terms of our actions and our feeling states. This goes back to the kitten on my head. Our bodies memorize our most common feelings, including the uncomfortable ones, and these then become our go-to feeling states.

Our brains will choose uncomfortable and familiar over uncomfortable and unfamiliar any day of the week because at least we can predict what the familiar discomfort experience will be. There are no surprises or potential dangers there.

If I had moved or adjusted the kitten and she then would have woken up, there's a possibility that she would want to play and would start running around and pouncing and keeping me awake again. My brain was like, I'd

Ep #24: Homeostasis

rather have her sleeping on my head than pouncing on it. Both are uncomfortable for me, but in the first case, I still get some sleep, albeit uncomfortable sleep.

Your emotions are created by your brain, but experienced in your body. So if you have a tendency to choose thoughts that create the experience of anxiety, inadequacy, hopelessness, defeat, overwhelm, et cetera in your body, that becomes a familiar feeling state for you. That becomes your body's emotional set point.

That's what feels right. Even though it doesn't feel good. The same can be true of a pleasurable feeling state of course, but most of us who are using food to escape are not trying to escape feeling good. So I want to focus on the opposite experience.

Consider a thought you have about your ability to successfully lose weight. Maybe it's nothing ever works for me, or I can't succeed at this, or even weight loss is hard. Notice what you feel. My guess is that it isn't challenging to access that feeling. Like as soon as you thought that thought, you felt the anxiety, the worry, the discouragement, the hopelessness of that thought because you're used to thinking it. You've practiced that feeling a lot.

Now, try on the opposite thought. I know exactly how to lose weight successfully. I am going to lose all of this weight and keep it off forever. Weight loss is easy. And notice what you feel. My guess is that you still feel anxiety, worry, discouragement, or hopelessness, right?

Your brain was like, no you don't. Just not super willing to get on board with confidence, hope, or certainty, right? Even though that would feel so much better. Can you imagine if you believed the thought, "I know exactly how to lose weight successfully" and you felt certain? So much better. It would be so much more comfortable.

Your brain, like mine with the kitten is like, I'd rather feel discouraged than try something again and end up failing. I'd rather keep this familiar

Ep #24: Homeostasis

discomfort of discouraged than risk another potentially more dangerous form of discomfort like failure.

Reciting positive mantras to ourselves or trying to believe opposite thoughts to escape our familiar feeling state is kind of like bringing in the fan to cool down the house instead of adjusting the thermostat. It may be temporarily useful, but it isn't actually effective long-term.

Changing our emotional set point is best done a degree at a time, a thought at a time. We have to start with understanding the current thoughts we believe and the feelings we feel in order to be ready to move closer to the ones we want to believe instead.

I like to look at those thoughts that I currently believe and ask some questions about them. Is this thought true? How do I know it's true? Is it helpful? Is it getting me closer to my goal, to the person I want to become? Do I want to keep believing it? Am I willing to let it go? What else could I believe about this? What do I want to believe instead?

Once you've thoroughly questioned and examined the thoughts you are choosing to believe and identified what they are creating for you, it becomes so much more natural to let them go and hold onto the next rung of the thought ladder on the way up to believing what you ultimately want to believe.

Okay friends, don't forget to review the podcast and submit your review to me at itbeginswithathought.com/review so I can put you in the drawing for an awesome surprise gift. Love you all and 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.