

Ep #29: Metamorphosis



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Natalie Brown

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This is *Weight Loss Success* with Natalie Brown, episode 29.

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. The review I want to share today is from Helaine. She binge-listened to all the episodes and had this to say. "This was really inspiring to hear your thoughts on losing weight for the last time. So glad I found it. I have lost 30 pounds since January just listening to podcasts and being very mindful when eating, making sure my in-the-moment brain is not taking over. Thank you so much."

30 pounds. Did you guys catch that? 30 pounds by keeping her in-the-moment brain in check. So amazing, Helaine. Thank you for sharing. If Helaine can do it, if I can do it, so can you. I know that because you are a human with a human brain just like us and change is possible. Thanks for sharing, Helaine.

Many of my podcasts start with a title. I have an idea, a term comes to mind, and I'm like, I can create a podcast about that. I currently have upwards of 10 blank Google Docs with titles only. They are like little containers that I add notes and stories and ideas to that will eventually become podcasts.

This podcast started with a title, the butterfly effect. And then it turned into a Google search of the term because I wanted to fully understand it before discussing here on the podcast. And well, it became something different through that Google searching process, which most magically is exactly what I want to talk about today.

About how setting out on a journey of learning, discovery, or change isn't always what we think it will be. It doesn't always look or feel like we thought it would. I was thinking about how the process of change isn't always

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pretty, how it's hard and messy and not fun much of the time, but on the other side, someone altogether new waits for us to inhabit her.

I thought about this a lot on my journey to master coach. As I was getting certified, it was not pretty. It was hard, it was messy, and it was not fun. And I felt a lot of the time not like a master coach. Like a beginner, and it didn't feel good.

But here I am on the other side of that, Natalie Brown, master coach certified. So as I'm thinking about that, it led me to thinking about butterflies and the butterfly effect, which is the term I Googled, that led me down a wormhole of butterfly transformation videos and all sorts of fun discoveries. Funny how that happens, isn't it?

Turns out the butterfly effect is less about the transformation of caterpillar to butterfly and more about the compound effect, which is another awesome podcast title that I will likely create a new podcast doc for, note to self.

A caterpillar transforming into a butterfly is a completely different situation. It is ugly. And utterly amazing. And there are so many parallels to our weight loss journey, like there is a lot of eating involved. Definitely some hormones, discomfort for sure, and ultimately, freedom at the end of it.

So let's talk a little science for a minute. Caterpillars eat and eat and eat and eat compulsively. They can't stop. They are driven to eat, and I bet if we could ask them, they would say it feels like it is out of their control, just like you feel sometimes.

There's a hormone called the juvenile hormone that surpasses the caterpillar's transformation process in order to allow the caterpillar to keep eating. Stockpiling all the raw materials that it will ultimately use to build itself into a butterfly during metamorphosis. Kind of like how humans stockpile fat, fuel for later, right?

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Our hormone insulin suppresses our body's fat burning so that that stockpiling can continue. You never knew you were so much like a caterpillar, did you? So this to me is the craziest part. Once the caterpillar has eaten and grown enough and is safely inside of that chrysalis, the juvenile hormone steps out of the way to allow the metamorphosis to commence.

In comes the caspases, the enzymes that dissolve the caterpillar. You heard that right. It dissolves the muscles and the other organs into kind of like a protein soup that can then be used to build the butterfly. The butterfly dissolves into mush. I assume that is a pretty uncomfortable situation for the caterpillar.

And then this is my favorite thing I learned in all of my butterfly research. Then in come the imaginal discs, which each contain a genetic recipe for a different part of the butterfly, kind of like our stem cells. So legs, wings, eyes, all the parts.

Don't you love that they are called imaginal discs? You know how important I think our imaginations are to the weight loss process, right? Episode 27 anyone? No wonder it feels so terrible to plan our food in advance and follow that plan, even when we don't want to, and feel anxious and not eat in response, and to learn to listen to our bodies and keep our commitments to ourselves.

We are turning into mush so that we can rebuild ourselves with our imaginal discs. Mush, my friends. You ever feel like your brain and your insides are so uncomfortable that they may be turning to mush in this process? Now you know, the mush, it's necessary.

It is the stuff your future self is made of. Sometimes in the process of change, things seem like they get worse before they get better. When my clients realize, like it really sinks in that their own thinking is what is creating their feelings and driving their eating, much of the time they feel overwhelmed rather than free.

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They can't believe that they alone are responsible for their lives and feel like it might be too much for them to handle. When I tell my clients to make a realistic plan that includes some of the foods they would normally overeat anyway, they often feel frustrated. Not relieved. They think that only kale salads equal weight loss and that the only weight loss that counts is super fast weight loss due to eating "perfectly" on "perfect" plans full of "perfect" foods.

Those were all in quotations by the way because it doesn't exist. It's made up. They focus on the sunshine and rainbow life that they think is waiting for them when the scale finally says the right number. And as they experience the discomfort of change along the way, we're not just talking about the discomfort of changing bodies, but the change in long-held beliefs and habits as well.

As they experience that discomfort, they think something has gone wrong. I had a client who had spent much of her life obsessing over food. Counting calories or macros or points or whatever else was the fad of the moment, with a kind of hyper vigilance that felt out of her control. Like an obsession.

Her brain, as a result, was eternally occupied with thoughts of food, constantly. What was good and bad and okay and not okay and what she should and shouldn't eat, and what would happen if she did or didn't, and what she could get away with or not get away with, and what would make her gain and lose and on and on and on.

She wanted nothing more than to stop this chatter and feel some freedom and space open up in her brain. She also wanted to lose weight, but the food chatter was the most disruptive and disheartening and felt the most impossible to change.

Well, changing this pattern for her felt like turning to mush in order to rebuild. It felt like it got worse before it got better because it meant letting go in many ways of all of those rules and restrictions and learning to listen to her body rather than outside measurements. And that felt terrible.

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But as she learned to slowly let go and turn inward, she learned she had immense inner wisdom and strength and that by letting go of what she believed was control, she was finally able to find peace and bonus, lose weight.

It wasn't an instant transformation. It was a metamorphosis. There are two different definitions of this word that I discovered in my search and I want to share. The first is the insect amphibian definition. Metamorphosis for them is the process of transformation from an immature form into an adult form in two or more distinct stages.

I love that this definition uses the words immature form to an adult form. You know that weight loss is just a shift in the control from our toddler brains to our adult brains, right? Podcast on parenting your toddler brain coming soon, PS. So many ideas today. I love it.

The other definition is a change of the form or nature of a thing or person into a completely different one by natural or supernatural means. Changing the nature of a person into a completely different one by supernatural means. Yep, that is my brand of weight loss.

Changing your nature supernaturally. So good. It's hard to describe what real weight loss by changing your brain looks like. I feel like the dissolving into mush is a pretty good depiction of what it feels like. But this quote by Cynthia Ocelli, another quote about the magic of nature describes it really well.

“For a seed to achieve its greatest expression, it must come completely undone. The shell cracks, its insides come out, and everything changes. To someone who doesn't understand growth, it would look like complete destruction.” That's kind of what it looks like. Destruction of who you have been, of the way you have spoken to yourself, the way you have treated yourself, the habits you have created that don't serve you.

And then it looks like creation of a body you love, of a self-concept that is fueled by love, by gratitude, by compassion, of a life that reflects your

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regard for yourself. From mush to a butterfly. From seed to tree. From disempowered to free.

So I want you to think about the discomfort of your change. Your mush state, if you will. Make a list or write a story of what feels uncomfortable right now. What destruction are you experiencing on your journey? What feels so terrible it has you thinking something may have gone wrong?

And then let's activate your imagination here. What do you think this current destruction is creating? What do you imagine might come from this discomfort? What beauty might you build from this mush?

Okay my beautiful butterflies or mush puddles on your way to becoming butterflies, thank you so much for your reviews. Keep them coming. I love them so much. And don't forget, if you leave a review, to submit your review title to me at itbeginswithathought.com/review to be eligible for a fun gift. Okay everybody, 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.