

Ep #30: Evolving Self-Care



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Natalie Brown

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This is *Weight Loss Success* with Natalie Brown, episode 30.

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 I want to share what Melissa had to say about the podcast. "More than weight loss" is what the title of her review is, and she says this: "I enjoy this podcast so much. Even if you're not trying to lose weight in your current season, you can still learn a ton. I share Natalie's love of learning and look forward to all of her tips and encouragement each week."

How perfect is it that I'm talking about different seasons of life today on the podcast? So this fits right in, first of all, I love the fact that the tools I teach and the concepts I share are weight loss focused but can be applied in so many places in our lives. Thank you so much Melissa. Your gift will arrive soon. So fun.

One of my very favorite things in my life is my book club. My best friend and I started it over 15 years ago and we've been meeting once a month ever since. That's almost 200 times. I calculated that. Which means nearly 200 books, 200 dinners, 200 conversations. Quite a history we have shared together.

Not much has changed in those 15 years in terms of the way it works. We take turns picking a book and hosting everyone for dinner once a month and the rest of us get to just read and come and enjoy dinner and discuss the book. But so much has changed about our lives over the nearly two decades we've been doing it. It kind of blows my mind.

We've seen our families grow and change, our careers and addresses change, our bodies and priorities change. When we started, I had one child and I was just finishing college. At the time, I was totally consumed by

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balancing being a new mom and keeping up with school. Book club was my little bit of carefree not required reading and I loved being able to explore new genres and read books that weren't textbooks and hanging out with my friends.

There was a season as I added more kids to the mix and they were all little and needed me all day that book club night became a sacred sanity-restoring break where I got to have some stimulating adult conversation with women who understood completely where I was at.

Now, in this season, it's a place where I get to go and learn from my wise friends. We have all been through a lot in our lives at this point and are settling into midlife and figuring out who we are inside and even outside of motherhood and other things.

And now we talk about parenting teens and politics and we philosophize about meaning and our priorities. We're in a new phase where some of our parents have passed away and our kids are growing up and we're needing to learn how to navigate our new unfamiliar worlds.

Book club for me has been an important part of my self-care over the years. Its role has changed and evolved through different seasons and phases of my life, and this is what I want to dive into today. The role of self-care for you in life and weight loss and how important it is to let it evolve and change with the seasons of your life.

So let's just first of all get on the same page about self-care. When we think self-care, we often think about bubble baths or pedicures or maybe even a night off of our plan to eat ice cream. Self-care is not just about what you do. It starts like all other things, with our minds, and it includes all components of your health. Physical, mental, and emotional.

And as you've learned here on the podcast, it's not the actions we take or things that happen outside of us that create the feelings we want. It's always our thinking that does that. Let's use a bubble bath for instance. You may think that a bubble bath is relaxing. You want nothing more at the

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end of the day than to run a hot bath and slip into the warm water and let the worries of the day just melt away along with your favorite bath bomb.

But it isn't the bath creating the feeling of relaxation for you. It's your brain. You believing thoughts like this is just what I needed, nothing else matters right now, I love this. Those thoughts are what create the feeling of relaxed. We know it's your thoughts and not the bath itself creating the feeling of relaxed because if it were, a bath would do the same for everyone, and unfortunately it doesn't.

I myself have thoughts like this when I'm in the bath. This is disgusting. I'm soaking in my own filth. It's too hot in here, I'm bored. I'm sure you can imagine; I do not feel relaxed in the bathtub based on these thoughts I have. In fact, I don't have a bathtub in my master bathroom for this reason.

So because of this, there's no exact prescription for self-care that's going to be the same for everyone. We can't just say everybody get in the bath at night and you'll feel amazing. And there's likely not even a prescription for self-care that will be the same for you every day, every week, or every year for all of time.

We want to connect to what self-care looks like for us and be open to it changing and expanding and receding and evolving over time. I like to think about it like the clothes of different seasons. I love clothes, so a clothes analogy just seems very fitting.

In the summer, it may feel amazing to put on a sundress and flip flops. Or cutoffs and a tank top. Or even some flowy linen pants and some strappy sandals. In mid-January, the same outfit does not feel so amazing. Winter is the time for sweaters and boots and scarves. Not sandals and sundresses.

We look at the weather, we decide what to put on based on what will be best for our bodies in that weather. We don't want heatstroke in the summer because we're bundled up in a sweater or hypothermia in the winter because we didn't pay attention to what we needed to wear.

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In addition to weather and seasons changing, styles change as well. So just like you won't wear the same type of clothes for every season, you also may not want to wear the same clothes every winter forever. Your emotions are like the weather. They're always there and always changing.

We want to tune into them so we know how to best care for ourselves in that emotional season. I noticed a few months ago that I was retreating inward and disconnecting in many areas of my life. My thoughts were looping in negativity, almost all the time it felt like. And I was feeling low much of the time as a result.

I was spending copious time on Instagram and Netflix, and I even started feeling the desire to turn to food again to escape. Wandering into my pantry, looking for something. I didn't know quite what, but my brain was pretty convinced it was in the pantry.

Do you remember in the old school cartoons like Road Runner or Tom and Jerry when one of them would get smashed flat by a rock or an anvil or by running into a wall? They'd stand up, be all flat and wobbly, and sort of shake it off, realize what had happened, and be ready to get back to the chase.

For me, once the pantry scenario started happening for me, that was kind of like, my wall. It was my anvil of sorts. Stopping me in my tracks and giving me a chance to figuratively shake it off and take a look at what was going on. So in this COVID season of quarantines and cancelled activities and lots of family time at home, my self-care needed some readjusting.

I really thrive when I have quiet alone time. I call it white space for my brain. I don't have to interact with anyone or think about any of my responsibilities. I get to just open up space in my brain for whatever I want. And I was not carving out time for that at all.

All of my time and brain space was occupied. My family was home all of the time, watching TV and talking to me and asking me questions and I love

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them, and I really wanted to take advantage of the opportunity to be together. But I was doing that at the expense of my precious white space.

In regular life, my kids go to school and they go to activities and they're with friends, and so that time for me sort of presents itself to me and I use it to read, to listen to music, to exercise, draw, whatever. With my kids home all the time, I had to re-evaluate how to do that on purpose and find new ways of getting that white space for my brain.

New season, new self-care. You may currently be in a space where self-care includes food or eating. Or you may be in a space where you have no idea what self-care would even look like for you. So I want to teach you a simple way to help you identify what self-care is to you right now and how to re-evaluate it as you go through different phases and seasons.

As always, it starts with questions. What is the purpose of self-care for you? Why do you want to take care of your mind and body? What do you need? What do you want? Really think about this. Write down a list of reasons or write the story of why this is important to you and what you need and want.

And then look back at it and come up with some feelings, just feeling words that sort of encompass your why and pick one. The one that feels most important to you right now. So self-care equals blank. It may be self-care equals balance, or self-care equals peace, or self-care equals fun, or self-care equals strength.

This word can then act as your guide. This is the feeling that you're trying to get by doing these things. This is kind of why we go out and "do" self-care things because we want this feeling. So what is that feeling for you?

And then in any situation, in any season, you can ask what would feel like balance to me? Or what would strength look like here? Or how do I find fun in this for me? For me, self-care equals kindness.

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Let me give you some examples of what that looks like in different areas of life. I think that just is a really important aspect to pause and just point out here. Self-care is not a separate or independent concept. It's not like we do self-care from three to five on Thursdays. It's a thread that runs through everything.

If self-care is taking care of your physical and emotional health, and you live in your physical body and are driven by emotions, then there is a component of self-care in everything you do. When it comes to exercise and moving my physical body, I ask myself what would kindness look like here?

I work out primarily at Orange Theory and I sometimes go early in the morning before school. My toddler brain likes to tell me that kindness would be pushing snooze and not showing up at Orange Theory because I'm tired. But my adult brain knows that kindness sometimes means choosing what I want most, which is a strong body and a healthy heart, over what sounds good in the moment, sleeping in.

Self-care isn't always rest. Self-care at times is signing up for discomfort in the name of our goals or growth. Now, there are times when I do choose to push snooze and stay in bed instead of going. Self-care or kindness then looks like not beating myself up for that choice.

I own the choice and I can choose to do something different in the future, but I know that berating myself for being lazy or letting myself down or whatever other nonsense my brain might offer doesn't serve me. It's important to take care of ourselves when we make mistakes as well as when we feel like we are killing it at life.

Sometimes, kindness looks like freedom, and sometimes it looks like loving limits. Sometimes self-care is honoring what I need over what my family needs from me. Sometimes kindness looks like two cookies instead of 10. Sometimes self-care looks like pushing myself to try new things, and sometimes it looks like saying no.

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Sometimes kindness looks like a consistent routine, even when I don't want to, and sometimes it looks like designing my day as I go along. When I use kindness as my guide, it's simple to see what to do to take the very best care of me no matter the season.

As the seasons and the phases of your life change from day to day, from year to year, or even sometimes moment to moment at this point, keep coming back to what do I need? What do I want? And find that feeling to guide you.

Okay everybody, thanks for being here with me in this season of your life. I hope listening to this podcast is part of your weekly self-care. Leave a review if you love it and let me know the title of your review at itbeginswithathought.com/review to be eligible for an awesome, special gift. 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.