

Ep #39: Change the Conversation



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Natalie Brown

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This is *Weight Loss Success* with Natalie Brown, episode 39.

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. I had a friend growing up who wasn't allowed to say, "Shut up," in her household. Her family regarded it as a swear word. They actually had quite a few family rules about words that were allowed and not allowed and what was acceptable in terms of how they spoke to each other.

They didn't tell each other to shut up, they didn't call each other names. And this was so foreign to me as a child. My older brother and I fought like crazy. He was constantly calling me names and I was in turn frequently telling him to shut up.

So I was so fascinated by my friend and her family who had a totally different way of talking to each other and dealing with conflict. They had conflicts and disagreements of course, they were humans living in relationships in a house together, but they didn't fight like we did.

And I remember being in her household and just being amazed at how they interacted as a result of the language that was allowed and the behavior that was acceptable. It created this supportive atmosphere of peace and love that encouraged authentic communication.

There weren't daggers flying everywhere and this need to be on the defensive like I felt like in my house. The way they treated each other started with the conversations they had.

This week's podcast is my plea to you. We have to change the way we are seeing and talking about ourselves to ourselves. My heart just can't take it. I hear the things my clients think about themselves, the words they are

Ep #39: Change the Conversation

using, the conversations they are having in their heads, and it is excruciating.

I see them as these most beautiful complex amazing humans, and they see themselves as garbage and they speak to themselves accordingly, and it is breaking my heart. I can only imagine that you are out there thinking and feeling some of the things they are about you. So please listen with an open mind and let's see if we can start to change these painful conversations in our heads to more loving and productive ones.

So what's the conversation like about you in your head? Do you know? If you don't, that's where we need to start. Maybe it sounds something like this. "What's wrong with me? Why can't I stick to anything? I knew this would happen; I knew as soon as I started this program that I would fall off the wagon big time. I do it every time. I am broken. I seriously can't do this; I won't ever be able to lose this weight. I have no willpower or discipline. I'm huge. I am fat, and I will always be fat. I'm never going to change."

That's what it sounded like in my head for two decades. 20 years, 7300 days of me judging, shaming, and berating myself. And that continual conversation about my faults, my mistakes, my negative opinions and judgments of myself, of course led to more overeating, more weight gain, more shame.

So if that is the kind of conversation you are having about you too, it's time to change the conversation. We need to bring it out into the light. For most of us, we don't say these things aloud. The conversation about ourselves is whispered in our minds, in the dark.

We often say I would never say the things I think about myself about someone else, I would never talk to someone else the way I talk to myself in my head. That's because if we said it out loud, we would have to hear it and own it. And that is a totally different experience than hiding all the poisonous words in our brains.

Ep #39: Change the Conversation

As Brené Brown says, shame cannot survive being spoken. It cannot survive empathy. So how do we bring it out into the light? Well, before I tell you step one, I have to emphasize that these steps must be done together. That is my disclaimer, my asterisk, my fine print, my caveat here. You can't do step one without the other steps. I do not recommend it.

I say this a lot to my kids and my clients when they are on the fence about trying something new or asking a question or looking closer at their beliefs. I say it can't hurt, but it might help. But in this case of this exercise, doing step one and then giving up and not completing the process won't help and it might hurt your progress.

So be warned. Step one is to bring awareness to the conversation. Meaning you listen in and see what exactly is being said in your head about you. Of course this will entail you sitting down and asking yourself some questions. You know the drill by now. This is how it works.

So ask, how do I currently see myself? What is my opinion of my body? Think about yourself and your body in different situations and notice if your opinion changes. So think like, what's my opinion when I stand on the scale, when I put on clothes, when I see myself in the mirror before a shower, when I go out with friends, when I meet someone new, participate in a physical activity, eat off plan?

Think about all the things you do in your body and how your opinion shows up in these different areas. How do I feel as a result of these opinions, I also want you to look at.

Now, this next step may seem a little strange but stay with me. It's one thing to think these things, it's another thing to read them. And it's a whole other thing to hear them. I want you to meet yourself where you are with this step. Hiding these things in your brain probably feels safe. Safe but terrible, but safe nonetheless, which is why they are still in there rattling around for years or decades.

Ep #39: Change the Conversation

So be gentle. Hearing them out loud is a powerful dose of real. Feel your way through this with compassion and kindness. You can do this a bunch of different ways based on where you are and what you're ready to take on. You can start with just one thing, one sentence that you wrote down. Find a private space and just start by whispering it out loud to yourself. Let it sink in. Sit with it for a minute. Notice how it feels.

That's what we want to start connecting. These sentences that are seemingly benign just rattling around in your brain but really aren't, what they're creating, what you're feeling as a result of believing these things.

Or maybe next level, you can go into a dim room and read it quietly to yourself, read what you wrote quietly to yourself in the semi-darkness. Easing ourselves into the light here. Or you can sit in your car, looking in the rearview mirror where you can only see your eyes and share it aloud with yourself.

Or if you feel like you're up for it, you can stand in front of the mirror and with all the care you can muster, face you and say the sentences out loud. This is not a punishment but should come from a place of yearning to love you. This is just an obstacle standing in the way of you being able to love you.

This isn't meant to be a humiliation. This is meant to be you letting the light in, accepting all of you, even the hidden parts. Shame cannot survive being spoken. It cannot survive empathy, especially empathy from you for you.

The last step is to change the conversation, change it to a complete and honest one. One where we observe not just our faults, but all of the ways we are also brave and courageous. Not focused only on how we are weak, but open to how we are strong as well.

Not just about what isn't working but what is. What if instead asking what's wrong with us, we look for what's right? We choose to see that we are humans with human brains, doing our very best with the skills and knowledge we currently have.

Ep #39: Change the Conversation

We can ask, what else is true about my body right now? What else is true about me? What else can I see? What else can I say? What else do I want to believe about me?

Here are some options for you to try on. Of course, brainstorm. Answer these questions, come up with your own. But here's a few just to kind of get the ball rolling. I'm a human learning how to lose weight and love myself. I'm a human working on allowing uncomfortable emotions. I'm a human who likes the taste of Oreos. I'm a human with a human brain that believes food can fix my feelings.

The goal here is to find statements of truth that you can believe right now, that are different than what you're currently choosing to see and allow some space for a new conversation. This is the one body I have to live in. I want to value it. This is the body I live in right now. How can you argue with that, right?

This body is the result of what I have been believing, feeling, and eating. This is a protective shell I have built. I built it to protect me from me. I want to regard my body differently. It doesn't have to change for me to love it. Me loving it doesn't mean it won't change. I want peace in my body. I want to be at peace with my body, not war. I am learning to take care of my differently. I'm doing my best. I'm a human worthy of love and care.

You can choose to believe something new. One of these things or something you come up with on your own. It's totally possible, and it's time, my friends. Have the courage to change the conversation. It starts and it ends with you. Thanks for being here 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.