

Ep #40: What If...



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Natalie Brown

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This is *Weight Loss Success* with Natalie Brown, episode 40.

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, master certified coach Natalie Brown.

Hey everybody. Did you know that I record my podcast from my closet? I tried out several different locations when I was originally starting the podcast. And I sent samples to my editor to check the sound, and we just loved the sound here in my closet. So I sit here in my closet with all my clothes that I love and my shoes that I love, and I'm nestled right up on the floor, next to my heat vent.

And the heat is blowing out right now and it's magical. Snowing outside, so cozy. This is actually randomly one of my favorite spots in my house. It's quiet, sort of private. I can come walk into my closet, to the back of my closet and sit down and think and be by myself. I know, kind of random.

One day I'll post a picture of my set up on my Instagram. You can check out maybe in the next week or two. If you don't follow me, you should, @itbeginswiththoughtcoaching on Instagram. But I digress. It's just a little random side note for you today.

So here's my little PSA for today that's going to dovetail into our episode. I want to strongly encourage and highly recommend all of you watched a documentary called *The Social Dilemma* on Netflix at some point. I think it's important for all of us living lives that are completely integrated and dependent in a lot of ways on technology and social media to have some understanding of the impact that has on us and our thoughts and our behaviors.

I watched it and I have been doing lots of subsequent research on the subject as I try to make sense of the world around me and all the humans and their brains and what they're thinking and feeling and doing. There is

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especially right now, this intense sense of I'm right, this is right, this candidate is right, this policy is right, this belief is right, this behavior is right, and everything else is wrong.

There's a lot of that going around right now, and there's no room for dissent or even discussion. When you watch *The Social Dilemma*, you'll see how these concepts intersect and influence each other. So fascinating and so important.

When we think in absolutes and we decide we're right and someone or something is wrong, we close the door on discourse. We shut down curiosity. We turn our back on learning. We see this happen in the world and we see this happen on our weight loss journey. Rightness implies wrongness on the "other side."

And our strong need to be right usually stems from our fear of being wrong and our desire to control outcomes, in order to avoid unpleasant emotions really. Right can be synonymous with goodness, with justice, and correctness, and is the root of righteousness. So it appears to be a good thing, a beneficial, and noble thing.

But I want you to pay attention to how you feel when we're talking about right and wrong applied to you and your weight loss. When you believe that it's right to eat salad but you want pizza for lunch instead, how do you feel about you?

When you believe it's right to stay away from cookies and then you eat cookies, how do you feel about you? When you think it's right to be a certain weight number, to be "thin," and you don't think you are, how do you feel about you?

That feeling is the message. It is the signal telling you whether believing something is right or wrong is helpful and useful to you on your weight loss journey or not. You've probably all heard the saying; do you want to be right or do you want to be happy?

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How true does that feel here as you think about what you think is right or wrong in weight loss? You're probably thinking that believing foods, actions, weight numbers are right or wrong is necessary to get you motivated and moving towards your goal.

But the truth, when you look at how those beliefs make you feel, which is always your fuel for action, is that they are much more likely to have you moving toward the pantry than your goal because they feel terrible and they reinforce weaknesses and that is a recipe for more eating.

We have these beliefs about right or wrong behavior and results that are pretty straightforward. Eating salad is right, counting calories is right, eating bread is wrong. And we also have some beliefs about right or wrong that show up in the form of should. Here it is again, rearing its unhelpful sneaky head.

Any should statement implies the concept of right and wrong as well. I should be under 200 pounds. I should be able to eat what's on my plan. I should be able to lose two pounds a week. I should be able to resist chocolate. This means that being over 200 pounds is wrong. Eating off your plan is wrong. Losing less than two pounds a week is wrong. Answering your craving for chocolate and eating it is wrong.

And how does it feel to think you are doing it wrong? That you in your current state are wrong? Feels terrible, right? You likely have quite a few entrenched beliefs. Background beliefs sometimes I call them. Driving how you show up in your weight loss here too.

Things like I can't lose weight, I'm a big girl, losing weight is miserable, food has control over me, weekends are hard, food is rewarding. These are all just blanket statements with a period at the end of the sentence. Things we have heard, picked up along the way, and are choosing to believe are true without question.

We choose to believe these things are true in order to create a framework for our world and make sense of it. We want to know the "rules" so that we

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can remain acceptable to the tribe. We want to know how to govern ourselves.

So we piece together a guide based on collecting information from outside of us and then taking it in and choosing what to believe. What we choose to believe dictates our actions. What we choose to believe is what creates who we are and how we show up.

The key here is that we choose. Ultimately, no matter what the rules are, what is offered to us, we choose to believe what we want. We are the deciders as to what is right and wrong to us, and we act based on what we decide.

There are rules about how fast you can drive your car in a given area, but you choose to believe that is true or not, and then you behave accordingly. There was a time where I chose to believe the speed limit was a suggestion and as a result, I spent a year on probation. It's not maybe the best choice.

There are rules more suggested than concrete about what a woman's body should look like. They vary from culture to culture, group to group, but right now, you probably have in your mind some unspoken idea of what is right and wrong about your body when you look in the mirror.

And then you choose how much you love or despise yourself and how you treat yourself accordingly. How different would your weight loss journey be if you asked yourself what if something else is true? What if I'm mistaken here?

Asking what if here is in essence changing all those periods at the end of those sentences of your beliefs to question marks. I can't lose weight? What if something else is true? I should be able to eat what's on my plan? What if I'm mistaken here? Food has control over me? What if something else is true?

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Can you feel how that opens the door to possibility? To the idea that there may be more than one definition of right. That there are other options of what you could believe. We are not chanting mantras that we don't believe. We're not even trying to believe something else.

We are simply cracking open the vault of right and wrong to explore the possibility that something else in fact exists. You don't have to give up your belief. You can still choose to believe you're right. But having entertained the other options, you then get to hold on to your beliefs because you love them and you want to keep them. Not out of fear of not being in control.

When it comes to beliefs about right and wrong in terms of timelines, for instance, I should be able to lose two pounds a week or this process should take six months, there's another what if question that I think is helpful. What is it scientifically proven that, and then use your imagination to entertain some other possibility.

For example, what if it's scientifically proven that it will take three years to lose the 50 pounds you want to lose? Like we went to a very official expert doctor who did some groundbreaking new research and he did some magical calculations and he told us that it will take three years and we believed him. How differently will you show up at three months or in six months if you knew it was a three-year process rather than a six-month one?

We have no ability to predict the future with 100% certainty, which means that it's really in our imaginations. We imagine that it will take six months. We decide that is true and then we feel terrible and behind and hopeless as it unfolds differently than that. So if we imagine something different about the timeline and we decide that it is true, how differently will we show up for ourselves right now?

The last what if question I like to use to disrupt my brain when it is stuck being very convinced that something is right, but that something it's convinced it's right is in reality causing a lot of pain, sometimes people refer

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to this as a cactus thought or a cactus belief, which really just describes how when we believe it and we hold on to it, it feels painful.

But for whatever reason, we won't let it go and we just keep squeezing tighter and creating more pain for ourselves. So in the case where you discover a this is right belief that isn't serving you, ask this. What if the opposite is true?

Having to stretch your brain to come up with ideas of how the opposite of what you are believing is true creates space for some compassion and understanding. I think this is super helpful, especially when we are thinking about other people with different or opposite opinions.

Being able to ask, how is what they believe that is the opposite of what I believe true or right in their mind? That can stretch you to see another person's point of view.

This can apply to you and your future self. You have very different beliefs about you, you and her. About food, about your body, so think about her. What is she believing that is opposite of what you are believing? What does she believe about her when she looks in the mirror? What does she believe about her relationship with food?

Likely nearly the opposite of what you are currently believing, right? Because she has completely different results. We are always using our imaginations to create our experience. Why not put them to work creating forward motion, new feelings that drive us closer to our goals, coming up with all the other possibilities? Let's put question marks on the end of all our beliefs about us by asking what if.

If you are interested in more information related to The Social Dilemma, the documentary I mentioned at the beginning, info about humane technology, the harms of technology and how to get involved, visit humanetech.com and you can also check out the podcast, Your Undivided Attention, which dives deep into this issue and its roots and its impacts. So important.

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I have no affiliation with this organization. I just love the work they're doing in the world and I want to support it. Have an amazing week, my friends. 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.