

Ep #48: Objective Detective



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With Your Host

Natalie Brown

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This is *Weight Loss Success* with Natalie Brown, episode 48.

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. Have you guys seen the movie *Knives Out*? I loved it so much. I love a movie that keeps me guessing and has a little fun in the process. But it was kind of my jam since I really love mysteries and puzzles, and I love humans and learning about our brains and how they work and why we do the things we do.

So a detective story about relationships and flawed humans and questionable intentions and evil and misinterpretations and greed and goodness, I'm in. I keep hearing my client say things like, "I screwed up, I did it again, I don't know why I did that, it keeps happening, here I am again, this is what happens every Christmas, I always, I can't," et cetera. Lots and lots and lots of judgment.

And a lack of one of the most important ingredients in weight loss, curiosity. And so I thought of *Knives Out* and what most legendary detectives have in common, which is a deep and abiding curiosity about what happened and why, and an ability to be objective as they go through the process of finding truth and solutions.

And I thought, if my clients could be objective detectives on their weight loss journeys, they would spend more time learning and growing and solving problems and less time beating themselves up and judging their actions and closing the door on forward motion.

Objectivity is not being influenced by personal feelings or opinions, in considering and representing facts. This is a critical piece of weight loss because it's our cycle of judgment and shame that has us overeating, and then beating ourselves up for overeating, and then eating more to numb the

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shame. It becomes a vicious cycle, a punishing treadmill that feels impossible to get off of.

The shame begets more eating to escape, which begets more shame and on and on. So we have to find a way out of judgment and into curiosity. That is how we stop this cycle. It might be surprising that it isn't that we first have to stop the eating in order to stop this cycle.

The eating isn't a problem in and of itself. It's a symptom of us not being able to connect to and feel our emotions in our bodies. It's a solution our brain has come up with to solve discomfort and create temporary relief. Eating is literally defined as putting food into the mouth and chewing and swallowing it.

Overeating is the action of eating more food than your body needs, especially so that you feel uncomfortably full. That's what the dictionary says about it. Notice there are no interpretations, no opinions, no descriptive judgmental words in the dictionary definitions. Just objective facts.

It doesn't say overeating is what overweight people do because they have no self-control. It doesn't say overeating is a result of laziness. Seeing an action or a result of yours with objectivity allows you to see it for what it is and get curious about why it is.

We have to be willing to look at what happens along the way on our weight loss journey, the wins and the struggles, the eating on plan and off, through the eyes of an objective detective, looking for why it happened and why it happened in order to know what we want to do differently next time.

So let's look at a couple of examples. Let's say you felt lonely and sad and frustrated over the holidays because you couldn't have a big family gathering like you usually do. You started thinking about how much you missed your family and how unfair and how unfortunate it is that this pandemic is happening right now, and how much you love being together and how it won't be the same without them.

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And from your sadness and loneliness and frustration, you bake your mom's cinnamon rolls and eat most of them in one sitting and feel sick afterwards. This is when the shame usually sets in, right? You sit at your table or in your bed, like some of us, with a pan of cinnamon rolls, and you loathe yourself.

You are physically uncomfortable and emotionally in turmoil because eating a pan of cinnamon rolls does not align with your goal of taking care of yourself and listening to your body. Eating a pan of cinnamon rolls was not on the plan today.

Your brain loops with judgmental thoughts about what you should have done, what you shouldn't have done, how this proves what you have been telling yourself, that there is something wrong with you and you will never be normal. Or maybe it's the end of the workweek and it has felt like a year instead of five days.

You're feeling stressed, the stress of all five days in one moment, and you want nothing more than to make it go away. You've committed to yourself that you're only going to have a drink once a week because of how you sleep and how you feel the next morning when you don't plan and you overdo it instead.

And the weekly drink is planned for tomorrow, but you get home and your brain just goes, "Screw it, I need this, I deserve it after the week I've had." And instead of two drinks, you have a whole bottle of wine. The next morning, you're racked with guilt over your choice.

You feel physically terrible, and you can't believe you ignored your commitment to yourself. Judgment, self-loathing, guilt, shame, I want you to think about what these emotions feel like in your body. Just pick one of them and try it on for a minute.

Think about a situation where you have judgmental thoughts about yourself or your actions. Go there for a minute. Notice what judgment of yourself

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feels like. Or think of an example of a time when you felt self-loathing. Can you recall that feeling? Or try on guilt or shame, just for a few seconds.

Notice how it feels and what it makes you want to do. Does it feel light or heavy? Does it feel open or closed? Tense or relaxed? Does it make you want to turn the lights off and get in bed or turn them on and move? Does it make you want to open your eyes or squeeze them shut?

Some antonyms of judgmental are approving, encouraging, forgiving. Can you imagine if after the pan of cinnamon rolls you felt forgiving? If after the bottle of wine you felt encouraging? I'm not suggesting of course that you will or should never feel uncomfortable emotions like guilt or shame. I just want you to notice that when that is how we choose to view our actions and feel about them, we typically don't shift into learning, growing, problem-solving mode.

Judgment shuts us down. It closes the door. It is case closed. There's nowhere to go from there but back into the black hole of food for most of us. So now I want you to try on something else. Have you ever heard something that you had to immediately Google to find out more?

I'll tell you something I recently Googled. I have been watching *The Crown* on Netflix at night, like 15 minutes at a time usually because I fall asleep. But anyway, one night, I got really curious about what all the characters looked like in real life.

And I went on a where are they now Google search. Think about the last time you had a spark of curiosity about something. Try to remember what that feeling of curious felt like in your body. What did it make you want to do? Curiosity typically feels open and it makes us want to move, to know more, to do something, to find information or answers.

It's a lighter, more effervescent feeling. It can also be a quiet contemplative curiosity that makes you want to think and look around and observe. Sometimes I call that wonder instead of curiosity. I love that feeling of wonder so much. It's one of my favorites.

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If we are to learn anything from our past actions, especially our eating that isn't in alignment, or overeating that doesn't feel good in our bodies, and make any real changes, we have to put on our objective detective hats and turn our judgments into curiosity.

This starts with the objective piece. We want to consider and represent the facts without the influence of personal feelings. So look at the actions for exactly and specifically what they were. Not I ate everything or I ate too much or I ate a lot or an obscene amount, or whatever else you may say about it.

But what exactly and specifically did I put into my mouth and chew and swallow? This may sound silly, but it's a really important starting point. We have to step back and put on the lens of objectivity first so that we can invite in curiosity and focus on solving the mystery of why.

So in our cinnamon roll example, I ate four three-inch cinnamon rolls with frosting, or I drank 25 ounces of Chardonnay. Period. No judgment, no disapproving, just observing objectively what actions were taken, what was consumed.

And then we want to start putting the puzzle pieces together. We want to get curious about what happened before. What was said? What did I see? What did I hear that may have sparked this? What did I think about? What were some of the things going through my mind prior to the consumption? What was I feeling? Why did I want to go to food? Why that particular food or drink?

Why did I consume it in that location? What did I want to feel instead of what I was feeling that I thought the food would accomplish for me? What did I feel in the middle of the eating? What were some of my thoughts as it was happening? Or was I totally unaware of what was happening, of what I was feeling and doing, like checked out of the situation? And if so, why?

We want to look at the facts and gather all of the clues we can. Then we want to look at the impact of all of that on now. Still with as much objectivity

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as we can muster. How am I feeling now physically, emotionally? What happened to the stress or overwhelm or whatever feeling drove the action? Is it better now? Why or why not?

What was the result of that action on my body, on my day, on my goal? As we wonder and get curious about all of the details, all of the clues, and uncover all of the pieces of the puzzle, we can start to see and understand why we might have made the choice we made and what it is creating for us now.

In the absence of judgment and in the presence of curiosity, we can gain understanding. We're not trying to erase the past. We are simply attempting to understand it. Once we have some measure of understanding, we can start to plan and prepare for the future and make changes to how we show up for ourselves next time.

Objectivity and curiosity are not just for after we've eaten something we didn't want to. You can put on your objective detective hat to look at what food works and what doesn't in your body.

If you were able to consider facts without personal feelings when it comes to cupcakes or Oreos or pizza, or your grandma's super special cheesecake that she only makes once a year, what might you discover? What might you choose to eat or not eat or eat less of?

What about when it comes to your body and your self-image? How could curiosity minus judgment help you understand why you think what you think about you? How could being an objective detective about your opinion of yourself and where it came from and how it formed change how you view yourself?

How can you become an objective detective on your weight loss journey? Where could you use more curiosity and less judgment? And what might you open yourself up to learning and becoming if you did?

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I'm including in the show notes an exercise I love that will help you with the curiosity process when it comes to eating something that doesn't align with your goals. Get out there and solve some of your mysteries.

If you want some help on your weight loss journey and you love what you are learning here on the podcast, my weight loss program might be the perfect place for you. I'm opening up a new group in February and I would love for you to be a part of it.

My clients learn how to bring curiosity and compassion to their weight loss journey, and start seeing not just their bodies change, but their brains and their lives and their relationships with themselves change right along with it. You can learn more about my group coaching program at itbeginswithathought.com. And if you're ready to apply and meet with me to see if the program's a fit for you, then head to itbeginswithathought.com/apply. I'll 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.