

Ep #80: Helpful or Hiding



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Natalie Brown

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This is *Weight Loss Success* with Natalie Brown, episode 80.

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.

Hello everybody. I really love and resonate with many of the concepts and philosophies of stoicism. Really, I see truth and beauty in a lot of places and I find wisdom from many varied sources.

So I read this quote recently, it really got me thinking and I wanted to talk about it. It's from Marcus Aurelius. "At dawn when you have trouble getting out of bed tell yourself I have to go to work as a human being. What do I have to complain of if I'm going to do what I was born for? The things I was brought into the world to do. Or is this what I was created for? To huddle under the blankets and stay warm?"

My youngest and only child still in school started back this week and it feels like this has been my literal struggle. To get up out of my warm bed and go to work as a human being, as a mom. To make sure she's up and ready and has a lunch and everything else she needs and give her some love before she leaves for six hours.

It has felt so hard, I think because I am still also trying to be mom to teenagers who stay up and come home late. So I'm trying to be on everyone's schedule and it's not going awesome.

Honestly though, I've never really been the jump out of bed bright eyed and busy tailed type of girl. It was a struggle for my parents to wake me up every morning for school and I was frequently pulling the covers back up over my head and going back to sleep.

I was often late for carpool and going to school with wet hair because I was just always rushing to shower and get ready before school after I had gone

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back to sleep. Since my parents worked this was not helpful for them. Now that I'm a parent of a child who struggles to wake up like I did, my middle child is a hibernating bear every night, she sleeps deep and hard. I realize how annoying that was for my parents.

In fact in third grade we had to come up with an invention to solve a problem we had in our lives. And I came up with an alarm clock for my Barbie that would dump a bucket of water on her head when it went off.

My dad was definitely involved in helping me come up with the idea and create it. And I'm sure he wished that it was something that we could actually make so it could happen in real life for me. No joke, they actually did threaten me with pitchers of water above my head a few times

Obviously, this isn't exactly the struggle Aurelius is talking about here. It's more of a metaphor about choosing to huddle and hide or get up and grow. To choose to evolve and progress, to challenge ourselves to change, or to stay in our comfort zone.

But something staying in my bed instead of getting up to work, or workout, or get work done is a way that I choose to huddle and hide. It's just so comfortable and warm in there, and you know how I love warm things.

So here's the thing I want to propose, there is a time for huddling under the blankets and staying warm. And there are times to get up and go do the work as humans that we were created for.

Nighttime is one of those times where huddling under the blankets is helpful. Our bodies were designed to rest, to lay prone and sleep deeply. There are so many amazing benefits to sleep, including weight loss benefits.

It's the time that our body renews and restores itself on a cellular level. It's the time that our brain sorts out all of the new, and old, and relevant, and useless information and stores it away. It's where our hormones regulate.

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Cortisol, that stress hormone that likes to keep us holding onto extra fuel gets lower if we get good deep sleep.

This is why as long as we're getting that quality sleep our body feels refreshed and revitalized in the morning. This is why when we wake up in the morning, we feel like our brain has a fresh take on things. Things often seem a little bit better after a good night's sleep. Emotions have processed and we're often feeling different.

In this case huddling is helpful. The same is true for when we are sick. Our body needs rest to heal, in this case as well huddling under the blankets is helpful.

If we are getting back in bed during the day instead of getting work done or taking care of our responsibilities. If we are choosing to lay in bed and watch TV instead of keeping commitments, we have made to ourselves, this huddling in bed is hiding. Hiding from the hard, hiding from our work as a human being, hiding from responsibilities, hiding from ourselves.

Huddling under the blankets to stay warm isn't the only kind of huddling and hiding we do. Sometimes we want to hide from our choices. We deny that we are not planning ahead and are eating crap instead. I hear my clients say things like, "I think I'm eating pretty good but I'm not losing weight. This isn't working."

Ignoring what's happening does not change it. It does not make it go away. Thinking that we should be able to eat what we are eating and not make any changes, and the scale should just change because we want it to does not change the results we are creating for ourselves.

If we are unwilling to look at what we're actually eating, what is actually going in, and why. If we are unwilling to see where we can make changes and adjustments and say no, because we just don't want to, well, that's hiding.

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Sometimes we want to hide from reality. We want to hide from the reality of our bodies from the reality of our lives. We keep blazing past our emotions, eating to escape them, and “starting over” daily or weekly. Eating garbage that doesn't align with our goals, overeating to escape emotion, not following the plan our adult brain made for us and then looking the other way and saying, “I'll start again tomorrow,” that is hiding.

There's no learning when we hide because learning requires accepting reality. Facing it head on and then deciding how we want to move forward. That is helpful.

When we set a goal, we want to achieve, our brain will usually want to huddle under the blankets and hide from the discomfort. But that is not what we were created for. We are programmed as humans to want to learn and move forward. Think of how quickly a baby human does this.

It's easy to see that we are wired for growth and change when you look at how quickly and profoundly a baby changes in the first year. I remember thinking that every week my babies were hitting new milestones, mental and physical.

I mean, in that first year we go from being utterly helpless, not even being able to hold up our heads, to independent locomotion, walking, or at least crawling. Eating and digesting food with teeth and sophisticated digestive systems. Forming complex sounds, and even words. All sorts of rapid growth in many areas.

Obviously, our growth slows from there but we are still driven to learn and evolve on an ongoing basis. Adult humans are not much different. We just have more skeptical brains with a lot more experience and acute awareness of discomfort as danger.

Toddlers are not afraid to fall down as they're learning to walk, they expect it. They know what's coming, they don't freak out about it. They just get back up and keep trying.

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As we get older, that fear of falling down, of failing, rises to the top and starts to inhibit us from pushing ourselves to learn and try new things. And we often use our fear of failure as a place to huddle and hide.

Now that being said, just like how at night when our body and brain need rest and recovery, huddling under the covers is helpful. So is slowing down as we work toward goals to just be where we are. We don't necessarily want to be in push mode all of the time.

There's a time for rest along the way. Time for taking it all in, for slowing down to recognize progress, for looking around and looking back and appreciating. Huddling in the warmth of what you have accomplished in this case is helpful.

We have to have some time along the way to celebrate and feel gratitude. To not push, but to rest and honor our achievements as well as reassessing and refocusing on our goals.

Sometimes we might think not having a goal is helpful, when it is actually us hiding from seeing what we're capable of. Sometimes we might be frustrated with ourselves for huddling under the blankets and hiding after we make mistakes, when it may actually be helpful because it's coming from kindness.

Only you know if your huddling under the blankets is helpful or hiding. But here are some questions to ask yourself to figure it out. First of all, what do I believe going to work as a human means for me? What was I brought into the world to do? What was I created for?

I realize these can seem like unanswerable existential questions, but you don't have to discover your purpose or know the meaning of life to answer these. Just ask, what do I want to believe about going to work as a human? Or what I was brought into the world to do or what I was created for?

Not what do other people think the answer is? Or what should the answer be? What's the right answer? Just what do I want to believe about it right

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now? Down the road in your life, it may change. This is not set in stone, it's just a starting point.

Once you have an answer, it's much easier to know if you're huddling to hide or if the huddling under the blankets is helpful self-care. What is the consequence of this huddling under the blankets is the next question. We know that if it's rest and sleep or acknowledgment of where we are, et cetera, it's helpful.

We know that if it's that I don't get closer to my goals, that I avoid feeling emotion or looking at my thinking. That I don't go to work as a human or that I literally don't get my work done, it's hiding.

Much of what we face on our journey of weight loss can be both hiding or helpful. That's why it's so important to know what going to work means to you, so you can start to discern the difference.

For example, sometimes not using the scale as a measurement tool is helpful, sometimes it's hiding. The scale is a great opportunity to look at your thoughts about your weight number. If you don't want to look at it for fear of what you will make it mean and how you will feel as a result, that is hiding.

You have full control of how you feel when you step on the scale and see whatever number you see. It all depends on how you interpret it. Someone else is going to step on the scale today and see the number you saw and think, "I am killing it. This is so exciting." Maybe they started 50 pounds up from you so they're super excited to see this new number. Either way, the number is not creating how they feel or how you feel.

When we're overly focused on the scale as a measurement and we are looking at the number 10 times a day and not recognizing any of the other ways we are making progress, taking a break can be helpful.

When we are looking at the number every day, not seeing it move and telling ourselves it's not working. Which usually leads to quitting and eating

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all the things and then gaining. I think spreading out the weigh ins from week to week instead of using the scale daily can be helpful.

Week to week is a much more realistic picture of your weight loss than day to day. However, if you heard that and are like, "Oh good, Natalie said I can weigh in once a week, which means I'll eat garbage today because I won't have to see the impact till Friday. And I'll skip three meals before my way and so the scale changes." No, that is hiding.

We can't necessarily go off the feeling to discern whether it's helpful or hiding because sometimes we will feel discomfort, that does not mean stop it means keep going. And sometimes we will feel comfortable and that is a sign of stagnation and not moving toward our goals.

So it's best to look at the consequences to help you decide. Only you will be able to discern the difference for yourself. Trust your instincts.

Okay y'all, send me your questions. I have received some awesome one so far and can't wait to address them on a future Q&A podcast episode. So if you have a weight loss question you would love answered on the podcast head to itbeginswithathought.com/question and ask away. 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.