

Ep #82: Goal Fear



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Natalie Brown

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This is *Weight Loss Success* with Natalie Brown, episode 82.

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. I have always loved this time of year. The seasons changing, fall is my favorite of all of them, and going back to school. Fresh starts, new school year, new teachers, new classes, new friends, new routines. I loved it growing up. It was one of my favorite things.

The smells of fall, getting my school supplies, and getting my backpack all ready and organized, my outfits planned out of course. I loved every minute of it, and I always looked forward to it.

My little - I know I call her my little. She's actually not that little, but she's little to me. She's the only child I have left in school, which is so weird to me. She's in junior high and she's an awesome student and has loved or at least liked school to this point.

She even went back to school in person last year by choice, wearing her little mask all day every day, just for the chance to be back at school. She was a lot like me. Loved getting everything ready for school, a new lunchbox and pencil case, folders labeled, outfits planned, all of it, until this year.

She and I as you know had a pretty packed summer. She was only home for four weeks total, so she wouldn't even let me say the word school. Literally. She wasn't ready. Every time I said it, she was like, "Nope." She didn't even want to think about it.

We didn't get school supplies, we didn't go school shopping for school clothes. I realize these aren't necessary or life or death matters, but they are traditions that we've always done and she's always looked forward to.

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She seriously wouldn't actually face that she was going to school until the night before.

At 10:30pm, I finally convinced her that we should at least empty her backpack from last year, which she hadn't done yet, and make sure she had a folder and some paper so she could take any papers or notes home that she got the next day on the first day.

Suffice it to say she entered this school year with a lot of dread. She ended up actually coming home after the first day and saying, "Mom, it wasn't as bad as I was remembering. I forgot I actually like school." So it was good news, but I'll be honest, I was a bit worried.

It's really hard to get where you're going if dread is the fuel you're trying to use to get there. It's really hard to head out in the direction of somewhere you don't want to go or don't want to be. It's really hard to work for something that you don't actually want.

It's really hard to move towards something you are afraid of becoming. It's possible it's just harder than it has to be. This is something that happens with goals sometimes. We might set a goal based on what we think other people think we should do or should want.

We might set a goal because we think it's the right one, based on some outside information. We might set a goal and go after it because it's the one we've always wanted, even though it may not be something we still want or care about.

The first money goal I set in my business was definitely not my own idea. It was not a number I came up with that I really wanted for any personal reason other than I thought it was just what people did. This is what people do is not really the best reason.

I mean, it may be a reason you like for you, but it's a bit of nonsense to me. It isn't based on something I value or that is important to me. I've done a lot

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of things in my life, aspired to a lot of things based on some version of this is what people do.

Like this is what successful people do, this is what confident people do, this is what important people do, this is what mature people do, et cetera. I just don't love that reason. It's not for me. It's for some nebulous them that I think I will somehow impress and therefore prove to myself to be more valuable, worthy, whatever.

If the weight or health goal you have in mind is one of these, it's worth re-evaluating. No matter what, we want to love our reasons for working hard to get somewhere. So ask yourself, what drove you to create or choose the goal you currently have? What is your reason for wanting to get there? Do you love that reason? That's all you need to know.

One interesting related phenomenon I'm seeing coming up is clients actually being afraid to get to their goals. Feeling some goal fear. On the one hand, they're excited to put all this madness behind them and find some peace and quiet and freedom around food. On the other hand, they're afraid of getting there and staying there and who they will be when they are there.

For example, maybe you think about being at your goal weight and all you can think about is how it won't last. You have some belief and some excitement about getting there, but you have zero belief or excitement about being able to stay there.

When we are thinking I won't be able to keep this up or I won't be able to stay there, or even I don't know if I want to, there's probably a what's the point hanging out in there too.

You have both the desire to get away from where you are in a constant battle with food in your body, and a fear of failing when you get where you are going. That's going to be a hard sell.

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Or maybe you think of future you, and as one of my clients put it, “She seems insufferable.” You don’t like people who are like that. People who say no to dessert, or sit and don’t eat at a party because they aren’t hungry, or don’t drink when everyone else is.

People who love themselves and are content with themselves, people who have it all figured out. If you don't actually like future you, it's going to be really difficult to do what is required of you now to become her.

There also may be some fear about what it will be like to no longer use food as a buffer between you and emotion. You may be thinking that once you get there, there’s no turning back, no more hiding behind overeating, or being a sugar addict, or procrastination of your goals.

It may feel a little scary, a bit vulnerable, naked, raw, exposed. If any of this is happening for you behind the scenes in your brain, you’re most likely seeing some self-sabotage happening on your journey.

If we are afraid to arrive at our goal and stay there, if we don’t love the version of our future selves we are working to become, if we’re worried about what life will look like without being able to comfort ourselves with food, then we are probably doing whatever it takes to stay right where we are, safe in the familiar discomfort of right now.

All of this makes perfect sense. You have never been where you are going. You’re imagining the unknown, the seemingly impossible. You are conceptualizing a human who doesn’t exist with skills you don't have yet but are working to develop.

There’s going to be some doubt. There are going to be some worries. There is going to be some discomfort. It doesn’t need to be the obstacle that keeps you from moving forward.

If you are both excited about getting there and worried about staying there, that’s okay. You likely have a bunch of evidence from the past stockpiled as proof that you can’t maintain your weight.

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Just because you haven't doesn't mean you can't. Your brain just wants to warn you, to prevent you from being blindsided. It wants you to be prepared as much as possible for whatever you might be walking in to.

Thank your brain for its concern for you, for trying to protect you, and just let it know, you've got this, that you are in the process of creating new evidence, evidence of what is possible for you, evidence of what you are capable of, evidence that you can make real changes, that you can learn how to take care of you in a totally different way, in an ongoing way for life.

You've never done it before but you are committed to figuring out how. If you think future you sounds like a nightmare you wouldn't want to be in the same room with, it's probably time to look at where this judgment is coming from.

There absolutely may be people in your life who are insufferable, but you don't necessarily need to become one, even if you and that person see the same number on the scale. Can you conceive of someone who is at your goal and that you would want to hang out with?

I think hanging out with your future self is a really good idea because you will be with you for life. So could you be a person who feels confident and loves herself but is really lovely to be around? Is it possible to be a person who doesn't eat when she isn't hungry, even if everyone else is, even if she's at an event where there is food and you can be really proud and content with that, rather than embarrassed and annoyed?

If you have the I don't want to be that girl happening for you, it's important that you ask why not? Why is who she is and what she does a problem for you? That will be important information for you in forming this picture of future you that you actually want to become.

You may have some current judgments of that girl based on some older outdated beliefs. You may have some disdain for her based on some jealousy or envy or even injustice that you are carrying around from the past.

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So inquire about this if it's coming up for you. We want to not only be excited about this vision of our future selves because of what she isn't anymore, she isn't an overeater or an emotional eater, or someone who uses food as a solution.

But even more for who she is, a person who takes care of her mind and body, a person who focuses on herself and what she's thinking over what other people are thinking, a person who's brave enough and willing to feel any emotion and live her very best life at the same time.

If you're worried about living a life without all the buffering and hiding that you currently do, that's because you don't know how to live that life yet. The ability to numb emotions with food, to escape discomfort with food, to run away or comfort ourselves or feel joy with food, that's what we currently know. That's all we currently know.

And it feels like safety. It isn't actually keeping us safe as we know, I would actually argue that in reality, safety is a willingness and capacity to allow and tolerate discomfort and know you'll be okay. To not view it as a problem to be solved or a threat to our wellbeing, but a message to look into and learn from.

But that's a skill we are or want to be working to cultivate and build in the process of weight loss. It isn't that we're going to get to our goal and all of a sudden no longer have food as an escape hatch. We aren't going to arrive at our goal and have to give up the crutch of food.

We will arrive at our goal because we have learned how to deal with life and our emotions differently. We have chosen to question and then lean into the belief that food isn't a real solution or an answer, that all we need is within us and that we can navigate life and food on our terms.

So really think about how you feel when you think about your goal. You don't have to feel 100% certain or amazing about it right now. It's okay if there are some doubts present. But what you want to tune into is what stands out, what rises to the top?

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It needs to be excitement with just a small side of doubt, or anticipation and joy with just a drop of hesitation. In other words, the main fuel driving you to your goal needs to feel good and make you want to move forward.

Because if fear of failure is driving this bus, if disdain of future you is in the fuel tank, there are going to be more detours and U-turns than forward progress.

Okay everybody, last chance to submit your weight loss questions for the Q&A podcast. I've been saying there's a Q&A podcast in the future. The future is upon us. We're doing this.

So if you have a question you want answered, or a topic you'd like me to touch on that has you puzzled, head to itbeginswithathought.com/question and submit yours to me today. 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.