

Ep #116: Your Relationship With You



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Natalie Brown

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This is *Weight Loss Success*, with Natalie Brown, episode 116.

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.

Hello everyone. I've got a laryngitis type situation starting. So, here's what it is, record the podcast was on my schedule and I keep my word to myself most of the time. So here we are, you've just got to bear with me with my little bit silly voice. So, I did a brave thing this week, well, brave for me. You may think it's silly. I am going to go into more detail about it in a future episode but I'll just tell you a little bit about it because it also relates to today's topic.

So, if you follow me on social media you'll notice that the majority of my photos are self-taken. I really like having my feed reflect what I'm actually doing. So, I really like that about it. But I've been wanting new professional photos for my website for a while. And I just have put it off and put it off. And so, I finally pulled the trigger and I did a photoshoot this week. So why is this brave, you're wondering, pictures of you, so what? Well, I have a really hard time seeing photos of me still right now. I find myself being extremely critical of them, any of them, any time I look at them.

So, I really had to lean into this relationship I have built with myself over the past few years to get over my fear, and hesitation, and embarrassment, and be willing to be seen by me ultimately. I haven't gotten the pictures back yet. So, I haven't had to face the music totally. But letting go of self-consciousness in order to just be there was a huge win for me. The process of weight loss is not just about changing what you eat but about changing your relationship with you so that you can show up differently in your life when it comes to food and eating.

And I mean so many other reasons but obviously in weight loss we're focused on that. That really is when things changed for me in my weight

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loss journey when I changed my relationship with me. I obviously still have work to do on that. Clearly my relationship with me, looking at photos of me for sure needs some work. But I've worked really hard to change how I feel about myself in general by focusing on how I see myself and what I say about and to myself. And that has completely changed how I take care of myself.

Our self-concept is largely built on the past, what we have experienced, what we've made it mean, our choices, our judgments of those choices. What we think about what we have done is what colors how we see ourselves in the present or all of the time. We view ourselves as a product of our past rather than a concept we are creating in real time with the stories we are telling ourselves today.

One example of a past centered story is one I hear often from my clients and what I believed about myself for a very large part of my life. The I am broken story. When this is part of our story of us we look back at the past to find evidence of how it's true. And then we see things in the present that reinforce this past based belief. We keep finding evidence now to corroborate the story of the past. I remember believing that my strong desire for and love of eating sugar was evidence that I was broken.

All of my failed attempts to rid myself of the desire, to stop eating it, just more evidence that I couldn't be fixed. Notice something important here I want you to watch for in your stories. This story is working off the premise that there is a right way to be. This I am broken story says there's a right way to be and that how I was, was not it, was not the right way. Part of my story was that a person should be able to not eat sugar, not crave sugar, stop eating it if they wanted to and not have so much drama about it. That was the right way to do it.

And so, my inability to do that was an indictment of my worth. Here are some questions to ask yourself to bring awareness to your current self-concept. How do you see yourself? What is your story of you? What makes you, you? How do you describe yourself to others? How do you describe yourself to yourself? Why do you think you are who you are? What

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influenced and contributed to how you see yourself? Where does worth or value come from, what determines it?

I also want you to pay attention to how many of your stories are centered on how you look to other people or to yourself in the mirror. Also, how many of your stories assume there is a right way to be and that is different from how you are. And notice how many of your stories are past based stories. The stories you are telling about who you are, they are what are shaping your present reality. They're telling your brain what to look for and find more evidence of. They are part of what makes up your relationship with you.

So, if they are past based, if they are unkind, if they are focused on what's wrong and not what's right they are detrimental to that relationship. The way we talk to ourselves about ourselves, what we say to ourselves, that's another integral part of our relationship with ourselves. And it's another place where we can see a focus on the past coming through. Often a part of our self-talk is centered on regrets about how we have shown up in the past. That might sound like mean spirited questions, why did you let yourself get this way? What is wrong with you?

Why did you do this to yourself? Why did you eat that? Why are you so weak? Questions are a way to insulate ourselves from the more painful statement version. You let yourself get this way. Something is wrong with you. You did this to yourself. You are so weak. Isn't that just, it's a little bit more painful than the question version.

If you're unsure of how you talk to yourself or what you say to yourself the loudest and clearest place to hear it, that is most indicative of your relationship with yourself is when something goes wrong. When you don't meet an expectation you have for yourself, or you do something that goes against what you planned or what you wanted. This is where your relationship becomes very clear.

So, think about the last time you overate, or saw yourself in the mirror, or stepped on the scale, whatever, what ran through your head? What did you

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say to yourself about it? Now, alternately, think about what you say to yourself when something goes well. This is another, though less glaring place to listen in to your relationship with you. Do you give yourself credit? Do you celebrate you? Do you encourage you? Do you praise you? These two places will give you a pretty good idea of the state of your relationship with you.

Your stories about you and how you talk to yourself and about yourself, those are determining how you feel about yourself. So, if you would describe how you feel about yourself as insecure, inadequate, unworthy, unlovable, embarrassed, ashamed etc. How you see yourself and what you say about yourself are the culprits, not your body or your weight. And all of that, what you see, what you say, and how you feel, that dictates how you treat yourself or what you do to and for yourself which rounds out what makes up your relationship with you.

Some examples, how do you feed yourself? What is self-care to you? And is it a part of your life? What about pleasure and rest? How do you dress yourself? How do you move your body or do you? How much or how little do you consider your needs and focus on meeting them? Do you know what you like to do, what you want to do? These are all questions that you will ask yourself and know the answer to when you have a healthy relationship with you. If you don't know what self-care is for you, that tells you something.

If you have never considered any of the previous questions for yourself and have only ever considered them in service of others, that tells you something. If the answer to how do you feed yourself is different from the answer to how do you feed your kids, or partner, or dog, that is an important thing to note. Your relationship with you is made up of the same things as your relationship to others in your life. What you see in them, what you say about them, that determines how you feel about them. And all of that will drive how you show up for them, what you do to and for them.

So, bring to mind someone you feel love for and then answer these questions about them. You may want to pause and give yourself a minute

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to think about each one. How do you see that person? What's your story about them? What do you say about them and to them? What do you do for them and to them because you love them?

Now, think about how this differs from your answers to the same questions we asked earlier about you. The love you feel for them, and the way you talk to them, and the way you treat them, it doesn't come from their body or their weight. It doesn't come from what they've accomplished or their mistakes for that matter. It isn't impacted by every food choice they have ever made. It comes from the stories that you choose to tell about them.

So that's where we want to start in our relationship with ourselves. Once you know your stories, once you are aware of what you are saying to and about you, once you see how it makes you feel and how it all has you showing up for and treating yourself. That's where you begin to step into your power to change it. It has to start with awareness. From there it's about getting curious about why these are your stories. And then asking one of my favorite questions, what if something else is true?

What if at the beginning of a sentence signals that we're about to pretend. When we ask what if and it's followed by a worry statement, what we're saying is, let's pretend something bad. But when we ask what if in the spirit of openness and possibility we're saying, let's pretend something awesome. Or at the very least, let's pretend something else. That's probably a realistic place to start if the state of your relationship with you is a bit dodgy.

You don't have to commit to believing or pretend what if, there's nothing at stake here. You're just playing around with other ideas. You're using your imagination to create an alternate picture of you. And that in and of itself is the beginning of you believing something new. You have to first think it to create it. So, start by opening up to the possibility that something else might be true about you too. And then when your brain offers you the same old story again you have a counterargument, you have a rebuttal. You can offer, well, this is also true.

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We just want to begin to crack open the door to possibility. A concrete example of this is how I changed my story about me and sugar. First, I learned some facts about how sugar functions in my body, how my brain reacts to it. And it allowed me to see that even though I didn't want to be so into it, so in love with it, so addicted to it, there is a reasonable explanation for why I was. And it wasn't a personal and moral failing on my part. And maybe I wasn't in fact broken. So that was a start.

Any time you can dispute your stories with some facts, super helpful, so look for those. I used facts and my favorite question, what if something else is true? And I went to work on this other story I had about me and sugar. It was some version of I can't stop eating it. I am constantly eating it. I eat it all the time. Something like that. Using a combo of facts in my imagination, what I realized is that I actually only ate sugar in an eight hour window of the day. I didn't eat it in the middle of the night and I didn't ever want it in the morning.

So, from noon to eight I eat sugar. Yes, sometimes that is primarily or all I ate in that timeframe but that was totally different than I can't ever stop. I could totally stop when I went to bed and all night until noonish. So that meant that what else was true was that I knew how to and was capable of not eating it. That was where it started for me, just a small glimpse of the possibility that the story that I had been believing and telling, I didn't have to keep believing and telling forever.

Fast forward to how it's going now. Sugar has zero power over me. I still like it and I still eat it but I go by how my body feels over how things taste 99% of the time now. I don't eat sugar all day or even every day and I feel happy and peaceful about that. There's no drama in my mind about it. I really don't think about it much at all. In fact, I have three small candy bowls on my counter all the time. They belong to my grandma and so I just love having them out and using them because it's a constant reminder of her and I love that.

And I have a house full of teenagers who love candy so it's a win/win. I walk by my candy dishes 50 times a day. I do not think twice about the

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candy inside them. I eat a piece or two once in a while, maybe once every other week or less. I do not empty all three of them into my body in one sitting like I used to once upon a time when my story was that I never stopped eating sugar. Because now I tell and I believe stories about me like sugar's no big deal to me. I can eat sugar whenever I choose to. I love listening to my body.

And I feel empowered, and I feel peaceful, and I feel relaxed, and I eat foods and amounts of food that feel good in my body and I don't eat foods that don't. How I see me and how I talk to me determines how I feel about me. And that is the fuel I use to show up for me. It has changed everything. Your relationship with you impacts every other relationship including your relationship with food. So, focusing on and changing your relationship with yourself is the most important thing to do when you want to change your body.

This is what we do in Love First Weight Loss. We do the work to change our relationships with ourselves so that we can change everything else with love as the fuel. It is magic. Head to itbeginswithathought.com/apply and join us. A new group starts at the end of May and I would love for you to be a part of it. 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.