

## Ep #122: Deserve



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With Your Host

**Natalie Brown**

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This is *Weight Loss Success*, with Natalie Brown, episode 122.

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.

Hey, everybody, this week's episode ended up being a little PSA about what you deserve. This has really been on my mind because I hear it so often from my clients. So, I really wanted to address it directly and concisely. The definition of deserve is to do something, or have, or show qualities worthy of reward or punishment.

We've given specific foods the role of that reward in our lives when we feel we have had a good day or we've done well in our jobs, we've fulfilled responsibilities like parenting, completed a project, achieved something we were working toward, gotten through something hard. Or even ironically if we have followed our eating plan precisely. We choose to eat certain foods as a reward. I didn't say we choose to eat, period, because we don't choose to just eat anything. We don't choose roast chicken and veggies as that reward food. We don't choose celery sticks as that reward food.

We choose one of our 'forbidden' foods or a 'naughty' food or a 'cheat' food because those foods feel extra pleasurable in the moment. Sugar is fun, it releases dopamine. That feels good. It tastes good. And we've been conditioned to see these things as rewards based on how we were raised and what we were socialized to believe constitutes a reward. Your parents didn't say, "Let's go grab some apples from the store and eat them together to celebrate your graduation or a job well done at your piano recital." It was ice-cream.

Give me a break, give me a break, that is not the slogan of Green Giant frozen veggies. The break or relief you get is due to the dopamine the Kit Kat brings. The slogan is not steak satisfies, it's Snickers. You didn't grow up seeing commercials with happy, laughing, beautiful people roller skating

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along the boardwalk with their friends having fun while they drink ice cold bottles of water, it was Coca Cola.

We look for these extra pleasurable foods as rewards especially since what has led up to the reward is usually more on the pain side of things, the practicing, the stress, the preparation, the planning, the time invested, the struggle, the resistance, the white knuckling. We are looking at a way to balance that pain out.

Our brain and body are always trying to strike a balance between pleasure and pain. Which is why it feels so good to get some dopamine and other feel good neurotransmitters flowing by eating a sugary food after a long week of work, or a big push to complete a project, or a week of hardcore deprivation as you struggle to stick to your eating plan. The norepinephrine levels, the cortisol levels have just been pushing higher and higher pain throughout the week. And as a result, our brain searches for a way to bring it down with pleasure and eating sugar is a pretty fast way of doing just that.

So, we think ice-cream, and candy, and soda, and fill in the blank with whatever food is a reward to you, and it does feel like a reward as the pleasure chemicals rush in. And even based on the definition of reward which is a thing given in recognition of one's service, effort or achievement, it fits. Anything given in recognition can call into this category. But what I want you to consider is if the food you consider a reward is rewarding, meaning does it provide satisfaction? Is it gratifying?

The definition of gratify is to give pleasure or satisfaction. The definition of satisfaction is fulfilment of one's wishes, expectations or needs, or the pleasure derived from this. By those definitions you might say, "Well, yes, it gives me pleasure and it fulfills a wish for something sweet, or tasty, or fun." But I think you might notice some dissonance here too because you also have a wish to be able to move around in the world in your body the way you want to. You also have the expectation that you will be able to feel strong, and healthy, and free in your body.

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You also have the need to take care of you now for your future. You also have the desire to honor and respect yourself and your accomplishments inside of you without needing outside validation. So, here's a definition I want you to pay attention to and think hard about. To fulfil means to gain happiness or satisfaction by fully developing one's abilities or character. If we boil this down, to feel rewarded means you fulfil your needs and gain happiness by fully developing your character or abilities. Ice-cream will not do that for you. Snickers can't do that for you. Coke won't do that for you.

Those foods you think are rewarding you, they aren't, not if we think beyond this moment. We are not after gaining momentary happiness only. We are not working toward fulfilling our needs in this moment alone. This taste experience will not fully develop our ability to take care of ourselves or ride the waves of emotion, or give ourselves the love we need. This food reward will not develop our character. When we say, "I deserve this", we are actually using the punishment version of the definition of deserve, do something, or have, or show qualities worthy of reward or punishment.

Because when you eat foods for reward that don't align with or serve your health goals, when you eat crap to celebrate you eating well all week, when you overeat beyond fullness with disregard for your body because damn it, you deserve it. You're punishing yourself, not rewarding yourself. This is not to say that ice-cream, Snickers, Kit Kats, Coke, whatever else is in this reward food category for you is off limits or is always punishing. But if how you are using it does not feel rewarding to you, or your body, or your future, it just might be.

It's worth a closer look if the reward you are telling yourself you deserve is actually a punishment. This speaks to your relationship with you because when we come from love, when we believe we deserve health, and peace, and freedom, we just do differently for us. We see different things as rewarding. We reward ourselves by honoring and valuing our accomplishments and our achievements and we see and then we acknowledge our progress. If what you think you deserve is being overfull of sugar that's something that should give you pause.

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You don't deserve to feel bloated, tired and ashamed because of what you tell yourself you deserve. What you deserve is actually something different than temporary pleasure. You deserve to give yourself recognition for your efforts, to notice your achievements, even if it's just getting through your week or getting through a day. You deserve to go to sleep at night proud and having made aligned choices that serve your growth.

You deserve to recognize and honor your body's need for rest in ways that truly provide it so that you don't have to rely on food to try and accomplish that impossible task. You deserve to feel the freedom in your mind and body that comes from riding the waves of discomfort instead of eating to escape them. You deserve to feel the happiness that comes from making commitments to yourself and keeping them. You deserve the satisfaction of knowing what you really want and letting nothing get in the way of you going after it.

You deserve compassion and kindness every minute of every day no matter what your choices, so that you don't need relief in the form of food to get a break from your own self-judgment. So, I want you to ask yourself, what do I believe I deserve and is the reward I'm choosing what I deserve? Does it feel rewarding? Do I feel rewarded? Think beyond the moment of eating it till later and answer the questions again.

If your answers don't match up with what you believe you will eventually deserve or the reward you think you'll choose in the future when you love yourself and you value yourself a little more. How might you begin to take steps toward that ultimate outcome? What might be the next step on the path to that future for you right now?

Okay, everyone, if you want some help with figuring out that path, if you would like some support as you go through this process that is what my Love First Weight Loss program provides. The tools support and practice you need to learn how to take care of you the way you deserve to be taken care of, without having to wait until you lose the weight to be worthy of that care. Head to [itbeginswithathought.com/apply](http://itbeginswithathought.com/apply) to get on the waitlist. Doors open in July for my August group, so I'll see you soon.

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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](http://itbeginswithathought.com). We'll see you here next week.