

Ep #132: For ME



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With Your Host

Natalie Brown

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This is *Weight Loss Success* with Natalie Brown, episode 132.

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 everyone, story time of course, it's how we start every episode. You know I love Orangetheory, if you've been listening to me for any length of time. I'm sure I've mentioned it several hundred. I've been working out there regularly, multiple times a week minus part of 2020 when it was closed and a few months of 2021 when I was protesting the tiny class sizes that were making it super hard to get in.

Anyway, it's been almost seven years and probably almost 900 classes that I've taken, that's my estimation. Every class I wear a heart rate monitor that keeps track of my heart rate throughout the class. The reason it's called Orangetheory in case you are wondering is that your heart rate moves through different zones, each assigned a color as you go through the workouts. Resting heart rate is grey, slightly elevated is blue, starting to breathe harder is green, pushing yourself to your uncomfortable feeling is orange and can only handle it for a short amount of time like a sprint is red.

Those aren't the official terms of course, just how I feel as I go through them. The goal is to spend 12 or more minutes of the class in the orange zone because if you do you get the afterburn effect of your body continuing to burn extra calories all day long even after the workout's done. Every minute you spend in the orange or red zone you get what they call a Splat Point. So that is what I live by. I get those 12 plus Splat Points no matter what. It's a daily competition with myself, 12 is my minimum, 20 is my ideal max and 16 is my target, in the middle of the two numbers.

It's like a game I play with myself. I know when I need to push myself harder and I know when I need to pull back. I had times in the past where I pushed myself really hard and went over 20 points. And I know when I do

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that I'm wiped out for the day. It's overdoing it for my body. So, I cap it at 20 for myself. But if I go and I don't get 12 outside of those handful of days where I have kind of taken it easy on purpose when I'm coming back from being sick or whatever, if I don't get 12 I'm mad.

I kind of get black and white about it like you all do with your eating. How you say, "Well, I ate one thing off my plan today so my day is shot and I might as well make and eat a dozen cookies." When I don't get to my 12 my brain is like, "That workout didn't even count." It doesn't matter that I got up, that I moved my body, and I lifted some weights, and I ran some miles. It's just not enough points is not enough and I don't like it.

Well, this week I forgot to charge my heart rate monitor one of the days. So, I'm running on the treadmill, racking up points, and my heart rate monitor dies and it stops counting my Splat Points. I'm confused for a second thinking the screen is frozen or something. And then I looked down on my arm and I see that light on the heart rate monitor is off which means it is dead. And I realize what's happening. I am running on the treadmill and I am not going to get any points for it. There will be no record of the rest of this workout on my app. It's like it's not even happening. I was so distraught.

All of the fun drained out of the workout in that instant and I literally thought to myself, I should leave. I might as well just stop and stretch and head home. There is that might as well garbage, see, nothing good ever follows might as well, no joke. Like John Acuff says, it's never, I might as well adopt some orphans, it's always I might as well sabotage myself pretty much. So, I hear myself start with the might as wells. And I'm shocked by myself, I mean the truth and the reality is that whether Splat Points are accruing or not I am working out.

My body is moving, my heart is beating, my muscles are strengthening, I am doing what I came here to do. But the thought of just being there listening to my body working out for me and my inside reasons and not for Splat Points, and outside reasons just wasn't enough. I almost quit and

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went home. I almost hit the easy button. In her book, *Untamed*, Glennon Doyle talks about this idea of easy buttons. Here's what she says.

“Easy buttons are the things that appear in front of us that we want to reach for because they temporarily take us out of our feelings, pain and stress. They do not work in the long run, because what they actually do is help us abandon ourselves. You know you've hit an easy button when, afterward, you feel more lost in the woods than you did before you hit it. It has taken me 40 years to decide that when I feel bad, I want to do something that makes me feel better instead of worse.

I keep a handwritten poster in my office titled easy buttons and reset buttons. On the left are all the things I do to abandon myself. On the right are my reset buttons, the things I can do to make staying with myself a little more possible.” Glennon's so wise.

In this case for me I had the option to literally hit an easy button, I could just hit stop, the stop button on my treadmill and it would immediately feel easier. My muscles would not have to work as hard. My heart rate would slow down. My breathing would mellow out, but I would be abandoning myself. I would have been so bummed later in the day if I would have gone home, so disappointed that I let a little number dictate how I took care of myself that morning. Sound familiar? Ever let the little number on the scale dictate how you show up for yourself that day?

Well, luckily I have spent years working on my awareness of my thoughts. So, I observed this all going on in my mind before I took action on it, before I pushed the easy button and quit. I responded to myself, presented a counterargument, if you will. I considered the alternate view that I could stay with myself rather than abandon myself here. I could make it worth it by doing it for me, just for me, not for points, for me, for my body.

I could run and focus not on just my Splat Point number going up, but on my body and all of its miraculous functions, what it feels like to run and challenge my heart and lungs, and push myself, and feel strong. And then slow down and feel my body recover and notice the contrast, and then pick

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up the pace and push again. I could go through my whole workout just in my body and then sit and stretch my body, and thank it for doing everything I asked of it. And walk out with the deep satisfaction that comes from sitting through discomfort with myself.

Having my own back as I do something challenging and I move through it as I see it through. How often do you think about your weight loss journey like this, that you're doing it for you versus for the number on the scale, or for acceptance, or for praise, or for your partner, or for your kids? Why do we feel like we need an outside reason instead of relying on inside reasons? What would it be like to choose to stay with ourselves instead of abandoning ourselves? I think part of it is our lack of self-trust.

We don't think we can trust ourselves and our bodies to know how to take care of ourselves. We need a program, or a format, or a structure, or Splat Points, or another person outside of us to tell us what to do and hold us accountable. So why do we struggle so much with this idea of trusting ourselves? Why do we doubt instead? One of my favorite therapists on Instagram, I just almost shortened it to Insta, you all would know what that means, right?

Anyway, her name's Maria Sosa, she is @holisticallygrace on Instagram. Recently she talked about this, she referenced five reasons for this, our upbringing, our education, our life experiences, our culture and our biology. She says if we are raised in a household where we're criticized or we're made to feel like nothing we did was good enough or where shame was used to motivate, we will likely doubt ourselves.

If we were positively reinforced or punished in our learning environments then self-doubt probably plays a role in our day-to-day depending on which one of those two things happened. How we interpret our experiences of succeeding or failing directly impacts our level of self-doubt. Gender constructs, systemic discrimination, social comparison, and an emphasis on more, more, more, on hustle, hustle, hustle tends to nurture our feelings of inadequacy and self-doubt.

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Depending on what we come into the world with in terms of biology, genetics, temperament, personality, all of that also influences our self-trust/self-doubt. For women I think culture is a huge part of this issue. We are taught that being selfless is a virtue and being selfish is a sin, or a moral failing, or a weakness, that we're supposed to take care of ourselves but not be vain, that we should be loving, and generous, and unconditional but not to ourselves lest we come off as self-absorbed or arrogant.

That we should give everything we can to others including our time but also look perfect/attractive/acceptable/sexy/insert whatever adjective you want there. No wonder we have a hard time trusting ourselves or doing anything just for ourselves. We are conditioned to believe this is impossible and wrong.

I just went on a little weekend trip with a best mom friend of mine and our daughters, and a few friends of theirs for her daughter's birthday, there's probably a way easier way to say that but you get the gist. They have a second home with an amazing community pool in a sunny and warm location about three and a half hours away. My friend and her husband just barely purchased this vacation home two weeks ago. It's been a dream of theirs that they have worked really, really hard for.

And one of the reasons why they purchased this home in this community was the pool, it's epic. And one of her very favorite things is sitting by the pool in the sun and floating around the lazy river. But she's a mom of six, an amazing mom who dedicates nearly all of her time to her children and has for decades. She loves it, wouldn't have it any other way except she really loves sitting by that pool.

So, on day two when the girls were 'bored of swimming' as if such a crazy thing exists and were looking to be entertained by us in some other way. She asked me if it was too much or bad if she really wanted to just sit by the pool and tell the girls to entertain themselves? I told her, I don't like to do anything anyone asks me to do against my will. I just don't do many things that I don't want to do, it's just how I am. And so, we should definitely go to the pool.

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But she was genuinely conflicted because as women and moms we are told indirectly and directly that we have to put them first, that good moms take care of their children and make sure they are happy. For most of us we interpret that to mean we are last and our happiness and care is not a priority. It's really hard for us to imagine doing something without guilt and shame just for us. We think we shouldn't, or we don't deserve it, or we aren't worthy but I think we should question that narrative.

I think the very people who dedicate time to others should also be encouraged to dedicate time to themselves too just for them. I think we should all question what we think are key values of being a good mom, or a proper woman, or whatever other role we are using against ourselves and start to redefine what it means for ourselves. If you valued you as much as you value others, what might you do differently?

If you were to show up for you on this journey, dedicated to staying with yourself instead of abandoning yourself, what might you keep doing, or stop doing, or start doing differently? I will still keep playing my Splat Point game at Orangetheory because I love it, I think it's fun. But I also see that I am choosing to stay to play the game for me, not just for points. And as I was thinking about this concept this week, asking myself, what else might I do that is for me in different scenarios, I did some other things for me that I haven't done in a while.

I went for a walk not for any other purpose than for me. I did take my puppy who is only a little over three pounds and he runs top speed as fast as I walk and he's also terrified of every bike, and runner, and bigger dog that passes us on the path by my house. And so, he just pretty much stops in his tracks whenever they do. So, it was less a walk and more a very slow meandering stroll. I think my heart rate actually may have slowed to resting on this walk. It was so painfully slow.

But nonetheless I got fresh air at my favorite time of day, sunset in the summer and it was just for me. I also thought about this with my meals this week. What does eating for me look like? It looks like nourishing delicious food that I can pull together quickly at home. So, I went to the store and I

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got a handful of things that would be fast, easy and nourishing, I really enjoyed eating for me in this way this week.

I have been considering this as I have gotten dressed this week too. If I'm dressing for me what does that look like? It depends on the day but it looks like not overthinking, having fun with style and color, and putting in some effort and some creativity. Being comfortable while also being colorful and bold. I've had red lips. I've had bright pink lips. I've had purple lips this week just for me. I mean other people saw them but it was for me.

I also spent a few mornings reading articles on things I'm interested in on Substack rather than scrolling Instagram or checking my emails first thing in the morning. So that I can start slow, get up and do time but do something for me while I'm getting ready to get ready for my day. I want to encourage you to try this out.

Think about what or who you are doing things for now. And ask yourself what it would look like to do these things for you. What would it be like to listen to your inside reasons instead of the outside ones? How could you stay with yourself a little more and abandon yourself less?

Okay, everyone, if you've been thinking, waffling back and forth between applying or not applying for my next Love First Weight Loss group that starts in September, now is the time to stop thinking about it and do it. I'm accepting applications for about one more week and then we'll be closing enrollment again. So, get online, head to itbeginswithathought.com/apply. Just so you know, after you apply you'll hop on a call with me where we'll talk about where you are, where you want to be and how I can help you get there. So, head to itbeginswithathought.com/apply and 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.