

Ep #135: So Much More



Full Episode Transcript

With Your Host

Natalie Brown

[Weight Loss Success](#) with Natalie Brown

Ep #135: So Much More

This is *Weight Loss Success* with Natalie Brown, episode 135.

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, everyone, I had such a core memory making evening last weekend. I want to tell you about it. My husband's friend has a VIP box at the outdoor concert venue where I live and they weren't using their tickets for the Jack Johnson concert. My girls are super into him right now. So, my husband bought out the box tickets and we took our whole family and my little sister and her husband to the concert. We got a serious VIP experience which we are not accustomed to. I mean we consider ourselves very important people but we do not live this kind of VIP life.

So, we had upfront parking, our own VIP entrance, amazing and comfortable seats, a server that came to our box and brought us anything we wanted at the touch of a button. And my girls got to skip the line at the merch booth and get the sweatshirts they wanted. It was the perfect temperature, a clear sky, the most ideal summer night, the music was awesome, Ziggy Marley opened for him and was fantastic. And Jack just sounded so great and the show itself was just a feel good happy two hours.

And to top it off it was my younger daughter's very first concert. I told her it was all downhill from here and that not all concert experiences are like this. We really set the bar high, I know. But anyway, she was so amazed. She's been listening to Jack Johnson nonstop since we told her about the tickets about a month ago. She loved him before but that just got her super dedicated once she knew she was going to see him live. So, she just could not have been more prompt when he came out and the music started. And she knew every word to every song he played.

She does this super cute thing when she's excited. She gets really bouncy, she kind of bounces up and down. And she was just bouncing in her seat

Ep #135: So Much More

for the whole first song and taking pictures, and videoing, and singing along with her big sis. We sat behind them so the whole thing is just burned into my brain, them just so happy, having so much fun, my whole family together, listening to live music, enjoying a beautiful summer night. We drove together and we got there pretty early so we had lots of time before the concert to hang out and chat too.

It was just perfection. It's burned into my brain as one of those things I won't forget and I can take myself back to and just smile any time. Notice what is missing in my memory of the evening and what stands out to me as I look back on it and tell the story, what we ate. Once upon a time what I ate, what the food was like, that would lead every story.

That was the most important and often driving factor to every night out, every vacation, every holiday, the food, where we would eat, what we would eat, what else we would eat. It colored every memory because I was always really in scarcity mode, always in restriction mode. And so, I was always looking for a break or some relief from that. Even when I was in all out eating whatever non-diet phases, it was still only temporary in my mind. And so, I had to get it in, whatever food I had labelled as bad, and wrong, and off limits I had to eat it while I had the chance.

And so, the importance of the food became magnified. Food was at the forefront. It was always on my mind and always my focus and my motivator. But now it's not, it's a part of why I do, it's a part of night outs, and holidays, and birthdays, and vacations. And I even eat things in special places and special occasions that I don't normally eat, like churros at Disneyland. I don't eat them or even want them anywhere else.

But it's not the reason the special place or special occasion is special, the people, the atmosphere, the activities, the views, the feeling, the smells, the conversation, the memories, the music, that is why it's special. That is what my memories are made of now. It's so much more than the food, it's the whole experience. While we were there at the concert my little sister and I were reminiscing about a trip that my stepmom and I took several

Ep #135: So Much More

years back to visit her when she was attending grad school at Ole Miss in Mississippi.

It was in the fall in the heart of football season. And I don't know if you are familiar with the south and college football but oh my goodness, I had no idea. It's like a religion. And they have all sorts of longstanding traditions at Ole Miss, I am sure elsewhere, that was just the only school I had experience with, including the running of the tents which I will explain in a moment. As we walked through the Oxford town square near the school, every shop you came to was selling clothes, and hats, and scarves, and jewelry in the school colors.

Everyone came to the games completely decked out in whole outfits that were coordinating school colors. And I'm not talking sweatshirts with the school name on it or jerseys of your favorite player. I'm talking a red suit custom made with a navy tie with the school symbol on it or a navy dress with red boots and a red hat. Fancy clothes that are the school colors.

The running of the tents is the night before game day and it's where everyone literally runs and grabs their spot in the grove which is the big grass field on the campus near the stadium to set up the tents for tailgating the whole next day. And this is not a little shade canopy with some camping chairs, I mean some are. But mostly we're talking gorgeous tents like you would see at a wedding with chandeliers and full size catered buffets, and TVs playing the games on them, and couches, and dining tables.

I mean row, after row, after row of the most elaborate setups you've ever seen. It blew my mind. Just Google Ole Miss zebra tent for example and you'll see a little bit of what I'm talking about. The football part was only a part of what we did while we were there. We went to my sister's favorite little bookstore on the square, and to the most quintessential southern restaurant called Taylor Grocery where we ate southern classics like fried okra and hush puppies, catfish, drank sweet tea in the most unique eclectic restaurant environment I've ever been in.

Ep #135: So Much More

You can Google that too, Taylor Grocery, it's imperfect perfection. We drove around and we looked at all the houses, and all the trees, and all the colors of the fall. We just soaked in this little corner of the south and all of its charm. Obviously one of those core memory trips. We ate food, and the food of that region played a role but it wasn't about the food. We had a four day weekend of experiences, and culture, and sights, and smells, and conversations, and laughter, and feelings. And we ate food too. The whole trip was so much more than food.

I want you to think back to some of your core memory evenings, or trips, or holidays, the ones that are burned into your brain, the detail's clear, the feelings and the images accessible, the important like it was yesterday kind. Tell the story. Notice what you lead with, what fills the nooks and crannies and what it's focused on, what stands out. If it's about the food, it's okay, that's good to know. That's how it is for a lot of us that treasure food, even though we don't really want to.

Most of us don't want it to be all about the food. But our relationship with food is fraught, we love it but it's forbidden and therefore commands more of our attention than we want to give it. We spend more time focused on it, more time thinking about it, and more time prioritizing it than we want to. Events, holidays, vacations become completely centered on it. And here's the unfortunate part of that. We end up not being able to see past the food to what else there is. And there is so much more than food.

Notice I didn't say ignore the food, the food is not part of this, you have to unlove the food for this to work. We just want to expand our view to all of the many parts of our experiences beyond just the food. Food will always be a part of trips, and holidays, and nights out, and birthdays, and events because we are human bodies and we need to eat. But the food can be an equal or inconsequential part rather than the most important or biggest part.

In order to have this more balanced view of food and its role in the special parts of our lives we have to get it off its pedestal and cannot eat list, out of bad food jail, released from forbidden food prison. We have to start to

Ep #135: So Much More

neutralize food. Food is a pile of ingredients, it's just sitting there. We imbue it with meaning, and value, and villainize, and outlaw it. Certainly, it has taste and mouthfeel that use to make judgments about whether we like it or not, or want to eat it or not and it's different for everyone.

Your favorite foods may not be your best friend's or your sister's and vice versa because it's personal. And the same goes for whether it's right, or wrong, or good, or bad, or healthy, or naughty, or off limits. We make judgments about food's value that are personal as well. But the reality is it's just a list of ingredients prepared in a certain way. It grows in the ground, or on a bush, or a vine, or a tree, or it comes from an animal who eats things that grow in the ground, or on a vine, or a tree.

Or for some of our favorite forbidden foods it's basically created in a lab and reproduced, and packaged for our consumption. It's not right or wrong, or good or bad, it's just food. Spend time really thinking about this concept. Look at your food, and think about what it is just purely based on facts. These Cheetos are made of corn, and oil, and baked, and rolled in orange cheese flavored powder. And then ask, is it important to me to eat this food? And if so, why?

Maybe you only got to eat Cheetos as a kid when you went to your cousin's house because your parents never bought stuff like that and your cousin's parents always did so it felt fun to eat it. And it felt like you had to eat it while you had the chance because you didn't know when you would have access to it again. And so, your little child brain made a note, this food is rare and yummy, and therefore very important. When you have access to it, eat as much as you can and you're still living by that tenant.

But here's the beauty of being a grownup, you get to take a look at these tenants adopted by your little brain and question them, and wonder about them, and look at them with your critical adult brain and make decisions. You get to decide what serves you and what doesn't, what is important to you now, what aligns with who you want to be and are becoming, not who you were. You can reassure yourself that you are in charge of the Cheeto purchasing now, not your parents.

Ep #135: So Much More

You can have them whenever and in whatever quantities you want. They just keep making them and shipping them to stores near you. And they are always available. So, the only thing you need to worry about is whether or not you want them, how much you want and how often. You get to consider what your health goals are and how Cheetos fit into that. When Cheetos are available to you all the time, if you want, and you're in charge of when you get to eat them and how much, you are no longer needing to operate on the tenant that they are important and scarce.

They're just one among thousands of crunchy salty snack foods to choose from at any time. When your view expands to how you want to feel, and what you want for your life and body, rather than just how much you can eat because who knows when you'll get to have some again, the food starts to look different. And just because you choose to give yourself the freedom to eat anything, doesn't mean you will then choose to eat everything.

Often that permission given, the focus on the abundance of the food, and the freedom to eat it, creates the opposite effect. You eat with more intention, with more calm, there's less drama around the food, you feel less controlled by the food. The food doesn't have such a pull. You stop eating when you're done instead of just when it's gone. This is a process that takes time, this will not be a way of being that you just adopt tomorrow and don't look back. It's an unlearning that has to take place but this is critical to changing your relationship with food.

The reason it looms so large is because of the fraught relationship you have with it right now, the scarcity around it, the forbidden nature of it. We have to change that first. The other part of you being able to see beyond the food is to really start to pay attention to what else there is. See if you can tell the story of your past special memories like I did. How did it feel to be there? Think about your five senses as well as your emotions, what happened? What are some of those pictures that are burned into your brain?

Ep #135: So Much More

When it comes to holidays, who are the people and what are the stories behind the traditions that make them special? There's so much more than the food. I was just thinking about thanksgiving dinner at my grandma's. I've mentioned before that I don't really celebrate thanksgiving anymore. We just go on a trip instead and take advantage of the time off. That's because what was special to me about thanksgiving was not the eating of the food or the particular foods themselves. I can get turkey dinner any time if I want it.

I realize it's a food centered holiday so it's about the food for most people but for me it was about the hands that prepared the food, and the magic, and the love, and the care and the time that went into it. My grandma made everything from scratch. She spent days preparing and then she was up in the wee hours bringing it all together. She molded little individual butters, shaped like turkeys for each guest. They were just on each of our plates. She served individual Waldorf salads in a crisp lettuce leaf cup.

She handmade and shaped these most delicate little rolls that were just folded perfectly on top of each other. She made fluffy mashed potatoes, and buttery corn, and pies, and stuffing, and turkey. And my grandpa was in charge of the hams. He would cook them slowly in his electric frying pan. And I remember watching him just meticulously turning them over and over for what felt like hours, getting them just perfectly sweet and caramelized. The house was always warm from all the cooking.

And the table was always decorated impeccably with beautiful tablecloths, and cloth napkins, and napkin rings, and handmade decorations, and place settings mixed with decorations that came back year after year. Like an adorable little pair of pilgrim candles that now grace my mantel every November in her memory. It was centered on food but it was so much more than food. It was family and it was my tiny, sweet grandma just floating around making sure everyone was fed and happy before she ever sat down and ate anything herself. Gosh, I'm getting emotional.

It's so much more than the food. So, here's something you can try. Next time you're out to dinner where you would normally be focused on the food,

Ep #135: So Much More

open your eyes, and your mind, and your heart to what else there is. What is the story beyond the food? What else is the experience made up of? Pay attention to your five senses, your feelings, the company, the conversation.

It doesn't have to be a core memory moment that's burned into your memory forever. But if you were just going to describe it to a friend when you got home or write down a few things about it in your journal, what would you say? It's so much more than food.

I have a super special treat for you next week. It's the very first of hopefully many in the future, podcasts that include a guest. I had on my friend and colleague, Dr. Katrina Ubell who's written an amazing new book, *How To Lose Weight For The Last Time*. We are having a fantastic conversation about it that I hope you'll get a lot out of. Super excited to share it with you. Can't wait so 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.