

Ep #71: Weight Loss and Hunger



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With Your Host

Brooke Castillo

Welcome to The Life Coach School podcast where it's all about real clients, real problems, and real coaching. Now your host, Master Coach Instructor, Brooke Castillo.

Hi everyone. I'm so happy that you're here and I'm really excited about this podcast. I have been knee-deep in studying weight loss for the past 6 months. I have been creating a new program that is called "Stop Overeating Master Class." It is my next level of weight loss coaching that takes everything that I know about emotional eating and overeating to the complete next level and incorporates many more aggressive protocols than I've ever introduced before, and it is for those people who are really ready to dive in and take everything to the next level. It's especially useful for anyone that has any kind of hormonal issues when it comes to losing weight.

In this podcast, what I want to talk to you about is, what is hunger and how it affects weight loss? One of the things that I have always taught and I truly believe because it's true is that the reason why any of us are overweight is we eat more than our body requires for fuel, okay, and that's simply it. There is no other way around it that if you eat more than your body requires for fuel, it will store as fat on your body. That's how it works. Most of us eat when we're not hungry and that is the main problem that causes any of us to overeat, and that is the main problem that causes any of us to be overweight.

We are overeating and we are overweight as a country literally. That's what we are doing. The question is why, right? Why are we eating when we are hungry? The way that I like to divide things up is into math. We have on one side of the page we have the math, that is eat less, exercise more, right, and then we have on the other side why we're not doing that, which is all the drama. Now, there are within the math problem, eat less and exercise more, there are lots of dynamics that will translate into a different amount of food for each person in a different amount and type of exercise for each person. I'm not going to give you that exact math and you just follow it, because it's very customized to your body, but the drama, the other side of the coin is very much similar for most of my clients.

I'm going to talk to you about both of those things on this podcast today. First, I'm going to talk to you about math, which is basically

physical hunger, when you're hungry what's going on in your body and fullness and what's going on in your body. Okay, that's your physical hunger cue and your physical sated cue, and then on the other side of the coin, I'm going to talk to you about emotional hunger and that's when you are wanting to eat food and use food to satisfy something that has nothing to do with your physical body.

Okay, so let's start with physical hunger. What is physical hunger? Physical hunger is a sensation in your body. It's different than an emotion, okay. It's a sensation in your body, and the way that we like to describe it is it starts in your body and travels to your brain whereas an emotion starts in your brain and travels to your body. Basically, you need to get tuned in to what is hunger in your body. I created a hunger scale, which is very similar to a fuel gauge in a car except that it has negative 10 all the way to 0 and then 0 to positive 10.

When we're exploring hunger, we're on the left side of the hunger scale when we're looking at it, okay, so negative 1 is the beginning of hunger. Negative 2, negative 3, negative 4, we're getting pretty darn hungry. Negative 5, we're definitely feeling some symptoms of hunger in our body physically. It is so important to be able to separate out what is literally physical hunger and what are the symptoms of physical hunger versus emotional hunger. Most of us have no idea what physical hunger even feels like. One of the ways to do that is to allow yourself to get hungry, right, physically, and the way that you allow yourself to get physically hungry is by not eating. I know this sounds like common sense, but it's very challenging for many of my clients to stay away from food long enough to truly feel physical hunger.

One of my suggestions for you to get to know your physical hunger is to wake up in the morning after you haven't eaten for maybe 8 hours and to not eat. It is very safe and actually quite healthy to allow yourself to go 10 or 12 hours without eating. That would mean if you went to bed at 8:00 at night and you woke up at 8:00 in the morning, you would have gone 12 hours without eating, and most likely you will feel hungry within an hour or two of rising. Okay, so now for some of you, you may be able to go 14 hours, 15 hours, 16 hours before you really experience what it's like to be hungry, so that's math, right.

The longer you allow yourself to go without food, the further on the left you're going to get on that hunger scale and you're going to explore what it feels like to get physically hungry. It's an important sensation to get to know because it is for many people a fluid sensation, so it comes in waves and it goes and it comes and it goes and some people feel it in their stomach and some people feel it a little bit in their head and some people feel it a little bit in their throat. If you are not sure if you're hungry, just wait a little bit longer and you'll be able to experience it in a way that really becomes clear. Okay, that is physical hunger, okay.

It is challenging for people to explore hunger who are eating all the time, right. If you're constantly eating, you may literally not know what it feels like to be hungry. First and foremost, you must understand what physical hunger feels like, and I want to recommend that you allow yourself to get hungry enough to experience at least a negative 5 on that hunger scale. Now for some of you, this will be filled with a lot of drama, and I'm going to talk to you about that in a minute but it's also very important so you can understand those different signs and be able to tell where you are on that hunger scale, okay.

One of the ways that I recommend that you do this is you wake up in the morning and you don't eat for a certain amount of time, and then at that time, you have some food planned. If you do get to negative 5, you have something to eat, something prepared, something ready that you can then stay calm enough to eat in a way that won't be a binge or won't freak you out. Now, if you can't allow yourself to get to negative 5 on the hunger scale without freaking out, then that's really going to be our first step. We're really going to explore that emotionally, and some of the work that I've done with clients before was we really worked on eating that minute that you got hungry and stopping the minute that you've got full, and that's kind of the beginners version of learning how to eat when you're hungry and stop when you're full.

I'm going to encourage those of you who have done that to try to let yourself get to negative 5 on the hunger scale and see what comes up for you physically and also what comes up for you emotionally. Now what's really interesting about what happens when you allow

yourself to get physically hungry is what happens with your hormones and what happens in your body and how beneficial that can be if you allow yourself to actually fully experience physical hunger every day. A lot of my clients come to me having never let their bodies get to the place where they're experiencing that physical hunger, and it causes actually a lot of hormonal issues in the body when we're constantly eating and we aren't allowing ourselves to get hungry.

If you're eating every single time you're just not full, right, you're always eating at 0 on the hunger scale, you're going to cause yourself some real challenges when it comes to losing weight, okay, so that's really math. Allowing yourself to get hungry and experiencing what it feels like at 0 on the hunger scale and also to negative 5, okay. That's the physical piece of it. That's the math.

Now, let's talk about the emotional piece of it. Let's talk about the reasons why we eat when we aren't physically hungry, when we are "emotionally hungry." We eat when we think it's time to eat. We eat when we're sad. We eat when we're happy. We eat when there's good food in front of us. We eat when we smell food. We eat when we go to a restaurant. We eat when someone ask us if we want to eat something. We eat when we come home from work and we're stressed out, right. There's all these other reasons why we eat that have nothing to do with physical hunger, and we must explore those reasons as well and really understand those reasons.

If we only eat when we're hungry and we stop eating the minute that we're sated and then we eat again when we are hungry, we will be providing our body with the amount of fuel that it requires, okay, and that will be the best way to stop gaining weight, that will be the best way to maintain our weight, and ultimately if we're only eating what our body requires for fuel, it will be the best way to lose weight. Because we will be able to take ourselves to a place where we are utilizing not only the nutrients that we're eating but also the extra fat storage that we have on our bodies.

Ultimately, we need to eat in a way where we can utilize food and fat storage at the same time in order to lose weight, and that is what is the secret sauce, right, and in order to do that, we have to know and listen to our body and know exactly when it's hungry and know

exactly how much to eat, so we eat enough where we're not only utilizing nutrients that we're putting in our body but also utilizing our fat storage. Many reasons why we eat when we're not hungry and many of the sensations that we're experiencing are from our emotions, right, so we're having these emotional experiences in our body and we're trying to solve those emotional experiences with food.

Now, there is no emotion that food can solve, and a lot of times my clients will be stressed and they'll be upset and they'll be frustrated and they will want to eat food to make that emotion to feel better to them. One of the things that I really want to teach my clients is that how important it is to be able to feel an emotion, be able to feel it all the way through. As you can see, I'm teaching you how to do that on both sides of this equation: on the math side of the equation and on the drama side of the equation, right. On the math side of the equation, I want to teach you how to experience hunger and how to feel it and to not panic or freak out about it, how to be present with your body when it's hungry and know that that's okay, it's part of the biological mechanism, and to be in your body when you're experiencing any emotion and to know that that's okay. There's no need to react.

Just because your body is a little bit hungry, just because your body is experiencing emotion, doesn't mean you have to eat. You can be physically hungry and not eat immediately. Allow yourself to move down to the negative numbers on that hunger scale before you eat and you can also allow yourself to be in an emotion and experience the emotion without eating. Everything I'm creating in this new course basically teaches you how to do that and I want to offer it to you here.

I want you to think about being in a place where you might feel a little bit physically hungry and you might be feeling a little bit stressed out, and knowing that you can be in that space and have that stressful emotion and to have that feeling of hunger and not eat and know that you will be okay, that is the secret sauce. That is the solution. Then you ask me, "Okay, so how do you do that? How do you allow yourself to get hungry? How do you allow yourself to experience emotion?" Well, I think understanding what's happening in the body physically when we're hungry is really helpful, and I also think what's

happening with us emotionally is really helpful when it comes to staying present with our bodies.

I remember when I was working with a client in one of my in-person programs, and she was telling me that she freaks out if she ever feels hungry. It just like freaks her out. She doesn't know what to do and she thinks she could die. Literally, the thought in her mind is, "Oh my god, I'm going to die if I don't eat something right now. I need to have food on me all the time." I remember feeling this way, and in fact even just getting to negative 2 on hunger scale was really challenging for me and it has been challenging for many, many, many of my clients; that feeling of emptiness, that feeling of hunger.

I think one of the reasons why is, we have such an out of body experience. We're trying to avoid our emotional lives so much that we don't want the body to be in a space where it can actually feel emotion. If you picture an empty glass, a crystal glass, and you ding it and cause a vibration, it's going to be a much louder vibration than if it's filled up with food or water, and I think that's what happens in our bodies as well. I think the more they're filled up, the more we dole our experience, we dole our emotional lives. The bummer is that's positive and negative emotion.

If we can allow our glass to be empty and experience that emotion, not only is it a win in terms of being able to manage our weight and be able to allow ourselves to be hungry and to experience that light feeling, but also to allow ourselves to feel emotion and to be present with ourselves long enough. Understanding that any emotion that we're experiencing is caused by what we're thinking, I think, is immensely helpful to keeping us present with ourselves. If we know that I'm experiencing frustration right now and this is what frustration feels like and it's caused from what I'm thinking, I think it's much easier for us to stay present and accept that rather than reacting to it by overeating. It's just frustration. It's nothing we can't handle. The same is true for hunger.

If any time we have even the inclination that we're going to be hungry, we're just at 0 on the hunger scale, if we start panicking and eating, then we don't get to experience what it's like to actually experience what it's like to be hungry, right, and one of the things that

I have found with myself and with my client is that being willing to experience hunger and physical hunger and recognize it is a huge part of deepening that connection, that mind-body connection, and developing some authority over our lives. If you combine the two, that's when you get some real magic.

Here's what happens to a lot of my clients. They start to experience hunger which means all of their emotions are intensified. If you're little bit angry and you're hungry, your anger will be intensified because that vibration will be stronger if you don't have any food in your body. This does not mean that you should go eat, right, it just means that you have an opportunity to learn how to be in the presence of anger to recognize that you are the one causing it with your thinking and that is where you start practicing being present in your body.

A lot of times people will go on these meditation retreats and they'll be it. There's a lot of fasting that happens there, and I think that's part of it because you're able to feel on such a deeper level, right, and I'm not suggesting that you go on a meditation retreat and not eat, but I am suggesting that you get to know what it's like to be hungry. Now once you practice understanding hunger, what's magical about it is then you will know when it's genuinely time to eat. You will know how to fuel your body, okay, and what's magical too about allowing yourself to get hungry is you learn that there are different types of hunger based on what food your body is wanting, right.

Sometimes we get hungry and we want to have salad, or sometimes we get hungry and we want to have meat, or we get hungry and we really feel like we want to have something hot like soup or whatever. Now that's different than a craving and it's important to understand the difference between when we're genuinely hungry and what that feels like versus a craving for a certain food that's usually a processed food or sugar or something like that. That's a more of a hormonal response, right, and being able to distinguish between those two is another magical thing. Because a lot of times we think when we crave a food, that it means we're hungry. A lot of times we don't even know the difference between thirst and hunger.

The action step that I want to give you guys and this is really just an introduction. I haven't even gone into depth on what hunger

hormones are and how those are affecting us and the insulin response we're having in our body and glucose and what it means, how hunger is related to, how often we utilize our own fat as fuel, okay. As you can imagine, I was telling you the story about how sometimes my clients will panic when they get hungry. One of the things I told them is that when your body gets hungry and it needs fuel, it's very good at regulating it. If we don't provide it with fuel, if we don't eat something, it goes and gets it from the fat stores and utilizes the fat as fuel. It's magical. We actually want our body to do that. It would be great if it would do that a few times a day.

When we're constantly staying full, we don't give our body the opportunity to utilize any of our fat stores because it never needs to go and get it because we're giving it so much food all day, every day. The introduction here is really a chance for you to start exploring, do you know when you're physically hungry and are you able to allow yourself to be hungry long enough that your body will start utilizing the fuel that many of you have already onboard. Now for those of you who want to give this a try, here's what I recommend that you do and I recommend that you pay really close attention to the drama that will come up in this process.

My suggestion is you start with 10 hours, so basically 10 hours that you don't eat and then from there you see how long you can go until you get to what you think is a negative 5 on the hunger scale and then have food prepared for yourself to eat. Eat only enough to take you till you feel sated on the other side of the hunger scale and then try it again. See if you can allow yourself to get hungry enough that you would classify it as a negative 5 on the hunger scale. Okay, practice this. Now the reason I'm asking you to go all the way to negative 5 is so you get the different dimensions of hunger and you get to experience what it's like to actually go past the point where you're just having that whisper of hunger. I want you to really get to know it.

Now if you're interested in learning a lot more about this and how hunger is related to weight loss and what goes on in your body when you don't allow it to get hungry and when you do and the magic of being at peace in your body when you allow it to get hungry multiple times a day and what's actually going on inside, I want you to jump

on my early list to get notified of when I actually go live with my "Stop Overeating Master Class." You can do that by going to thelifecoachschool.com/stopovereating. It will also be in the show notes under www.thelifecoachschool.com/71 if you want more information on that.

In the meantime, allow yourself to get hungry. See what kind of drama comes up for you. See what kind of emotions come up for you. See if you can separate out: that's physical hunger and this is the emotional hunger that I'm experiencing. I would love to hear all about it in the show notes. If there's enough comments there and enough questions there, I'll do a whole special episode just on that in a follow-up to that because I think it's important to know how each of us experience hunger and how different it is and the real significant difference between physical hunger and emotional hunger. Have some fun with it, and I'll talk you guys next week. Take care everybody. Bye-bye.

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