

Ep #89: Diets



Full Episode Transcript

With Your Host

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Welcome to the Life Coach School Podcast 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.

Hey everyone. How are you guys? This is different today because what I'm doing is I'm recording the podcast in my office like I normally do but I'm also recording my screen. I'm recording the visual as well. I have my microphone a little bit further away from normal. It's not right in my face. The people on YouTube can see it but I'm going to upload this podcast to YouTube and you guys can see the visual of me teaching and see if you guys like that. If it's something that you want me to continue to do, I will continue to do it.

Today, I want to talk to you guys about diet. One of the things that I've been doing is reading every book there is on dieting and food addiction and health and nutrition and protocols for weight loss and studying the research and fasting and everything I can possibly get my hands on when it comes to weight loss. The reason why I've been doing this is because I have started a course called Stop Overeating Masterclass. It's this amazing course that I'm teaching to 18 people right now. It's a 6-month program. I have had such an amazing experience. We're only 3 weeks into the course and we've had such an amazing experience with what's going on with my students in that class and my clients in that class that I've been wanting to share a little bit some pieces of it with you all.

Obviously, that course is very intense. I have daily contact with those people. I really work closely with them and on their personal issues, but there's a lot of concepts that are universal that I think you guys that listen to my podcast will benefit from. I definitely want to share them with you. One of the themes that I noticed that came up when I was selling the course and talking to people that were interested in doing it and also with the people that are in the course is this kind of vilification of diets. A lot of people have said to me, "I don't want to go on a diet. I hope this isn't a diet. I don't believe in diets. I'm fed up with diets."

A lot of what I've always said is I like to work with people who are done going on crazy diets because they're really ready to do the work

that's required. I started thinking a lot about what that means and what the whole diet mentality means and also, what it means to have gone on many diets and not succeeded and why are we so blamey? It's a word, blamey, and why do we make ourselves the big dumb and diets the villain, and is that useful and is that helpful for us? For me, I teach a concept called emotional childhood. The concept is that when we aren't taking responsibility for our lives, when we aren't taking responsibilities for how we feel in our lives, we end up blaming other people and blaming situations for what's going on with this. The problem with doing that is it's completely disempowering because if the reason I feel the way I do or the reason I act the way I do or the reason I have the result that I have is because there's something outside of me that I have very little control over whether I can change that result or not.

For example, if the reason why I'm overweight is because diets don't work, then I'm pretty host because the diet is the villain and I can blame the diet and the diet is the problem. I'm not taking responsibility for that. I'm just going to say, "I'm never going to go on a dieting because diets are bad." Diets aren't always bad. Diets are good for some people. Some people have gone on many diets and lost lots of weight and been very happy with the results. What's the difference between someone who goes on a diet and has a wonderful experience or someone who goes on a diet and doesn't have a wonderful experience? I think that it's easy to throw the baby out with the bath water and blame a diet and then feel completely disempowered.

Many people have given up dieting because dieting is bad and have decided just to accept themselves at the weight they are even though they're continuously overeating. I think that is also a mistake. I think the issue is to consider why are you overeating and what is that behavior about and what happens when you go on a diet, what do you do on a diet, because here's a thing. Diets don't feel anything. People will say to me, "I go on a diet and I feel restricted. I go on a diet and I feel upset, I feel cranky," as if the diet is causing that emotion. What happens a lot of times that I've seen with many of my clients is they go on a diet and they stop overeating.

Let's talk about this for a minute. When you go on a diet, a lot of times, depending on what kind of diet it is, you're restricting yourselves from overeating. The reason why most people overeat is because they don't want to deal with their emotional life, is one reason, or they have a complete lack of awareness as to what's going on in terms of food in their body. What a diet does is it, first of all, creates that awareness because you have to be paying attention to what you're eating. The second thing it does is it often removes the option of overeating. The reason why you're overeating comes to the surface. It's usually frustration and irritation and anger and unmanaged emotion.

It's easy at that point to blame the diet and say, "This diet is causing me to feel this emotion." What I think is happening often times is that the diet is really just revealing what's going on underneath. Many people can stay on diets like this in a white-knuckling way and lose a bunch of weight, but the reason why they gain it back is not because the diet wasn't effective and not even because the diet was not sustainable. The reason why is because they go off of the diet. They start overeating again and then they gain weight. I could just as easily say, "This diet didn't work for me," or I could say, "This diet did work for me as long as I follow it. As soon as I stop following it, it didn't work for me," or, "This diet worked in the sense that I stopped overeating but I didn't enjoy the experience of not having overeating in my life so I stopped doing the diet."

If I make the unfortunate decision of blaming the diet, I missed the opportunity of understanding what's going on with me. If the reason why I didn't enjoy the diet is because I couldn't eat every time I had a negative emotion and I acknowledge that, then I can start getting to doing the work of how to manage my emotions. Often times, one of the issues that people are dealing with is just the lack of education. They don't understand nutrition. They don't understand how to eat healthy. You've heard of these people, yes? They go on these diets, they learn how to eat healthy, they change the way they're eating their whole life and they never gain the weight back.

Those are typically people that just need education that diets are brilliant for that, especially if they are based on sound nutrition. If you're not normal, if you eat emotionally, the diet will be, in many

ways, the enemy, because it will prevent you from being able to do that and you will be consistently looking for the loophole in the diet. For example, I have clients that have told me that they go on weight watchers and there are certain foods that don't have any points. They utilize those foods to keep overeating so they don't have to manage their emotions. They find ways of working within the diet to be able to try to still overeat. The problem with that is not the diet. There's nothing wrong with the diet. It's just not addressing the reason why you're overweight in the first place. It's not addressing the underlying reasons for the overeating.

In the first camp, all you need is education. You change what you're eating and you're all set. If you're an emotional eater, what a diet does is it reveals all the negative emotion that's underneath the overeating. Then, we blame the diet. I want to advise against doing that. I want to advise against vilifying the diet because then, you've taken what might be a tool, which is a sound diet and made it the enemy because it has revealed all your negative emotion. Then, you're associating your negative emotion with the diet instead of associating your negative emotion with not overeating. It's a huge difference.

There are many diets, and I think we should back up just a few steps here and define what a diet is. Diets are just the way of eating. There is suggested protocol for how you should eat. There are many very reasonable diets out there. If you are relying on a diet to provide you with the exact nutrition you need, the exact amount of food that you should eat and when exactly to eat it and you don't have any input into that decision-making when it comes to the diet, that can be a huge issue because it has you relying on something external that can actually disconnect you from the wisdom of your own body.

If you're going on a diet that's telling you to eat 6 times a day or 8 times a day or wake yourself up in the middle of the night or something that is counterintuitive when it comes to tuning into your body, you really need to have a look if that structure is going to give you the result you want. There are other diets that have you doing things that are completely unhealthy. Obviously, eating Snicker bars or eating only powdered food, things like that, that are very extreme. I'm going to leave those things out of this discussion because I think

with you're ever going to be thinking about going on a diet, it means to make logical sense. One of the problems with the way we think about diets is, "Is this sustainable?"

This has become a very interesting question with many of my students because most of my students don't think anything as sustainable if it doesn't include eating whatever you want whenever you want. This is kind of been an interesting dynamic that I think we have all butt into that, "I should be able to eat whatever I want whenever I want and lose weight. I want to be on a diet that allows for that and allows me to eat anything I want whenever I want and then I can lose weight as long as I do it in a way that aligns with my mental fortitude," so to speak. What I have ran into is that my philosophy is that the reason why we overeat and I define overeating as eating food that isn't fuel when you aren't hungry, that's our main problem, overeating is eating fuel are not fuel when we aren't hungry, then leads to being overweight. We're eating more than our body requires for a fuel.

The question becomes why are we doing that. There's a few reasons why we do that. One of the reasons why is we don't know when we're hungry. This has been a huge issue for my clients because there's so many things that can throw off your hunger scale which is basically a scale that goes from negative 10 to positive 10 and lets you know when you're hungry and when you're full. If you go on a diet that allows you to get hungry, this is not a bad thing. When you go on a diet that has you ignoring your hunger and not paying attention to it and distracting yourself from it, that's a very different thing, as if the hunger doesn't matter. Just because you go on a diet and experience hunger doesn't mean that it's bad. In fact, many people need to go without food long enough so they can experience what hunger is like. They can really go, "Oh, that's hunger." So many of my clients are eating so consistently that they don't even know what the experience of hunger is like. They're constantly eating.

The second issue that we ran into is that our hunger scales, our signals of hunger from our body have evolved from a place of eating real food. In our day and age, we have so much processed food. I know you guys have heard this so much but here's why it matters. When you take food and you distill it down, you process it down. You

take it from this huge plant. You take it from, for example, sugar cane and you distill it down into this little tiny fine white powder, our bodies have not evolved to the point where they register those calories and give us that full signal in a way that represents actually how many calories within. If you take an apple and you distill it down to some apple juice, you're going to have a very different experience of hunger and fullness with the same amount of calories. You're going to eat that apple, you're going to feel much more sated than if you drink that juice, and same with the sugar cane, if you eat the whole thing, a sugar cane versus that distilled powder.

Sugar and flour, because they are distilled down, they're processed down, so our body can't register them on the hunger scale in the same way, we've completely thrown off the hunger scale in terms of being able to recognize that number of calories as the fuel, so to speak, that it really is. You drink a Coke, that can be 300 calories, your body is not registering that you've just had 300 calories. Problem number one, you aren't allowing yourself to get hungry so you don't really experience what true hunger is. Problem number 2, your body isn't registering calories from processed food in the same way so it doesn't give you an accurate sense of fullness or hunger.

The other thing that really interferes with it is that sugar and flour also create withdrawal symptoms in our body that we mistaken as hunger. The last thing that processed foods do in the amounts that we're eating them is completely throw off our hormones. The reason why our hormones matter is because our hunger scale and our feeling of fullness and our feeling of hunger is regulated by our hormones and the brain. We have hormones that are communicating to our brain that we're full. We have hormones that are communicating to our brain that we're hungry. Sugar and flour and processed foods completely throw off those hormones.

Ten years ago, what I was telling everyone was to make sure that they were really tuning in to their hunger and fullness signals. Many of my clients, very well intended, were tuning into what they thought were hunger and thought was fullness but really, they were tuning into withdrawal. They were never feeling full because their hormones are so off-balanced. When I really started to understand this was, of course, when my son was diagnosed with insulin resistance and I

was able to really study the hormones and how they affect our hunger scale.

Back to diets. You want to make sure that any diet you're on helps you to tune in to that wisdom of your body. You want to make sure that you aren't vilifying diets and throwing them all out with the bath water, but when you are looking at diet that they help you tune in to what's going on in terms if you're hungry or what's going on in terms of your fullness, the other thing that's brilliant about diet is that they can offer you an education in terms of nutrition. For some of you, you may want to try the paleo diet and see how your body feels when it has a higher protein, higher fat, whole food content. Some of you might want to try a vegan diet and see how your body feels with no animal products whatsoever. Some of you might want to try vegetarian. Some of you might want to try eating only the whole foods.

There's different diets that you can try. What's great about that is you learn the nutrition and the theory behind the diet which, of course, would never hurt you learning anything about nutrition and different theories about it. The other thing that it does is that helps educate you on how your body feels. For example, I do really well when I eat a good amount of protein. My body doesn't do well in a vegetarian diet. I don't feel good on a diet like that. I do much better when I eat more fats. I went on a higher fat diet and I felt much better. Going on these diets was really helpful for me because I saw which diets really helped my body to lose weight, which diets didn't helped my body to lose weight, what I felt good on, what I didn't feel I'm good on. I didn't have to vilify the diet if it didn't work for me. I didn't have to make the diet the enemy. I just saw that, "Oh, my body doesn't work really well when I eat in that way."

Diets are good in terms of the way they educate us and the way that we can learn about different foods and different theories about foods. Notice how our bodies feel when we try different things like that. What's not great about diets, the flipside of it is the temporary nature that most of us treat them with. We talk about going on a diet and then going off a diet. Many people think that diets are only for losing weight. You go on a diet, you lose weight, and then you go off the diet. Then, we complain that we gain all of our weight back. We're

gaining all the way back because the diet didn't work. Diet did work when you're on it, but the idea is you went off of it.

This diet mentality, this idea that when you go on a diet, that it's temporary is a huge problem, not with the diet, not with the dieting industry, but with how we think about something. If you think about your diet as something that you're going to go on, which I think is actually something that's been pretty well-proven in the paleo community, more people go on at paleo diet and they don't talk about, "Hey, go on paleo and then go off it." They really created it as a lifestyle, as a way of eating for the rest of your life. I think if we can think about any diet that helps us lose weight, it's probably going to be a diet that will help us sustain that lower weight if we're willing to go on it for the rest of our lives. Many people have committed to paleo. A lot of people have committed to low-carb high-fat. A lot of people have committed to vegan, vegetarian, plant-based. Those ideas has a lifestyle.

When they go on a diet and they lose weight on the diet, they don't then say, "Okay, I'm going to go off the diet." They stay on it. In that way, they don't need to vilify it. They can use it as a something that will actually serve them. You've known many people that have started a certain way of eating that has served them in their life. This diet mentality, whether you're either on it or off it or blaming the diet, doesn't really serve you. It certainly doesn't serve the dieting industry because, or any diet that is effective. A lot of people talk about the dieting industry, I have been one of them, by the way, as just a money-making organization. Many of them are, but I also want to offer that just because diets make money, for example, weight watchers, just because they make money, it doesn't mean that it's not a good diet.

Looking at the quality of the food that you're eating and if it serves your body and if it works for you to help you stop overeating, that is part of being healthy. I think a lot of people make judgments about whether food is healthy or not, like if it's packaged, that it can't possibly be healthy. One of the things that I want to offer is that if it helps you to eat more packaged meals, and I'm not talking about processed, I'm talking about packaged, in a way that helps you stop overeating, that isn't necessarily a bad thing. Especially if it helps you

stop overeating to the point where you can uncover those reasons underneath as to why you're overeating and solve those issues permanently, that diet can be a beautiful thing, even if it's really highly structured because it's revealing the reason why you're overweight.

One of the problems that I have with people blaming diets is they use the diet as an excuse as to why they can't lose weight. They use the diet as a reason, as evidence to prove that belief system. What happens is, I'll have clients that'll say, "I'm unable to lose weight." I'll say, "Where is your evidence? Tell me." They say, "Well, I went on this diet. I went on this diet. I went on that diet. None of those diets worked for me." What I like to offer is that, "Okay, first of all, I want to know what you did. Did you follow the diet exactly?" The answer is 90% of the time no. They're blaming the diet but they didn't actually do the diet or they modified it or they didn't stay on it long enough. That's the first thing.

The second thing is that they went on this diet and they tried it for a certain amount of time and they didn't get the result fast enough. They feel like, "If I'm going to be doing something like this, if I'm going to be on a diet, if I'm going to eat in this way, then the results better be immediate and I better get those results right away or it means the diet is not working." That's not necessarily true. The third thing that I think is a problem is people have complained that diets have completely messed up their bodies. I have butt in to this belief where metabolisms are messed up but I don't think it's because of the dieting that the metabolism is so messed up. I think the problem is the overeating, the consistent overeating.

What I have learned about hormones and how hormones are affected by our overeating, I have recognized that the issue is not the dieting. The issue is the overeating. If we dieted more than we overate, we would be thin. We wouldn't have messed up metabolisms. The messed up metabolism is coming from the overeating. We go on these diets and we restrict ourselves from overeating. We reveal all these emotions. We don't have to deal with them. We don't know how to deal with the mental aspect of losing weight. We completely go the other way and start overeating everything in sight and then blame the diet for messing up our metabolism. When really, I think the issue is the overeating that we chose to do. The diet didn't make us overeat.

In fact, the diet was when we weren't overeating, but it's our mentality about the diet.

I used to really believe that it was the restriction on the diet that cause the overeating, but I am amending my belief system on that. When you learn more, you understand this more. I think the white-knuckling it, the will power that we use not to experience our emotions are what causes to go the other way. For example, if you go on a diet that restricts you from eating sugar, let's say, and you're restricting yourself from eating sugar in a very white-knuckled way which means you're not experiencing the emotion that's coming up, you're not experiencing what's going on for you mentally or cognitively, you're resisting that while at the same time, resisting the sugar, that will cause you to run out of will power and eat everything in sight.

The diet didn't caused it but you were inability or your unwillingness to allow the emotion to reveal itself instead of using will power not to experience the emotion. People think they're using will power not to eat, but what I've started to notice is that resistance, that white-knuckling is about not experiencing the emotion. Let me tell you exactly what I mean. I'm going to give you example so you can really understand the difference. If there's a piece of cake in front of you, you have three options. You can eat the cake, you can resist eating the cake and the emotion that will come up if you don't eat the cake, or you cannot eat the cake and experience the emotion that comes up. If I go on a diet that says I can't eat chocolate cake and I pushed the cake away and I pour salt all over the cake or I try not to look at the cake and I resist it, that's going to be a I have a temporary amount of that will power. It's not going to last very long. I have it processed any emotion that would come up otherwise.

If what I do instead is I don't have the cake and I allow whatever it is to come up, maybe it's deprivation or upset or sadness or frustration, if I allow that emotion to come up without any resistance and I processed that emotion and I understand it and I do that consistently, I don't build up this resistance. I don't wear out my will power completely because I'm not trying to resist feeling what I'm feeling. Holding that ball underwater can only be held for so long. It's not coming from not eating the food. It's coming from not experiencing the emotion. Then, on top of it, if I'm using will power not to eat the

food and to resist my emotion, and then on top of that, I blame the diet for causing me to do that, I've completely disempowered myself.

The alternative and what I want to encourage you to do is a couple of things. If you know that there's a sensible useful diet that you can use to go on that will help you lose weight and you know that it will stop you from overeating if you follow it, the second piece is you have to learn how to live a life, live in a world where you can survive, you can thrive with not overeating, and so if you're not overeating what's left, what emotions do you have to deal with? What issues do you have in your life that you need to process and understand? People will say, "Well, how do I do that?" I say, "Well first, you have to stop overeating long enough. Then, first, stop overeating long enough. Second, you have to stop resisting your emotion and let it come up and out. Let yourself experience it." Then, it only then we can figure out why you're having that emotion.

That's when you get to the coaching work. That's when you understand your brain and what you're thinking and what's going on in your life which you haven't allowed yourself to do because you think your problem is a weight problem, but really, your problem is you don't have a relationship with yourself where you understand how to process your own emotions so you're eating instead. Using a diet to stop overeating is not a bad thing. Overeating after you've been on a diet a long time is probably coming from your resistance of emotion and not from your resistance of the food.

Finally, I want you to ask yourself two questions. What diet have you've been on in the past that worked for you and why did it work? What you're really asking yourself is, "What did you do that worked for you?" Can you utilize that in your life? The diets that didn't "work" for you, why didn't they work for you? Resist the temptation to blame the diet. What didn't you do? What didn't you work at? What didn't you commit to? What weren't you willing to feel? Really, focus on your piece in it will be very empowering. Then, ask yourself why didn't you keep doing that thing that worked for you. Is it because, and this is been a huge issue, is that people want to give up dieting because they want to do everything in moderation. They want to believe that they can have and eat whatever it is they want to eat even though they know that hasn't worked for them.

When you decide that you're willing to stop overeating, what is that going to look like for you? Are you willing to calibrate your hunger scale by eating foods that your body is used to recognizing so your hunger scale can be calibrated? Are you willing to stop overeating and reveal what's left when you do, what's left when you stop eating food when you are needing to experience an emotion? What happens when you allow the feeling of deprivation, when you allow the feeling of frustration and anger and injustice that you may experience because you can't eat everything you want whenever you want and be in the body that you want? Those are the questions that matter.

Stop vilifying the diet and stop blaming the diet and start looking at your role in your own weight loss, your role in your life in terms of what has worked, what is working, and what isn't working and what can you learn from diets and what can you use from diets in a way that will serve you instead of blaming them and making them the villain. Hopefully, this has really helped you change that paradigm if you've been vilifying diets and maybe throwing the baby out with the bath water and maybe you can let a little bit of that back into your life and see how it can serve you in a way that connects you with your body instead of disconnecting you from your body. All right everybody, I hope you have an amazing week. I'll talk to you next week. Take care. Bye-bye.

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